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THE
DRAMATIC
AND
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOANNA BAILLIE.

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LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.



J. Baillie

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Dramatic
AND
POETICAL WORKS
OF
Joanna Baillie



Bothwell Mansel

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

THE
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OF
JOANNA BAILLIE

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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P R E F A C E.

ALL the Dramatic and Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie are now collected together, and presented to the Public, with many corrections, and a few additions, by herself. They are in this Volume arranged in three divisions. The first contains the Plays on the Passions, from which the reputation of the Author primarily and chiefly arose; in which is embodied the design she formed, at the commencement of her career, of writing a Tragedy and Comedy on each of the stronger passions of the mind. The second division embraces, under the head "Miscellaneous Plays," all her dramatic works not comprehended in that design. The third includes all her poetical compositions, not dramatic, nor connected with the Plays. In this division appears a poem entitled *Ahalya Bæe*, recently printed for private circulation; and amongst the *Fugitive Verses* have been introduced some short poems never before published.

LIFE

OF

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE life of Joanna Baillie contained unusually few incidents of an exciting or eventful nature. She lived in retirement from the first hour to the last. She was unmarried, and her sole constant companion was a sister likewise unmarried. The only circumstances which distinguished one day from another, apart from her literary career, were domestic matters or changes of locality, and these were few. She was connected with celebrity solely by a genius, which shed light on contemporary time, and far into the future. The quietude, however, of her existence renders more extraordinary the nature of its result. From her serene seclusion she surveyed the wide and restless expanse of the human soul, she penetrated to its deepest and darkest recesses, was present to situations and emotions remote as possible from her own; and embodied a vast variety of conceptions in creations co-existent thenceforth with the language of this country. The most prominent events of her life, traits illustrative of her character, of the dawn and development of her genius, with the more important circumstances of her literary career, can alone interest the public mind.

Joanna Baillie was born on the 11th day of September, 1762, immediately after the arrival of her mother at the manse of Bothwell near Glasgow, to the ministry of which parish her father had just been appointed from Shotts, the scene of his previous exertions. Her birth was premature; from

which cause, perhaps, and from her having a twin-sister still-born, she was in infancy small and delicate.

Her father, Dr. James Baillie, was descended from an ancient family in Scotland, which, according to heraldic authorities, derives its ancestry from high sources, numbering among its progenitors the great patriot of Scotland, Wallace. His daughter, the heiress of Lamington, married Sir William Baillie, whose lineal descendants still possess the same estate, and from this stem Dr. James Baillie's branch proceeded. There are many collateral lines from the main body of this family, all more or less nearly allied; and Joanna has stated in her preface to the *Metrical Legends* that her ancestor of that period was connected by blood with Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, and was involved in the struggle which bestowed on him enduring fame, but terminated his life. Joanna's mother sprang likewise from an old family, the Hunters of Hunterston, in Ayrshire; and she was the sister of the two brothers, highly celebrated in medical science, William and John Hunter.

The children by the marriage of Dr. James Baillie with Dorothea Hunter were William, who died in early infancy; Agnes; Matthew, afterwards the eminent physician; and Joanna.

The first six years of Joanna's life were passed at Bothwell, and, perhaps, at this early period the character of her future cele-

brity was determined. Even then, probably, her mind was imbued with those feelings and impressions which combined to mould her genius, and induce it into that channel, along which it afterwards ran with so strong a current. Amid those scenes there was every ingredient to excite and influence the thoughts of the young poet. In that locality were to be found ancient structures, wild and picturesque forms of nature, containing every element of beauty, and animated by all possible alternations of climate. The romantic legend was also heard; for in the vicinity Wallace wandered an outcast amid every privation, was there at last betrayed, and hurried thence to an ignominious death; a tale, doubtless, peculiarly impressive to Joanna, from its own intrinsic interest, and from the connection of the hero with her race. Exciting associations of a later date also existed there; for on that spot was fought the battle by which the civil and religious liberties of Scotland were for a time overthrown. Martyrs for that church, of which her father was a minister, had stained with their blood the waters of the river familiar to her eye. Superstitious tales were, without doubt, likewise in great abundance supplied there to thrill the imaginative child with horror, and fix themselves indelibly on her mind. That these various impressions were strong and pervading, may be concluded from Joanna's works; in which are predominantly marked a love and knowledge of external nature with all its various forms and hues, an attachment to ancient legend, indignation against tyranny and oppression, with a frequent recurrence to the terrific and supernatural.

A custom existed in those days, and one especially connected with the situation of Joanna's father, which gave exercise to the faculty she naturally possessed for the observation of character; and, perhaps, afforded her through life material for many combinations, though the sources from which they were derived might not be traced even by herself. In the kitchens of the Scotch gentry way-worn travellers were hospitably received and entertained, while that of the

manse was laid under peculiar contribution for those purposes; by which custom many strange adventures and strongly marked characters must have been displayed. The early store of incident and the knowledge of human nature thus obtained would be further increased by the duties and habits belonging to the daughters of the minister. They visited the neighbouring cottages, conversed with the inhabitants, and afforded to the sick and needy succour on occasions when concealment disappears and the genuine emotions of the breast are laid bare.

The beauty of the scenery and the various occupations the place afforded, appealing strongly to Joanna's peculiar tendencies, perhaps combined to make learning more than usually irksome to her. Certain it is she was by no means a proficient in acquisition from books, either at Bothwell, or during some time after quitting that locality. A considerably longer period than usual elapsed before she could be taught to read,—a power not perfectly attained by her till she had reached her tenth year, the final consummation of which, in some degree, arose from her companionship with her brother in his lessons, and the fear she felt of school, with which, on account of her backwardness, she was threatened. It appears, however, that her sister was chiefly instrumental in overcoming her reluctance to learning, and stimulating her youthful fancy.

“'Twas thou who wooed'st me first to look
Upon the page of printed book,
That thing by me abhorr'd, and with address
Didst win me from my thoughtless idleness,
When all too old become with bootless haste
In fitful sports the precious time to waste.
Thy love of tale and story was the stroke
At which my dormant fancy first awoke,
And ghosts and witches in my busy brain
Arose in sombre show, a motley train.” *

There must, nevertheless, have been early proofs of great shrewdness and talent in Joanna, for, notwithstanding her tardiness in study, she was considered among her companions a very clever child,—an opinion also

* Lines to Agnes Baillie on her birthday.

entertained in her own family, which appears from the following anecdotes. Her sister had great facility of acquirement in her childhood and through her whole life. She had a quick apprehension in reading, and an excellent memory, which supplied her with a variety of information ever ready for production. This facility on her part, and the obtuseness of Joanna at her books, made Agnes conceive she was greatly her sister's superior, until she heard her father say, "Agnes is very well, but Joanna is the flower of our flock." Upon another occasion the just opinion of her father was manifested. Whilst her brother was at school, a very appropriate theme for poetry, the seasons, was given him, upon which he was required to compose verses. The boy was in great consternation, and felt that the construction of rhyme was wholly beyond his powers. His father, upon witnessing his despair, said, "Joanna will do it for you;" and he was right, for two couplets were composed immediately. This must have occurred before she could read with ease.

When Joanna was at the age of six, her father was appointed to the collegiate church of Hamilton, and the family removed to that town. The circle of society was there much enlarged; and Joanna, who profited in her early youth by all sources of knowledge except books, reaped considerable benefit from the information around her. She has been described by one of her companions at that time as a lively active girl, a great romp, ever happy, and in the full enjoyment of all the liberty which was then usually allowed to children. Her power of invention was beginning to develop itself, and was much remarked. She astonished her young playmates with the multitude of wonderful tales she poured forth, all created at the moment for general amusement, exciting surprise and delight. She was full of merriment and playful trick, was celebrated for the fearlessness with which she ran along the parapets of bridges and the tops of walls, and scampered heedlessly upon any pony she could find. Her fearlessness was the cause of a severe accident which befel her brother. She had

mounted a pony, and invited him to ride behind her; but no sooner was he seated than she started the animal, and her brother falling off suffered a fracture of the arm. She became a proficient in horsemanship, and on one occasion, when riding in advance of her party, a farmer who accompanied them turned round and said, "Look at Miss Jack, she sits her horse as if it was a bit of herself." She possessed, indeed, not only physical but moral courage in the highest degree. This inestimable quality, the parent of truth and guardian of principle, accompanied her through life; enabling her to steer on her noble course, unchecked by opposition, and supporting her in the declaration of any opinion which she considered duty urged her to avow and enforce.

During this time, however, the studies of Joanna at home do not seem to have proceeded with much success, and it was thought that the method and emulation of a school would produce those happy results which domestic instruction had failed to effect. She was accordingly sent about the age of ten with her sister to a boarding-school at Glasgow under the superintendance of Miss Macdonald. She there made much progress in many branches of education. She had a correct ear, learned to play on the guitar, and accompanied it agreeably with her voice. She was taught to draw, and had the talent she possessed for this pursuit been ably cultivated, she would have excelled, as specimens still existing of her early efforts prove. One of the most remarkable characteristics of Joanna during her girlhood, especially when considered in connection with her tardiness of acquirement by reading and her fertility of imagination, was her love for mathematics, and her proficiency in that study. She had always strong powers of reasoning and a clear conception of what she had once mastered, from which qualities of her mind her natural tendency for this science probably in some degree arose, while at the same time these faculties were strengthened through its discipline. By her own unassisted exertions she advanced through a considerable portion of Euclid, and rendered

herself perfect mistress of each succeeding problem.

There was no languor about Joanna. The games of her childhood showed vigour both of mind and body. If unoccupied with study, her intellect was in active operation, and her great power and tendency were soon revealed in mimicry and the representation of character. Children frequently possess much aptitude for this; but there must have been an unusual portion of the talent in Joanna; for she often drew tears from her little audience, whilst at other times they expressed their delight by loud peals of hearty laughter. To the end of her life indeed she related a humorous story with the utmost zest and effect, especially when illustrative of human nature and Scotch manners, which required for due elucidation her native dialect, the peculiar phrases of which she ever loved to recall. This power of effective narration was an accomplishment inherent in the family, for her mother and eminent uncles all possessed it to a great extent. By her influence amongst her young companions dramatic representations were frequently performed. These were chiefly of her own invention, suggested doubtless by the stories and incidents she had heard; of which, especially when displaying any natural impulse or peculiarity of character, her memory, irretentive with regard to many subjects, was tenacious. She was celebrated for the skill with which she contrived upon these occasions the dresses and decorations required, and from materials of the poorest kind. The tragic queen and the exalted heroine were dressed in lappets and flounces congregated from morsels of linen or imitated in paper; but the high and dignified air of the young Joanna, and the susceptible feelings of the audience, made these deficiencies forgotten. Her powers of acting and composition, for the dialogue was invented at the moment, quickened their sensibilities to an extent which at a more advanced period the highest efforts of art would have failed to accomplish, and the tribute of their emotions was freely paid.

In the year 1776, Dr. James Baillie was

appointed Professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow. In the following winter the family removed to the house provided at the college. Intercourse with them was much sought, and Joanna's mind derived new impulse from the society of some of the first men of that period. She had now attained the age of fifteen. It appears that her manners had become more sedate, and that years had passed over her in no respect unprofitably. She was deemed a very correct well-bred young lady, far advanced for her age, clever and well-informed; so much so, that her companions stood rather in awe of her. This respect was not impaired by her propensity for a good game at romps, and even the solemnity of the Divinity Hall did not always repress this exuberance. The best authorities declare also that at this time she was not disinclined to a little controversy, which perhaps the genius of the place in some degree fostered; that she promptly entered the arena, and did not easily forego the conflict. This is highly probable, for to the end of life she was somewhat tenacious of her opinions; and though not disputatious, though gentle and generous with the feebler in intellect, yet, were her convictions challenged in matters open to general discussion, she certainly would not have declined to do battle in their support with the doughtiest champion society could produce. About this period she took up for the first time *Paradise Lost* with the design of reading it throughout, but could not proceed far with the sublime poem. Some few years later *Comus* attracted her attention. She drank it in with delight, and, induced by the pleasure she derived, commenced again the great epic. She then prized it as its grandeur and beauty deserve.

In the year 1778 Joanna lost her father. He was a man of learning, of the highest principles, and was endeared to his wife and children by the utmost kindness and affection, whilst his worth and the esteem in which he was held were manifested by the general sorrow felt at his decease. The widow and daughters immediately retired into deep seclusion at Long Calderwood, in

Lanarkshire, a small estate belonging to Mrs. Baillie's eldest brother, and lived there for nearly six years; but Matthew entered at Baliol College, Oxford, where he remained the usual period, and then proceeded to London to prosecute his medical studies under the auspices of his celebrated uncle, Dr. William Hunter. At Long Calderwood Joanna was again in the midst of beautiful scenery, and renewed her early habit of rambling. She was active and enterprising, loved to wander with her young companions along the rocky banks of the Calder, to watch its rapids, and bathe in its stream. The retirement arising from a scanty neighbourhood and recent affliction threw the family upon their own resources, and reading became an habitual occupation. Joanna soon grew familiar with the best poets, and above-all studied Shakespeare with the greatest enthusiasm. Generally there is a strong desire in those endowed with the poetic temperament to invest the pent-up thought and strong emotion in words, to give those inmates an outward existence which within induce oppression; but the works of others seem to have absorbed all the thoughts of Joanna at this period. Before she left Scotland in 1784 she does not appear to have attempted any composition beyond a humorous poem or song, thrown off in mirth and thought of no more.

Mrs. Baillie, with Agnes and Joanna, passed at Glasgow the winter of 1783, in the course of which year Dr. Hunter died. He was to a considerable extent the founder of the fortunes of his family. He was a profound anatomist, an eloquent lecturer, an accomplished gentleman, and was honoured by the favour and admitted to the society of his sovereign. His brother John, whose genius has often been compared to that of Newton, but who was equally backward with his celebrated niece in acquirement during early life, owed to Dr. Hunter his first introduction to those pursuits by which he afterwards attained a widely extended fame. Dr. Hunter expired at a house in Great Windmill Street, which he had himself built, to which he had attached

an anatomical theatre, lecture-room, and museum; which contained not only many results of physiological research, but also a large collection of coins, many fine pictures, and a valuable library. At his death, the use of this museum was bequeathed to his nephew Matthew Baillie for a term of thirty years, and subsequently in perpetuity to the College of Glasgow, whither it was removed previously to the completion of that term. In addition to this, the small family estate of Long Calderwood was left to Matthew instead of his surviving uncle, who was the natural heir. Matthew, however, with that high honour which ever distinguished him, declined to receive the bequest, though at that time his means were small and the future altogether uncertain. The property was then offered to John Hunter, and continued in his family till it reverted by the death of all his lineal descendants to Matthew's successor. Upon the death of Dr. Hunter, Mrs. Baillie with her daughters proceeded to London to reside in the house then occupied by her son, and continued with him in Great Windmill Street until his union in 1791 with the daughter of Dr. Denman, the father of the venerated and beloved Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench. From this marriage the family ever derived the greatest happiness and comfort.*

In that gloomy house, in that dark and narrow street, the genius of Joanna first wakened into life and energy. The daily sight of her native land and its romantic beauty, the companions of her youth, and the fresh impulses derived from the study of our best authors, had hitherto sufficiently occupied her feelings; but amid scenes, the reverse of those in which she had rejoiced, her heart yearned, her imagination kindled, and poetical feeling took its appropriate form. In the year 1790, she published a volume of

* See Joanna's description of her sister-in-law, page 812 of this volume. She survived Dr. Baillie many years, and died in 1845. She always lived in London, in great retirement after the death of her husband, and passed her exemplary life in offices of affection, benevolence, and charity.

miscellaneous poems.* Appearing anonymously, this work did not at first make any impression; but a friendly article in a review, praising these "truly unsophisticated representations of nature," brought the book into some notice, and gave Joanna confidence in her powers. Notwithstanding the knowledge of human feeling, the acquaintance with external nature, the capacity of delineation in the poems of this small volume, and the praise echoed upon their republication, after a half-century unusually rich in poetry, by some of the chief journals of the period, it must be confessed that the streak of light which then dawned but faintly indicated the day that ensued. Considering, too, how prominently in Joanna the dramatic talent was developed, it is singular this peculiar form of poetic composition did not manifest itself at the earliest period of her efforts, and that the first gush of her genius was not in that channel. The idea of this description of writing, in connection with herself, in this year flashed suddenly on her mind. It was whilst imprisoned by the heat of a summer afternoon, and seated by her mother's side engaged in needlework, that the thought of essaying dramatic composition burst upon her. The first play written in pursuance of this resolution, was a tragedy called *Arnold*, which has been described by a judge certainly not impartial, her sister, as having contained much fine poetry. What was the merit of the work cannot now be known. It must have been of considerable length, for, though probably absorbing all the time and attention Joanna could bestow, it required three months for its completion.

In the year 1798 Joanna published her first volume of Plays on the Passions, containing *Basil*, a tragedy on Love; the *Trial*, a comedy on the same subject; and *De Monfort*, a tragedy on Hatred. This appeared also anonymously, and the author was sought for with avidity among the most gifted personages of the day. It soon became evident, through some peculiarities of expression, that the work proceeded from a native of

Scotland, and a suspicion arose that the mighty minstrel, whose genius at that time broke forth in *Glenfinlas* and the *Eve of St. John*, was the writer. This impression was soon abandoned; and after many great names had been suggested and dismissed, the public was astonished at the acknowledgment of the volume by a lady, still young, unknown to fame, whose life had passed in tranquillity and seclusion. This was the more startling as the speculators had decided that the plays, and especially the preface, must have been written by a man. So convinced were many of this, that after the source of the dramas was placed beyond a doubt, the preface was still declared to manifest a masculine origin, and it was ascribed to the brother of the poetess; an opinion, it is scarcely necessary to remark, groundless. The author of the *Pleasures of Memory* reviewed* this work of Joanna, considering it, along with others, the production of a man, and stated the volume to abound in beautiful passages. This tribute from a gifted mind rendered eminent service to Joanna, whose genius might have been injuriously impressed by the severity of a distinguished periodical, soon after introduced into literary existence. Encouragement, received from the pen of a celebrated poet, did, in the words of Joanna, "enable her to make head against criticism of a very different character;" † and this expression from one of firm mind, tenacious of its convictions, showed how keenly she had felt strictures launched with all the poignancy consummate talent could employ. The friendship which ensued between herself and him, whose praise in time of need had afforded her support and solace, lasted uninterruptedly for more than half a century, and was ranked by her amongst the greatest pleasures and privileges she possessed.

The chief object of Joanna in these plays was to delineate passion in its progress, to trace it from its early beginning, and to show the fearful gulf towards which it

* Fugitive Verses, first part.

* Monthly Review, Sept. 1798.

† Preface to Fugitive Verses.

hastens, if not checked in the earlier portions of its career. She had thus a high moral purpose in her design; which, if the drama can warn and save, will not altogether have been defeated. Joanna's views, as declared in her celebrated preface*, were much canvassed and objected to; but she only intended what has constantly been done by the greatest dramatic poets, and what has been proved by result to be in the highest degree effective. The sole difference between her design and the usual practice of dramatic composers, is, that while they have in most instances selected a story for the striking nature of its details, which rendered the prominence of one master passion necessary, she proposed to render her plots subservient to her main end, the development of one predominant and overruling passion. What with them was casual and subordinate to the general effect, was with her the paramount and fixed object. Her manner of accomplishing her end was the bar to triumph upon the stage. The principle was to be recognised, that from within passion is chiefly supplied with aliment, and that small external stimulant is necessary to its strength. She likewise rejected the aid of splendid event, as obscuring the struggle of passion. In all these opinions she manifested a penetrating and philosophic genius, but displayed views of dramatic composition inconsistent with those effective situations and with that splendour and show, necessary to secure, particularly in large areas, theatrical success.

The Plays on the Passions, then the subject of general discussion in literary circles, attracted the notice of John Kemble; and being struck with the character of *De Monfort*, he resolved to produce the play bearing that name on the stage with some alterations, himself taking the chief part, and allotting that of Jane to his illustrious sister. It was performed in April, 1800, at Drury Lane Theatre, and every effort was made to do justice to the tragedy. The Hon. F. North wrote the prologue, and the Duchess of

Devonshire the epilogue, whilst the scenery and decorations were arranged with the utmost care and without regard to expense. Both John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons liked their parts; but, notwithstanding the impression made by their acting, the play did not become popular on the stage. It was well received the first night, and announced for repetition with much applause; but the receipts at the theatre were not satisfactory, and it ran only eleven nights. The half of her gains Joanna appropriated to charity, a rule to which she ever adhered with regard to all sums derived from her dramas. It is probable that John Kemble and his sister had been present to the mind of Joanna when she composed the tragedy of *De Monfort*. Moulded as they were by nature for the stage; adapted in form, voice, gesture, to produce the greatest theatrical effects, once seen they could scarcely afterwards be absent from the contemplations of the dramatic poet. Certain it is that Mrs. Siddons thought the character of Jane well suited to her talents; and the passage in the play, descriptive of that personage, has been applied to the great actress as the best portrait of her in existence. The authoress and actress were introduced to each other at this period, and the interview was the commencement of a friendship, which continued to the end of life, founded on mutual admiration and esteem. Mrs. Siddons upon this occasion, whilst taking her leave, uttered these parting words: "Make me some more Jane De Monforts."

Among the chief characteristics of Joanna were decision and tenacity of purpose. Once convinced that her own opinion was correct, and the object worthy of attainment, nothing deterred her onward course; and notwithstanding adverse criticism, and the absence of success at the theatre, she continued her exertions for the completion of the plan she had laid down for herself. In the year 1802 she published the second volume of *Plays on the Passions*, consisting of a comedy on *Hatred*, a tragedy on *Ambition* in two parts, and a comedy on the same passion. The first comedy was presented to the public some years after-

* Preface to first volume of *Plays on the Passions*.

wards by Mr. Arnold at the English Opera House; and music was introduced, but sparingly, for the purpose of bringing the play within the restrictions of his license. In this form it was repeated frequently during the season. The tragedy was not adapted to the stage, being too diffuse for such a purpose; but it was acknowledged to contain much skill in the delineation of passion, and poetry of a high order.

About this period, after some changes of abode, Mrs. Baillie and her daughters fixed upon Hampstead as their home, where they remained during the continuance of their lives. They first occupied a house on Red Lion Hill, from which the sisters did not remove until after their mother's death in 1806. Soon afterwards they rented a house in the vicinity of the Heath, and changed not their residence again. That beautiful village has abounded for many years with individuals familiar in name to the world for worth and philanthropy; and though many have passed away to their great reward, the worthy descendants of such are still there to be found. By all these they were surrounded, and with all these they were intimate. By this domestic circle of the highest moral purity, the happiness of life in its mid course was increased; by this were soothed and cheered the infirmities of declining years. Hospitality was pleasant to them; and at their table, arranged with the greatest propriety, under the superintendance of Joanna, were seen many of those distinguished in the world for literature and science*, who were wont to resort thither and hold converse with one, possessing ever an individuality and freshness, equally removed from what is either eccentric or conventional. To the interest pervading that circle, not only did the genius and originality of Joanna, ever ready in acute remark and important discussion, largely contribute;

but the stores of valuable information supplied by her sister were highly appreciated. None, either the greatest or the humblest, admitted within its happy precincts, can ever forget the healthful pleasure and watchful kindness there experienced alike by those most gifted and those most devoid of all claim to peculiar attention. All that Joanna desired in her friends was worth and moral purity. She had too just an estimation of the real value of all earthly distinction, and of her own duty in reference to the highest considerations, to admit of any qualification, however great, as a substitute for good principles and unblemished character.

In the year 1804 Joanna published her first volume of *Miscellaneous Plays*, showing that she was not fettered by the plan she had proposed from composing upon any subject which might strike her imagination; but she distinctly announced in her preface to this work that her opinions, stated in the first volume of her plays, remained unchanged. The *Miscellaneous Plays* included the two tragedies, *Rayner* and *Constantine Paleologus*. The first of these had been completed at an early period of her literary career, but was re-written to a considerable extent previously to publication. It turns on the crime of murder, a crime Joanna has often introduced as the foundation and catastrophe of her plays. It must be remembered, in reference to this, that the material for dramatic composition is more limited to a woman than to a man. Besides which, minds are liable to be struck in the greatest degree with those acts most in opposition to their own nature; and what chiefly creates emotion in themselves they will consider most likely to produce a similar effect in others. When the instinctive horror, implanted in man to guard him from bloodshed, is overwhelmed, all restrictions are relaxed, and the force of passion manifests itself to an unequalled extent. No test therefore is so strong as this crime for displaying the recesses of a soul when overthrown, and no subject affords matter more various and powerful to the dramatic poet.

Almost all Joanna's plays were entirely

* The friends, the acquaintance, and correspondents of Joanna Baillie, included a large portion of the most eminent of her contemporaries. To mention some names would be the invidious omission of many.

the products of her own invention; and Constantine Paleologus is remarkable in the history of our author as being an exception to this rule, for it is founded on Gibbon's description of the siege of Constantinople by the Turks. As Joanna stated in her preface, the passage struck her imagination so forcibly, and interested her feelings so warmly, that, though at the time she read it she had no design of immediate composition, the subject would, of necessity, be written upon. It is not, however, entirely taken from history. The imagination of the poet bodied forth new shapes and forms. Three of the characters only had real existence, namely, Constantine, Mahomet, and Justiniani. The remainder, including Valeria, so conspicuous for her lofty and beautiful spirit, were creations of Joanna's fancy. There was no wife of Constantine to be portrayed, or elevated and embellished into tragic dignity. This play was written with a view to its performance at one of the largest theatres, and the two principal characters were designed for John Kemble and his sister; but, influenced perhaps by former failure, they declined to produce it on the stage. Though untried in the larger London theatres, many conversant with these matters were convinced that its interest and beauty, mingled with so much of stirring event, rendered it likely to impress an audience. It was produced at the Surrey Theatre as a melodrama, under the title of Constantine and Valeria. It was acted likewise at Liverpool, and at Edinburgh in 1820, where the authoress, then paying a short and last visit to her native land, had the satisfaction of witnessing its success; for the house was full in every part, and the effect on those present was great. This play was also performed at Dublin in 1825 with much of that splendour and pageantry which the drama admits of, and indeed demands. It was repeated there on many occasions, and the audience were liberal of their applause, whilst the press of that city descanted much on the beauty of the composition and the genius of the author.

In the autumn of 1806 the sisters had

the misfortune to lose their mother. Mrs. Baillie was possessed of great decision of character, and was ever actuated by the highest principles, which seconded precept by example, and contributed much to form the high moral nature of her children. She had been blind some years previously to her death. She had suffered also a paralytic seizure, and had been watched day and night by the sisters; but Joanna, being more able to bear the want of sleep, was most in attendance. These circumstances had bound the sisters to one spot; but, after this event, change of scene was required, and in the following year they visited Scotland, the recollections of which country ever filled their minds, and the accents of which they ever distinctively retained. They first resorted to the scenes where they had passed their early days, and had the good fortune to find many of their dearest friends, the companions of their youth, still living. The remembrance of Joanna as she left Scotland was fresh upon the minds of these; her image there had undergone no change, and they were much impressed by her altered appearance. The expression of her countenance, once so animated, now shaded with melancholy, was highly indicative of sensibility; and her vivacity had given place to a mild seriousness, which inclined her to take little share in conversation, when in the company of strangers. She had left Scotland wholly unimportant. She returned to it possessed of widely extended fame, holding a high station among British poets, and shedding lustre upon her native land. Her society was much sought. All were ambitious of being acquainted with her, of being addressed by her, and it was expected she would take the lead upon all occasions. The good sense and modesty of Joanna prevented her from gratifying these expectations, and on this account many complained of coldness in her manner. With her friends, all reserve vanished. She was the same warm-hearted pleasant companion she had ever been, enjoyed to the uttermost her intercourse with them, and ever delighted to recall the habits and incidents of

early days. The sisters visited the most picturesque scenes of the Western Highlands; and never did any one derive more enjoyment than Joanna from the grandeur and sublimity there to be found. More than all, she admired the falls of Moness near Taymouth, which were then swelled by heavy rains. She shed tears whilst she gazed on the torrent, and would not quit its precincts for an hour, though drenched with the rain, which descended heavily during the whole time she was in the glen. She also took every opportunity of entering the Highland huts, and observing the manners and habits of the inmates. In the spring of the following year the sisters visited Edinburgh, and were received with the greatest attention by all those most eminent for influence and ability. The excitement of association with such persons, together with the cordial kindness Joanna experienced, lessened her reserve, and she became popular in the highly intellectual society then and ever to be found in the northern metropolis.

Mingling with the most distinguished for station and intellect, Joanna frequently met the celebrated editor of the Edinburgh Review, the chief arbiter of fame, whose multifarious criticism, so justly dreaded by literary aspirants, was marked by the greatest acuteness and talent. He was very desirous of being presented to Joanna; but in vain did friends of both parties, among whom the Duchess of Gordon was prominent, strive to effect an introduction. Joanna was inexorable. She thought Mr. Jeffrey responsible for those articles which, at an earlier period, at a crisis of her career, had given her much pain and caused great disadvantage to her works. She considered them written with a desire to exalt the fame of the critic and the popularity of the periodical, without due regard to justice and propriety of feeling. She declined the intended honour in the most conclusive manner; assigning as a reason, that if acquaintance were to take place, the critic might not feel himself at liberty to give full vent to his opinions regarding her future productions, and that she

was unwilling to deprecate any severity of judgment he might consider it his duty to enforce. At a subsequent period all difficulties were removed, and the formidable editor, whose connection with the political world drew him often to London, was a frequent and welcome visitor at Joanna's home.

The friendship of so illustrious a man as Walter Scott is too important an event in the life of any individual, however eminent, to be unnoticed, even in a memoir necessarily condensed like that now under consideration. All the great poets, contemporaries of Joanna, highly estimated her genius. Most of them frequented her abode; and Byron and Campbell, and others of that distinguished band, have recorded their high appreciation of her works. Scott threw into his admiration and attachment for Joanna the generous warmth and chivalrous feeling prominent in his character; and after their introduction by Mr. Sotheby, conspicuous for worth and talent, in 1806, a friendship and affectionate intimacy arose between them, which never ceased till death cut asunder the intercourse. Whilst in Scotland, the sisters remained some time in the house of Mr. Scott in Edinburgh; and when he visited London in the following year, he left his eldest daughter with them at Hampstead. During separation their correspondence was frequent, and when opportunity offered he was as often with them as his numerous engagements would permit. He enjoyed greatly the shrewdness, originality, and elevated tone of feeling which pervaded Joanna's mind; and pronounced her to be "the highest genius of our country." During the stay of the sisters in Scotland, Scott's spirit-stirring and immortal poem of *Marmion* first appeared; and Joanna, who appreciated his works as amongst the greatest literary glories of her own or any other nation, was reading to a circle of friends for the first time this signal triumph of his genius. She came suddenly upon the following lines:—

"Or if to touch such chord be thine,
Restore the ancient tragic line,

And emulate the notes that rung
 From the wild harp, that silent hung,
 By silver Avon's holy shore
 'Till twice an hundred years rolled o'er;
 When she the bold enchantress came
 With fearless hand and heart in flame!
 From the pale willow snatched the treasure,
 And swept it with a kindred measure,
 Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
 With Monfort's hate and Basil's love,
 Awakening at the inspired strain,
 Deemed their own Shakespeare lived again."

Deeply as Joanna must have felt, from a source which she prized above all others, a tribute of such beauty and power, which could not fail to enhance the fame of the most eminent, she read the passage firmly to the end; and only displayed a want of self-command when the emotion of a friend who was present became uncontrollable.

At the beginning of the year 1810 Joanna's play of the Family Legend was brought upon the Edinburgh stage with considerable effect. Mr. Henry Siddons had become the manager of the theatre, whilst Scott was a shareholder and one of the acting trustees for the general body of the proprietors. The first play produced under this management was Joanna's drama; and Walter Scott, ever warmly interested in the success of a friend, exerted himself in the cause. He wrote the prologue, and the author of the Man of Feeling the epilogue. The play had a run of fourteen nights continuously, and was acted on subsequent occasions.* Some alteration was made in the names of the characters at the suggestion of Mr. Scott. Knowing the strong feelings of pride and clanship which had existed amongst Highlanders, and which had not by any means become extinct, he suggested that the title of Duart, the name of the property of the Macleans, should be substituted for that the chief actually bore. The name of the clan was changed to that of Clangillian. The

success which attended the performance of the Family Legend, induced the managers to bring forward in the same season the play of De Monfort. In that comparatively small theatre, the causes and development of the fatal passion were more clear, the force and beauty of the language more prominent. Mr. Henry Siddons sustained the chief character, Mr. Terry that of Rezenvelt; and though the part of Jane was not so well supported, the play met with much success. In the words of an eye-witness, "the effect produced was very great; there was a burst of applause when the curtain fell, and the play was announced for repetition amid the loudest applause."

In the year 1812, in the prosecution of her original plan, Joanna published her third volume of Plays on the Passions, containing two tragedies and a comedy on the unpromising subject of Fear, with a musical drama on Hope. The tragedies were much admired for their skilful representation of character, as well as for their poetical merit; and the latter drama was allowed on all hands to possess the highest beauty. It contained many of those lyrical compositions which are to be found scattered through Joanna's plays, and some of which have been set to music. They are acknowledged to possess a peculiar charm, and are not unlike those fresh and sparkling effusions to be found in Shakespeare's plays in similar form. The characters of Orra and Aurora attracted much notice: they suggest many of the peculiarities of Joanna's heroines; they are full of high honour and noble sentiment; they are not cold abstract images, but are instinct with life. Though capable of the greatest sacrifices and noblest exertions, they are endowed with playfulness and variety, and are recognised as beings not altogether unfamiliar to observation; who, if seen, must have been the objects of affection as well as admiration. Many of them recall the following lines of Wordsworth:—

* The Family Legend was performed for the benefit of Mrs. Bartley at Drury Lane Theatre in 1815, and De Monfort was revived by Mr. Kean on the same stage in 1821; but neither play had success.

"I saw her upon nearer view,
 A spirit, yet a woman too!
 Her household motions light and free,
 And steps of virgin liberty;

A countenance in which did meet
 Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
 A creature not too bright and good
 For human nature's daily food ;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles."

No circumstance of general interest now occurred in regard to Joanna for some years ; but in 1820, being advanced in life, and desirous of once more visiting the land of her birth, where many of the friends of her youth still remained, she with her sister proceeded to Scotland with the intention of never afterwards returning thither again. They shared the liberal hospitality of Sir Walter Scott, at Abbotsford, for some time, but nothing further worthy of remark occurred. This visit seems to have excited the early associations of the poet, and to have kindled her imagination ; for during the following year she published the *Metrical Legends*, in one of which Wallace is the chief personage, and in another *Lady Griselda Baillie*. The same volume contained several ballads, composed after the ancient model, of high interest and great dramatic effect. Two years subsequently she edited a collection of poems from various sources for the benefit of some intimate friends who had been unfortunate. By her influence and name, as well as by those of the contributors, many of whom were highly distinguished in the literary world, she realised a larger sum than such efforts usually accumulate, and secured a small independence for those she desired to assist. She supplied some short compositions of her own, which are to be found among the *Miscellaneous Poetry of the present volume*.

In 1823 Joanna lost her brother, whose guilelessness of character, whose perfect integrity and generous disposition had secured for him the highest esteem in the public mind, and in private life the warmest affection as well as the most implicit confidence. Joanna manifested the deepest grief in witnessing his decline, and attended him day and night with the utmost solicitude. He died in the bosom of his family at his seat in Gloucestershire, and the firmness of Joanna, combined with her tenderness and

sympathy, rendered great service to her sister-in-law amid her severe affliction. They had every consolation in the public sorrow. The profession felt that Dr. Baillie not only had advanced it by his knowledge and skill, but had elevated it by his moral worth. They paid him, in addition to that grief which passeth show, the unusual tribute of a record in Westminster Abbey ; to which, the highest monumental honour this country can bestow, the most eminent as well as the humblest of his own profession contributed.

The deep feeling of devotion, which ever abided with Joanna, was manifested in a dramatic poem, entitled the *Martyr*, which first appeared before the public in 1826, though it had been composed some years previously. The friend of Joanna may point to this drama, full of beautiful poetry and sentiments worthy of its title, and assert with undoubting conviction, that whatever her abstract opinions might be in reference to one most important doctrine, her piety was sincere and profound. She affords another proof that poetical inspiration is akin to religion, and that for both states of mind elevation of the soul is required. The strong impressions on divine subjects with which she was imbued, seem at this period of her life to have acted upon her with more than usual power ; and deeming that her advanced age gave her some title to announce her opinions, she resolved upon a publication referring to one of the greatest mysteries of our faith. It was entitled, "A View of the general Tenor of the New Testament regarding the Nature and Dignity of Jesus Christ," and was published in 1831. In this she professed views similar to those of Milton, but did not introduce any new matter into the controversy.

Joanna, having found that the performance of her plays on the stage was not likely to be realised, had resolved not to publish any more of her dramatic works. She had not, however, repressed her genius, or abandoned the pleasure of composition, but had amassed a considerable number of dramas, partly in continuation of her original plan, and partly on miscellaneous subjects. These

she had intended should be first published after her decease, with directions that they should be then offered to the smaller theatres for representation; but considering, as time advanced, that the condition of the stage was not encouraging, she resolved to publish at once all she had completed, and they appeared in three volumes in 1836. The first three of these dramas were in continuation of her original plan. A tragedy and comedy illustrated the passion of Jealousy, and a tragedy that of Remorse. These concluded the Plays on the Passions; and, in defiance of difficulties and obstacles, she had now fulfilled through all its extent the intention she had formed at the commencement of her course. The tragedies were much admired, though the principal character of the first gave rise to much criticism, on the ground that the great proneness to jealousy therein exhibited was inconsistent with interest and the dignity of tragic delineation*; but the last attracted universal admiration, and was by many esteemed equal to any of her compositions. The Miscellaneous Plays in these volumes were also allowed to contain merit of the highest order. Peculiar circumstances attended upon two of these; namely, the Martyr, which had before appeared, and another drama of great beauty, then first published, entitled the Bride. Sir Alexander Johnston, Chief Justice of Ceylon, who had employed the influence of his important station for the highest purposes in that island, and who had established native juries as a part of its legal procedure, thought that the mind of the inhabitants might be raised, and some of their vices eradicated, by writings directed to that end, and looked to the drama as a well-adapted form for the endeavour. Joanna's Martyr struck him as well suited for the object he had in view. He requested of her another drama, and The Bride was the result. They were both translated into the Cingalese language.

Notwithstanding the disclaimer by the author of all intentions that any of these plays should be performed on the stage, the universal impression existed that some amongst them would produce great theatrical effect. Not only were many skilled in composition of this opinion, but the same conclusion was formed by those most conversant with dramatic representation. The critic called upon the actor, and the actor responded to the appeal. Two of the dramas were brought out simultaneously at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, though these theatres at the time were under different management. One Kemble of the unrivalled race remained, marked but not marred by time, and gave full effect to the character of Garcio in the Separation at the former house; whilst at the latter the tragedy of Henriquez was acted, Mr. Vandenhoff representing the chief personage. Both these plays had partial success; but in their comparative failure a proof was afforded, that even those most experienced in theatrical management cannot always pronounce upon what is calculated to affect an audience powerfully. It was shown, therefore, that the dramatic author, unaided by constant observation of the stage, must have almost insurmountable difficulties to contend with. Joanna, unmarried, leading a life of retirement, could but rarely find opportunities of attending the theatre; and if, by the force of genius alone, unsustained by study of the stage, unquickenened by frequent communication with those most cognizant of the means of success, she had achieved great theatrical popularity, she would have been indeed marvellous. It must be remembered, also, that all she did was her own, that no one owed less to the productions or to the suggestions of others. She combined her own conceptions by the force of her imagination, and wrought them out by her own unaided powers. Confident in her genius, resolved that all her triumph should arise from herself, that she would owe nothing to adventitious sources, she often repelled valuable advice to her own disadvantage. She gained by this, however, as well as lost; for though diminution of suc-

* Joanna replied to these criticisms in the number of Fraser's Magazine published in December, 1836.

cess in reference to theatrical representation, and some errors of composition, might result from self-reliance, her works retain thereby a freshness and originality they would not otherwise have possessed.

The reputation of Joanna had now expanded far beyond the boundaries of her own country. Not only did the most eminent in her native land seek introductions to her, but from other realms her visitors were not few. She was, however, most popular in the United States of America, where the high estimation in which her writings were held caused a correspondence to arise between herself and many of that enterprising and powerful nation. With Dr. Channing her communications were frequent, as well as with many other individuals in that country, distinguished also, but of less general reputation beyond its confines. She was much gratified by receiving a testimony that her genius had penetrated to distant portions of that vast territory, in the form of a diploma, constituting her a member of the Michigan Historical Society.

The next publication of Joanna, of a very inferior description to the arduous species of composition by which she is chiefly celebrated, possesses this interest, that more than all the rest it reveals herself, her simplicity, her generous spirit, and the warm affections of her heart. Much appears of herself in her dramas, through the intervention of fictitious personages; but in the volume entitled *Fugitive Verses*, the sentiments come direct from herself. This collection consists of the poems with which she commenced her career, and others redolent of the associations of youth; while many of later dates embody those affections for relations and friends, which the engrossing nature of her pursuits, the excitement of celebrity, and the anxieties of connection with public life, had never superseded or diminished. Some of the verses display a minute observation of the sportive ways of children, resulting much from that fondness for them which characterised Joanna. It is remarkable that several of these poems were written when the author

had nearly completed fourscore years of earthly pilgrimage. Her intellect had not grown dim, and her heart was unchilled, as the tenderest emotions manifest. Of all, however, in the volume, the lines which have most claim upon the feelings, are those which are addressed to her sister, the generous, affectionate, cheering friend, the high-spirited and cultivated woman, who had been the partner of her joys and cares from her cradle; to look upon whom was to view her own past existence, to recall another self, one who had in equal measure shared every change, grief, anxiety, and triumph. One more poem at a still more advanced period of her life was added to her works, entitled *Ahalya Bae*, printed originally for private circulation, and subsequently first published in the present volume.

The life of Joanna Baillie, passed in retirement during youth and middle age, became more secluded in its latter portion. The hospitality ceased as the weakness of age advanced; as the grey deep-set eye lost its fire; as the whitening hair, ever simply parted, now scantier, showed more plainly the fine forehead and brow; as the delicate form, below the middle size, became shrunk and more fragile. One day was like another, passed in the performance of the duties of life; in the receiving and reciprocating of kindness as far as possible, and in preparation for that hour which at last arrived. On Saturday, the day preceding that of her death, which occurred Feb. 23, 1851, Joanna expressed a strong desire to be released from life. She retired to bed as usual, complained of some uneasiness, and sank till the following afternoon; when, without suffering, in the full possession of her faculties, with sorrowing relations around her, in the act of devotion, she expired.

The memoir of Joanna Baillie, of which the history of her works forms necessarily an essential part, has rendered some general remarks upon their contents and nature necessary. No detailed criticism has, however, been attempted, which would be superfluous, since Joanna's most distinguished competitors have recorded their admiration of

her writings, while the most eminent critics have, with elaborate discrimination, delineated their chief characteristics, and done homage to their originality, vigour, comprehensiveness, purity, and poetical beauty.* Though a woman, though surrounded by the most disadvantageous circumstances for success in dramatic composition, not even aided by that enlargement of being which marriage may confer, unquickenened by much intercourse with the world, uninformed by personal knowledge of the busy scenes of life, unaided by frequent study of the stage, these indisputable judges have placed her high amongst the high. It is a still deeper gratification to her friends to feel, that, even if she had not possessed the gift of genius, her moral excellence would have assured her the greatest respect and affection wherever she might have been known.

Among the prominent features of the character of Joanna Baillie was the most consummate integrity. Not only would an act, dubious in respect of honour, have been impossible to her; but words which savoured in the most distant manner of craft or duplicity would never have dared to present themselves to her pure and elevated mind. She possessed the highest and most sustained moral courage. Once persuaded that a course was right, either in reference to morality, or the enforcement of abstract opinion, she would, in defiance of all opposition, undaunted by sneers, sarcasm, misconception, or misrepresentation, have pursued her end with unflinching resolution. She was wholly without affectation. No one ever claimed less deference, or externally was more free from the profession of an author. She had all the simplicity of greatness. Her imagination, so powerful and excursive, was under the dominion of her intellect and principles. Her impulses never for a moment swayed her from the path she considered right. Her absorb-

ing pursuits, of a tendency to render repulsive the ordinary concerns of life, never interfered with the performance of daily duties. She deemed not that the highest gifts gave privilege to neglect the obligations laid upon all without exception, or to withhold kindness from the least endowed of mankind. The general admiration of her genius never disturbed for a moment the perfect singleness of her mind and character; never excited her soul above its usual serene condition; nor did the weight and poignancy of public attack ever depress her below a just estimation of her powers. Though she was not without ambition; though not insensible to the homage she received from many, from those whose praise was glory; though her heart might kindle at Scott's designation of her as "the immortal Joanna," thoughts and feelings of the highest nature were so familiar to her mind as to keep the things of this world subordinate. She lived ever as before the Omniscient. Looking to Him for guidance and approval, the elevation and purity of her spirit were unalterable. The lowness and coarseness of vice would have repelled her without reference to its sin. She never sacrificed principle directly or indirectly. The admission of any substitute for moral worth was by her unflinchingly opposed. She despised none, but the essentially unworthy of esteem. Charity, as far as her own means, sufficient for little more than a full measure of the comforts of life, could supply, never failed. She was faithful and devoted as a friend. No caprice ever swayed her affections. They were neither gained nor lost without a cause. They were deep and full, like all the other qualities she possessed; whilst the great capacities of her intellect and the habitual tone of her feelings rendered impossible vanity and the smaller emotions of the mind. She was irreproachably good, and she was great. These are strong expressions, but the friends of Joanna Baillie may challenge the world to impugn their truth.

The high qualities of Joanna Baillie were sustained by her strong sense of religion;

* As the criticisms here alluded to appeared always soon after the publication of the original works, and as the dates of these have been given, a reference to the articles is easy.

which, like all other impressions permanently adopted by her, was deeply rooted in her heart. It was woven with every sentiment of her soul. Her admiration of the character of Jesus Christ was boundless, and she considered this as sufficient of itself to establish the truth of the Christian Revelation. She often alluded to her undoubting faith,

which was firmly built upon the irrefutable evidence frequently studied by her. It maintained through a long life her morality and purity at the highest point. It governed each thought, word, and act. It strengthened her to bear with cheerful courage and serenity the infirmities of age, and attended her on the bed of death.

THE
WORKS
OF
JOANNA BAILLIE.

A SERIES OF PLAYS:
IN WHICH IT IS ATTEMPTED
TO DELINEATE THE STRONGER PASSIONS OF THE MIND;
EACH PASSION BEING THE SUBJECT OF A TRAGEDY AND A COMEDY.

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

It is natural for a writer, who is about to submit his works to the Public, to feel a strong inclination, by some Preliminary Address, to conciliate the favour of his reader, and dispose him, if possible, to peruse them with a favourable eye. I am well aware, however, that his endeavours are generally fruitless: in his situation our hearts revolt from all appearance of confidence, and we consider his diffidence as hypocrisy. Our own word is frequently taken for what we say of ourselves, but very rarely for what we say of our works. Were the three plays which this small volume* contains, detached pieces only, and unconnected with others that do not yet appear, I should have suppressed this inclination altogether; and have allowed my reader to begin what is before him, and to form what opinion of it his taste or his humour might direct, without any previous trespass upon his time or his patience. But they are part of an extensive design: of one which, as far as my information goes, has nothing exactly similar to it in any language; of one which a whole life's time will be limited enough to accomplish; and which has, therefore, a considerable chance of being cut short by that hand which nothing can resist.

Before I explain the plan of this work, I must

* The first volume of the former editions.

make a demand upon the patience of my reader, whilst I endeavour to communicate to him those ideas regarding human nature, as they in some degree affect almost every species of moral writings, but particularly the Dramatic, that induced me to attempt it; and, as far as my judgment enabled me to apply them, has directed me in the execution of it.

From that strong sympathy which most creatures, but the human above all, feel for others of their kind, nothing has become so much an object of man's curiosity as man himself. We are all conscious of this within ourselves, and so constantly do we meet with it in others, that, like every circumstance of continually repeated occurrence, it thereby escapes observation. Every person who is not deficient in intellect, is more or less occupied in tracing among the individuals he converses with, the varieties of understanding and temper which constitute the characters of men; and receives great pleasure from every stroke of nature that points out to him those varieties. This is, much more than we are aware of, the occupation of children, and of grown people also, whose penetration is but lightly esteemed; and that conversation which degenerates with them into trivial and mischievous tattling, takes its rise not unfrequently from the same source that supplies the rich vein of the satirist and the wit. That eagerness so universally shown for the conversation of the latter, plainly enough indicates how many people have been occupied in the same way with

themselves. Let any one, in a large company, do or say what is strongly expressive of his peculiar character, or of some passion or humour of the moment, and it will be detected by almost every person present. How often may we see a very stupid countenance animated with a smile, when the learned and the wise have betrayed some native feature of their own minds! and how often will this be the case when they have supposed it to be concealed under a very sufficient disguise! From this constant employment of their minds, most people, I believe, without being conscious of it, have stored up in idea the greater part of those strongly marked varieties of human character, which may be said to divide it into classes; and in one of those classes they involuntarily place every new person they become acquainted with.

I will readily allow that the dress and the manners of men, rather than their characters and dispositions, are the subjects of our common conversation, and seem chiefly to occupy the multitude. But let it be remembered that it is much easier to express our observations upon these. It is easier to communicate to another how a man wears his wig and cane, what kind of house he inhabits, and what kind of table he keeps, than from what slight traits in his words and actions we have been led to conceive certain impressions of his character: traits that will often escape the memory, when the opinions that were founded upon them remain. Besides, in communicating our ideas of the characters of others we are often called upon to support them with more expense of reasoning than we can well afford; but our observations on the dress and appearance of men seldom involve us in such difficulties. For these, and other reasons too tedious to mention, the generality of people appear to us more trifling than they are: and I may venture to say, that, but for this sympathetic curiosity towards others of our kind which is so strongly implanted within us, the attention we pay to the dress and manners of men would dwindle into an employment as insipid, as examining the varieties of plants and minerals is to one who understands not natural history.

In our ordinary intercourse with society, this sympathetic propensity of our minds is exercised upon men under the common occurrences of life, in which we have often observed them. Here, vanity and weakness put themselves forward to view, more conspicuously than the virtues; here, men encounter those smaller trials, from which they are not apt to come off victorious; and here, consequently, that which is marked with the whimsical and ludicrous will strike us most forcibly, and make the strongest

impression on our memory. To this sympathetic propensity of our minds, so exercised, the genuine and pure comic of every composition, whether drama, fable, story, or satire, is addressed.

If man is an object of so much attention to man, engaged in the ordinary occurrences of life, how much more does he excite his curiosity and interest when placed in extraordinary situations of difficulty and distress? It cannot be any pleasure we receive from the sufferings of a fellow-creature which attracts such multitudes of people to a public execution, though it is the horror we conceive for such a spectacle that keeps so many more away. To see a human being bearing himself up under such circumstances, or struggling with the terrible apprehensions which such a situation impresses, must be the powerful incentive that makes us press forward to behold what we shrink from, and wait with trembling expectation for what we dread.* For though few at such a spectacle can get near enough to distinguish the expression of face, or the minuter parts of a criminal's behaviour, yet from a considerable distance will they eagerly mark whether he steps firmly; whether the motions of his body denote agitation or calmness; and if the wind does but ruffle his garment, they will, even from that change upon the outline of his distant figure, read some expression connected with his dreadful situation. Though there is a greater proportion of people in whom this strong curiosity will be overcome by other dispositions and motives; though there are many more who will stay away from such a sight than will go to it; yet there are very few who will not be eager to converse with a person who has beheld it; and to learn, very minutely, every circumstance connected with it, except the very act itself of inflicting death. To lift up the roof of his dungeon, like the *Diable boiteux*, and look upon a criminal the night before he suffers, in his still hours of privacy, when all that disguise is removed which is imposed by respect for the opinion of others, the strong motive by which even the lowest and wickedest of men still continue to be actuated, would present an object to the mind of every person, not withheld from it by great timidity of character, more powerfully attractive than almost any other.

Revenge, no doubt, first began among the savages of America that dreadful custom of sacrificing their prisoners of war. But the perpetration of such hideous cruelty could never have become a permanent national custom, but for this universal desire in the human mind to behold man in every situation, putting forth his strength against the current of adversity, scorning all bodily anguish, or struggling

* In confirmation of this opinion I may venture to say, that of the great numbers who go to see a public execution, there are but very few who would not run away from, and avoid it, if they happened to meet with it unexpectedly. We find people stopping to look at a procession, or any other un-

common sight they may have fallen in with accidentally, but almost never an execution. No one goes there who has not made up his mind for the occasion; which would not be the case, if any natural love of cruelty were the cause of such assemblies.

with those feelings of nature which, like a beating stream, will oftentimes burst through the artificial barriers of pride. Before they begin those terrible rites they treat their prisoners kindly; and it cannot be supposed that men, alternately enemies and friends to so many neighbouring tribes, in manners and appearance like themselves, should so strongly be actuated by a spirit of public revenge. This custom, therefore, must be considered (as a grand and terrible game) which every tribe plays against another; where they try not the strength of the arm, the swiftness of the feet, nor the acuteness of the eye, but the fortitude of the soul. Considered in this light, the excess of cruelty exercised upon their miserable victim, in which every hand is described as ready to inflict its portion of pain, and every head ingenious in the contrivance of it, is no longer to be wondered at. To put into his measure of misery one agony less, would be, in some degree, betraying the honour of their nation, would be doing a species of injustice to every hero of their own tribe who had already sustained it, and to those who might be called upon to do so; among whom each of these savage tormentors has his chance of being one, and has prepared himself for it from his childhood. Nay, it would be a species of injustice to the haughty victim himself, who would scorn to purchase his place among the heroes of his nation at an easier price than his undaunted predecessors.

Amongst the many trials to which the human mind is subjected, that of holding intercourse, real or imaginary, with the world of spirits: of finding itself alone with a being terrific and awful, whose nature and power are unknown, has been justly considered as one of the most severe. The workings of nature in this situation, we all know, have ever been the object of our most eager inquiry. No man wishes to see the Ghost himself, which would certainly procure him the best information on the subject, but every man wishes to see one who believes that he sees it, in all the agitation and wildness of that species of terror. To gratify this curiosity how many people have dressed up hideous apparitions to frighten the timid and superstitious, and have done it at the risk of destroying their happiness or understanding for ever. For the instances of intellect being destroyed by this kind of trial are more numerous, perhaps, in proportion to the few who have undergone it, than by any other.

How sensible are we of this strong propensity within us, when we behold any person under the pressure of great and uncommon calamity! Delicacy and respect for the afflicted will, indeed, make us turn ourselves aside from observing him, and cast down our eyes in his presence; but the first glance we direct to him will involuntarily be one of the keenest observation, how hastily soever it may be checked; and often will a returning look of inquiry mix itself by stealth with our sympathy and reserve.

But it is not in situations of difficulty and distress alone, that man becomes the object of this sympathetic curiosity: he is no less so when the evil he contends with arises in his own breast, and no outward circumstance connected with him either awakens our attention or our pity. What human creature is there, who can behold a being like himself under the violent agitation of those passions which all have, in some degree, experienced, without feeling himself most powerfully excited by the sight? I say, all have experienced: for the bravest man on earth knows what fear is as well as the coward; and will not refuse to be interested for one under the dominion of this passion, provided there be nothing in the circumstances attending it to create contempt. Anger is a passion that attracts less sympathy than any other, yet the displeasing and distorted features of an angry man will be more eagerly gazed upon by those who are no wise concerned with his fury, or the objects of it, than the most amiable placid countenance in the world. Every eye is directed to him; every voice hushed to silence in his presence: even children will leave off their gambols as he passes, and gaze after him more eagerly than the gaudiest equipage. The wild tossings of despair; the gnashing of hatred and revenge; the yearnings of affection, and the softened mien of love; all the language of the agitated soul, which every age and nation understand, is never addressed to the dull or inattentive.

It is not merely under the violent agitations of passion, that man so rouses and interests us; even the smallest indications of an unquiet mind, the restless eye, the muttering lip, the half-checked exclamation and the hasty start, will set our attention as anxiously upon the watch, as the first distant flashes of a gathering storm. When some great explosion of passion bursts forth, and some consequent catastrophe happens, if we are at all acquainted with the unhappy perpetrator, how minutely shall we endeavour to remember every circumstance of his past behaviour! and with what avidity shall we seize upon every recollected word or gesture, that is in the smallest degree indicative of the supposed state of his mind, at the time when they took place. If we are not acquainted with him, how eagerly shall we listen to similar recollections from another! Let us understand, from observation or report, that any person harbours in his breast, concealed from the world's eye, some powerful rankling passion of what kind soever it may be, we shall observe every word, every motion, every look, even the distant gait of such a man, with a constancy and attention bestowed upon no other. Nay, should we meet him unexpectedly on our way, a feeling will pass across our minds as though we found ourselves in the neighbourhood of some secret and fearful thing. If invisible, would we not follow him into his lonely haunts, into his closet, into the midnight silence of

his chamber? There is, perhaps, no employment which the human mind will with so much avidity pursue, as the discovery of concealed passion, as the tracing the varieties and progress of a perturbed soul.

It is to this sympathetic curiosity of our nature, exercised upon mankind in great and trying occasions, and under the influence of the stronger passions, when the grand, the generous, and the terrible attract our attention far more than the base and depraved, that the high and powerfully tragic, of every composition, is addressed.

This propensity is universal. Children begin to show it very early; it enters into many of their amusements, and that part of them too, for which they show the keenest relish. It oftentimes tempts them, as well as the mature in years, to be guilty of tricks, vexations, and cruelty; (yet GOD ALMIGHTY has implanted it within us, as well as all our other propensities and passions, for wise and good purposes.) It is our best and most powerful instructor. From it we are taught the proprieties and decencies of ordinary life, and are prepared for distressing and difficult situations. In examining others we know ourselves. With limbs untorn, with head unsmitten, with senses unimpaired by despair, we know what we ourselves might have been on the rack, on the scaffold, and in the most afflicting circumstances of distress. Unless when accompanied with passions of the dark and malevolent kind, we cannot well exercise this disposition without becoming more just, more merciful, more compassionate; and as the dark and malevolent passions are not the predominant inmates of the human breast, it hath produced more deeds—O many more! of kindness than of cruelty. It holds up for our example a standard of excellence, which, without its assistance, our inward consciousness of what is right and becoming might never have dictated. It teaches us, also, to respect ourselves, and our kind; for it is a poor mind, indeed, that from this employment of its faculties, learns not to dwell upon the noble view of human nature rather than the mean.

Universal, however, as this disposition undoubtedly is, with the generality of mankind it occupies itself in a passing and superficial way. Though a native trait of character or of passion is obvious to them as well as to the sage, yet to their minds it is but the visitor of a moment; they look upon it singly and unconnected; and though this disposition, even so exercised, brings instruction as well as amusement, it is chiefly by storing up in their minds those ideas to which the instructions of others refer, that it can be eminently useful. Those who reflect and reason upon what human nature holds out to their observation, are comparatively but few. No stroke of nature which engages their attention stands insulated and alone. Each presents itself to them with many varied connections; and they comprehend not merely the immediate feeling which gave rise to

it, but the relation of that feeling to others which are concealed. We wonder at the changes and caprices of men; they see in them nothing but what is natural and accountable. We stare upon some dark catastrophe of passion, as the Indians did upon an eclipse of the moon; they, conceiving the track of ideas through which the impassioned mind has passed, regard it like the philosopher who foretold the phenomenon. Knowing what situation of life he is about to be thrown into, they perceive in the man, who, like Hazael, says, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" the foul and ferocious murderer. A man of this contemplative character partakes, in some degree, of the entertainment of the Gods, who were supposed to look down upon this world and the inhabitants of it, as we do upon a theatrical exhibition; and if he is of a benevolent disposition, a good man struggling with, and triumphing over adversity, will be to him, also, the most delightful spectacle. But though this eagerness to observe their fellow-creatures in every situation, leads not the generality of mankind to reason and reflect; and those strokes of nature which they are so ready to remark, stand single and unconnected in their minds; yet they may be easily induced to do both: and there is no mode of instruction which they will so eagerly pursue, as that which lays open before them, in a more enlarged and connected view than their individual observations are capable of supplying—the varieties of the human mind. Above all, to be well exercised in this study will fit a man more particularly for the most important situations of life. He will prove for it the better Judge, the better Magistrate, the better Advocate; and as a ruler or conductor of other men, under every occurring circumstance, he will find himself the better enabled to fulfil his duty, and accomplish his designs. He will perceive the natural effect of every order that he issues upon the minds of his soldiers, his subjects, or his followers; and he will deal to others judgment tempered with mercy; that is to say, truly just,—for justice appears to us severe only when it is imperfect.

In proportion as moral writers of every class have exercised within themselves this sympathetic propensity of our nature, and have attended to it in others, their works have been interesting and instructive. They have struck the imagination more forcibly, convinced the understanding more clearly, and more lastingly impressed the memory. If unseasoned with any reference to this, the fairy bowers of the poet, with all his gay images of delight, will be admired and forgotten; the important relations of the historian, and even the reasonings of the philosopher, will make a less permanent impression.

The historian points back to the men of other ages, and from the gradually clearing mist in which they are first discovered, like the mountains of a far distant land, the generations of the world are dis-

played to our mind's eye in grand and regular procession. (But the transactions of men become interesting to us only as we are made acquainted with men themselves.) Great and bloody battles are to us battles fought in the moon, if it is not impressed upon our minds, by some circumstances attending them, that men subject to like weaknesses and passions with ourselves, were the combatants.* The establishments of policy make little impression upon us, if we are left ignorant of the beings whom they affected. Even a very masterly drawn character will but slightly imprint upon our memory the great man it belongs to, if, in the account we receive of his life, those lesser circumstances are entirely neglected, which do best of all point out to us the dispositions and tempers of men. Some slight circumstance, characteristic of the particular turn of a man's mind, which at first sight seems but little connected with the great events of his life, will often explain some of those events more clearly to our understanding, than the minute details of ostensible policy. A judicious selection of those circumstances which characterise the spirit of an associated mob, paltry and ludicrous as some of them may appear, will oftentimes convey to our minds a clearer idea why certain laws and privileges were demanded and agreed to, than a methodical explanation of their causes. An historian who has examined human nature himself, and likewise attends to the pleasure which developing and tracing it does ever convey to others, will employ our understanding as well as our memory with his pages; and if this is not done, he will impose upon the latter a very difficult task, in retaining what she is concerned with alone.

In argumentative and philosophical writings, the effect which the author's reasoning produces on our minds depends not entirely on the justness of it. The images and examples that he calls to his aid to explain and illustrate his meaning, will very much affect the attention we are able to bestow upon it, and, consequently, the quickness with which we shall apprehend, and the force with which it will impress us. These are selected from animated and unanimated nature, from the habits, manners, and characters of men; and though that image or example, whatever it may be in itself, which brings out his meaning most clearly, ought to be preferred before every other, yet of two equal in this respect, that

* Let two great battles be described to us with all the force and clearness of the most able pen. In the first let the most admirable exertions of military skill in the General, and the most unshaken courage in the soldiers, gain over an equal or superior number of brave opponents a complete and glorious victory. In the second let the General be less scientific, and the soldiers less dauntless. Let them go into the field for a cause that is dear to them, and fight with the ardour which such a motive inspires; till, discouraged with the many deaths around them, and the renovated pressure of the foe, some unlooked-for circumstance, trifling in itself, strikes their imagination at once; they are visited with the terrors of nature: their national pride, the honour of soldiery, is forgotten; they fly like a fearful flock. Let some beloved

which is drawn from the most interesting source will please us the most at the time, and most lastingly take hold of our minds. An argument supported with vivid and interesting illustration will long be remembered, when many equally important and clear are forgotten; and a work where many such occur, will be held in higher estimation by the generality of men, than one, its superior, perhaps, in acuteness, perspicuity, and good sense.

Our desire to know what men are in the closet as well as in the field; by the blazing hearth and at the social board, as well as in the council and the throne, is very imperfectly gratified by real history. Romance writers, therefore, step boldly forth to supply the deficiency; and tale writers and novel writers, of many descriptions, followed after. If they have not been very skilful in their delineations of nature; if they have represented men and women speaking and acting as men and women never did speak or act; if they have caricatured both our virtues and our vices; if they have given us such pure and unmixed, or such heterogeneous combinations of character, as real life never presented, and yet have pleased and interested us; let it not be imputed to the dulness of man in discerning what is genuinely natural in himself. There are many inclinations belonging to us besides this great master-propensity of which I am treating. Our love of the grand, the beautiful, the novel, and, above all, of the marvellous, is very strong; and if we are richly fed with what we have a good relish for, we may be weaned to forget our native and favourite aliment. Yet we can never so far forget it but that we shall cling to, and acknowledge it again, whenever it is presented before us. In a work abounding with the marvellous and unnatural, if the author has any how stumbled upon an unsophisticated genuine stroke of nature, we shall immediately perceive and be delighted with it, though we are foolish enough to admire, at the same time, all the nonsense with which it is surrounded. After all the wonderful incidents, dark mysteries, and secrets revealed, which eventful novel so liberally presents to us; after the beautiful fairy-ground, and even the grand and sublime scenes of nature with which descriptive novel so often enchants us; those works which most strongly characterise human nature in the middling and lower classes of society,

chief then step forth, and call upon them by the love of their country, by the memory of their valiant fathers, by every thing that kindles in the bosom of man the high and generous passions: they stop; they gather round him; and, goaded by shame and indignation, returning again to the charge, with the fury of wild beasts rather than the courage of soldiers, bear down everything before them. Which of these two battles will interest us the most? And which of them shall we remember the longest? The one will stand forth in the imagination of the reader like a rock of the desert, which points out to the far-removed traveller the country through which he has passed, when its lesser objects are obscured in the distance; whilst the other leaves no traces behind it, but in the minds of the scientific in war.

where it is to be discovered by stronger and more unequivocal marks, will ever be the most popular. For though great pains have been taken in the higher sentimental novels to interest us in the delicacies, embarrassments, and artificial distresses of the more refined part of society, they have never been able to cope in the public opinion with these. The one is a dressed and beautiful pleasure-ground, in which we are enchanted for a while, among the delicate and unknown plants of artful cultivation: the other is a rough forest of our native land; the oak, the elm, the hazel, and the bramble are there; and amidst the endless varieties of its paths we can wander for ever. Into whatever scenes the novelist may conduct us, what objects soever he may present to our view, still is our attention most sensibly awake to every touch faithful to nature; still are we upon the watch for every thing that speaks to us of ourselves.

The fair field of what is properly called poetry, is enriched with so many beauties, that in it we are often tempted to forget what we really are, and what kind of beings we belong to. Who, in the enchanted regions of simile, metaphor, allegory, and description, can remember the plain order of things in this every-day world? From heroes, whose majestic forms rise like a lofty tower, whose eyes are lightning, whose arms are irresistible, whose course is like the storms of heaven, bold and exalted sentiments we shall readily receive; and shall not examine them very accurately by that rule of nature which our own breast prescribes to us. A shepherd, whose sheep, with fleeces of purest snow, browse the flowery herbage of the most beautiful valleys; whose flute is ever melodious, and whose shepherdess is ever crowned with roses; whose every care is love; will not be called very strictly to account for the loftiness and refinement of his thoughts. The fair Nymph who sighs out her sorrows to the conscious and compassionate wilds; whose eyes gleam like the bright drops of heaven; whose loose tresses stream to the breeze, may say what she pleases with impunity. I will venture, however, to say, that amidst all this decoration and ornament, all this loftiness and refinement, let one simple trait of the human heart, one expression of passion, genuine and true to nature, be introduced, and it will stand forth alone in the boldness of reality, whilst the false and unnatural around it fade away upon every side, like the rising exhalations of the morning. With admiration, and often with enthusiasm, we proceed on our way through the grand and the beautiful images raised to our imagination by the lofty epic muse: but what, even here, are those things that strike upon the heart; that we feel and remember? Neither the descriptions of war, the sound of the trumpet, the clanging of arms, the combat of heroes, nor the death of the mighty, will interest our minds like the fall of the feeble stranger, who

simply expresses the anguish of his soul, at the thoughts of that far distant home which he must never return to again, and closes his eyes among the ignoble and forgotten; like the timid stripling goaded by the shame of reproach, who urges his trembling steps to the fight, and falls like a tender flower before the first blast of winter. How often will some simple picture of this kind be all that remains upon our minds of the terrific and magnificent battle, whose description we have read with admiration? How comes it that we relish so much the episodes of an heroic poem? It cannot merely be that we are pleased with a resting-place, where we enjoy the variety of contrast; for were the poem of the simple and familiar kind, and an episode after the heroic style introduced into it, ninety readers out of a hundred would pass over it altogether. Is it not that we meet such a story, so situated, with a kind of sympathetic good will, as in passing through a country of castles and of palaces we should come unawares upon some humble cottage resembling the dwellings of our own native land, and gaze upon it with affection? The highest pleasures we receive from poetry, as well as from the real objects which surround us in the world, are derived from the sympathetic interest we all take in beings like ourselves; and I will even venture to say, that were the grandest scenes which can enter into the imagination of man, presented to our view, and all reference to man completely shut out from our thoughts, the objects that composed it would convey to our minds little better than dry ideas of magnitude, colour, and form; and the remembrance of them would rest upon our minds like the measurement and distances of the planets.

If the study of human nature, then, is so useful to the poet, the novelist, the historian, and the philosopher, of how much greater importance must it be to the dramatic writer? To them it is a powerful auxiliary; to him it is the centre and strength of the battle. If characteristic views of human nature enliven not their pages, there are many excellences with which they can, in some degree, make up for the deficiency: it is what we receive from them with pleasure rather than demand. But in his works, no richness of invention, harmony of language, nor grandeur of sentiment, will supply the place of faithfully delineated nature. The poet and the novelist may represent to you their great characters from the cradle to the tomb. They may represent them in any mood or temper, and under the influence of any passion which they see proper, without being obliged to put words into their mouths, those great betrayers of the feigned and adopted. They may relate every circumstance, however trifling and minute, that serves to develop their tempers and dispositions. They tell us what kind of people they intend their men and women to be, and as such we receive them. If they are to move

us with any scene of distress, every circumstance regarding the parties concerned in it, — how they looked, how they moved, how they sighed, how the tears gushed from their eyes, how the very light and shadow fell upon them, — is carefully described; and the few things that are given to them to say along with all this assistance, must be very unnatural indeed if we refuse to sympathise with them. But the characters of the drama must speak directly for themselves. Under the influence of every passion, humour, and impression; in the artificial veillings of hypocrisy and ceremony, in the openness of freedom and confidence, and in the lonely hour of meditation, they speak. He who made us hath placed within our breasts a judge that judges instantaneously of every thing they say. We expect to find them creatures like ourselves; and if they are untrue to nature, we feel that we are imposed upon.

As in other works deficiency in characteristic truth may be compensated by excellences of a different kind; in the drama, characteristic truth will compensate every other defect. Nay, it will do what appears a contradiction; one strong genuine stroke of nature will cover a multitude of sins, even against nature herself. When we meet in some scene of a good play a very fine stroke of this kind, we are apt to become so intoxicated with it, and so perfectly convinced of the author's great knowledge of the human heart, that we are unwilling to suppose the whole of it has not been suggested by the same penetrating spirit. Many well-meaning enthusiastic critics have given themselves a great deal of trouble in this way; and have shut their eyes most ingeniously against the fair light of nature for the very love of it. They have converted, in their great zeal, sentiments palpably false, both in regard to the character and situation of the persons

who utter them, sentiments which a child or a clown would detect, into the most skilful depicments of the heart. I can think of no stronger instance to show how powerfully this love of nature dwells within us.*

Formed, as we are, with these sympathetic propensities in regard to our own species, it is not at all wonderful that theatrical exhibition has become the grand and favourite amusement of every nation into which it has been introduced. Savages will, in the wild contortions of a dance, shape out some rude story expressive of character or passion, and such a dance will give more delight to their companions than the most artful exertions of agility. Children in their gambols will make out a mimic representation of the manners, characters, and passions of grown men and women; and such a pastime will animate and delight them much more than a treat of the daintiest sweetmeats, or the handling of the gaudiest toys. Eagerly as it is enjoyed by the rude and the young, to the polished and the ripe in years, it is still the most interesting amusement. Our taste for it is durable as it is universal. Independently of those circumstances which first introduced it, the world would not have long been without it. The progress of society would soon have brought it forth; and men, in the whimsical decorations of fancy, would have displayed the characters and actions of their heroes, the folly and absurdity of their fellow-citizens, had no Priest of Bacchus ever existed.†

In whatever age or country the Drama might have taken its rise, Tragedy would have been the first-born of its children. For every nation has its great men, and its great events upon record; and to represent their own forefathers struggling with those difficulties, and braving those dangers, of which they have heard with admiration, and the

* It appears to me a very strong testimony of the excellence of our great national Dramatist, that so many people have been employed in finding out obscure and refined beauties, in what appear to ordinary observation his very defects. Men, it may be said, do so merely to show their own superior penetration and ingenuity. But granting this: what could make other men listen to them, and listen so greedily too, if it were not that they have received, from the works of Shakspeare, pleasure far beyond what the most perfect poetical compositions of a different character can afford?

† Though the progress of society would have given us the Drama, independently of the particular cause of its first commencement, the peculiar circumstances connected with its origin have had considerable influence upon its character and style, in the ages through which it has passed even to our day, and still will continue to affect it. Homer had long preceded the dramatic poets of Greece; poetry was in a high state of cultivation when they began to write; and their style, the construction of their pieces, and the characters of their heroes were different from what they would have been, had theatrical exhibitions been the invention of an earlier age or a ruder people. Their works were represented to an audience already accustomed to hear long poems rehearsed at their public games, and the feasts of their gods. A play, with the principal characters of which they were previously acquainted; in which their great men and heroes, in the most beautiful language, complained of their rigorous fate, but piously submitted to the will of the gods; in which sympathy was chiefly excited by tender and affecting sentiments; in

which strong bursts of passion were few; and in which whole scenes frequently passed, without giving the actors any thing to do but to speak, was not too insipid for them. Had the drama been the invention of a less cultivated nation, more of action and of passion would have been introduced into it. It would have been more irregular, more imperfect, more varied, more interesting. From poor beginnings it would have advanced in a progressive state; and succeeding poets, not having those polished and admired originals to look back upon, would have presented their respective contemporaries with the produce of a free and unbridled imagination. A different class of poets would most likely have been called into existence. The latent powers of men are called forth by contemplating those works in which they find any thing congenial to their own peculiar talents; and if the field wherein they could have worked is already enriched with a produce unsuited to their cultivation, they think not of entering it at all. Men, therefore, whose natural turn of mind led them to labour, to reason, to refine, and exalt, have caught their animation from the beauties of the Grecian Drama; and they who ought only to have been our critics have become our poets. I mean not, however, in any degree to depreciate the works of the ancients: a great deal we have gained by those beautiful compositions, and what we have lost by them it is impossible to compute. Very strong genius will sometimes break through every disadvantage of circumstances: Shakspeare has arisen in this country, and we ought not to complain.

effects of which they still, perhaps, experience, would certainly have been the most animating subject for the poet, and the most interesting for his audience, even independently of the natural inclination we all so universally show for scenes of horror and distress, of passion and heroic exertion. Tragedy would have been the first child of the Drama, for the same reasons that have made heroic ballad, with all its battles, murders, and disasters, the earliest poetical compositions of every country.

We behold heroes and great men at a distance, unmarked by those small but distinguishing features of the mind, which give a certain individuality to such an infinite variety of similar beings, in the near and familiar intercourse of life. They appear to us from this view like distant mountains, whose dark outlines we trace in the clear horizon, but the varieties of whose roughened sides, shaded with heath and brushwood, and seamed with many a cleft, we perceive not. When accidental anecdote reveals to us any weakness or peculiarity belonging to them, we start upon it like a discovery. They are made known to us in history only, by the great events they are connected with, and the part they have taken in extraordinary or important transactions. Even in poetry and romance, with the exception of some love-story interwoven with the main events of their lives, they are seldom more intimately made known to us. To Tragedy it belongs to lead them forward to our nearer regard, in all the distinguishing varieties which nearer inspection discovers; with the passions, the humours, the weaknesses, the prejudices of men. It is for her to present to us the great and magnanimous hero, who appears to our distant view as a superior being, as a god, softened down with those smaller frailties and imperfections that enable us to glory in, and claim kindred to his virtues. It is for her to exhibit to us the daring and ambitious man, planning his dark designs, and executing his bloody purposes, marked with those appropriate characteristics which distinguish him as an individual of that class, and agitated with those varied passions, which disturb the mind of man when he is engaged in the commission of such deeds. It is for her to point out to us the brave and impetuous warrior, struck with those visitations of nature, that, in certain situations, will unnerve the strongest arm, and make the boldest heart tremble. It is for her to show the tender, gentle, and unassuming mind, animated with that fire which, by the provocation of circumstances, will give to the kindest heart the ferocity and keenness of a tiger. It is for her to present to us the great and striking characters that are to be found amongst men, in a way which the poet, the novelist, and the historian can but imperfectly attempt. But above all, to her, and to her only it belongs, to unveil to us the human mind under the dominion of those strong and fixed passions, which, seemingly unprovoked by outward

circumstances, will, from small beginnings, brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature, are borne down before them; those passions which conceal themselves from the observation of men; which cannot unbosom themselves even to the dearest friend; and can, oftentimes, only give their fulness vent in the lonely desert, or in the darkness of midnight. For who hath followed the great man into his secret closet, or stood by the side of his nightly couch, and heard those exclamations of the soul which heaven alone may hear, that the historian should be able to inform us; and what form of story, what mode of rehearsed speech will communicate to us those feelings, whose irregular bursts, abrupt transitions, sudden pauses, and half-uttered suggestions, scorn all harmony of measured verse, all method and order of relation?

On the first part of this task her Bards have eagerly exerted their abilities: and some among them, taught by strong original genius to deal immediately with human nature and their own hearts, have laboured in it successfully. But in presenting to us those views of great characters, and of the human mind in difficult and trying situations, which peculiarly belong to Tragedy, the far greater proportion, even of those who may be considered as respectable dramatic poets, have very much failed. From the beauty of those original dramas to which they have ever looked back with admiration, they have been tempted to prefer the embellishments of poetry to faithfully delineated nature. They have been more occupied in considering the works of the great dramatists who have gone before them, and the effects produced by their writings, than the varieties of human character that first furnished materials for those works, or those principles in the mind of man by means of which such effects were produced. Neglecting the boundless variety of nature, certain strong outlines of character, certain bold features of passion, certain grand vicissitudes and striking dramatic situations, have been repeated from one generation to another; whilst a pompous and solemn gravity, which they have supposed to be necessary for the dignity of tragedy, has excluded almost entirely from their works those smaller touches of nature, which so well develop the mind; and by showing men in their hours of state and exertion only, they have consequently shown them imperfectly. Thus, great and magnanimous heroes, who bear with majestic equanimity every vicissitude of fortune; who in every temptation and trial stand forth in unshaken virtue, like a rock buffeted by the waves; who, encompassed with the most terrible evils, in calm possession of their souls, reason upon the difficulties of their state; and, even upon the brink of destruction, pronounce long eulogiums on virtue, in the most eloquent and beautiful language, have been held forth to our view as objects of imitation and interest: as though they

had entirely forgotten that it is only for creatures like ourselves that we feel, and, therefore, only from creatures like ourselves that we receive the instruction of example.* Thus passionate and impetuous warriors, who are proud, irritable, and vindictive, but generous, daring, and disinterested; setting their lives at a pin's fee for the good of others, but incapable of curbing their own humour of a moment to gain the whole world for themselves; who will pluck the orbs of heaven from their places, and crush the whole universe in one grasp,—are called forth to kindle in our souls the generous contempt of every thing abject and base; but with an effect proportionably feeble, as the hero is made to exceed in courage and fire what the standard of humanity will agree to.† Thus tender and pathetic lovers, full of the most gentle affections, the most amiable dispositions, and the most exquisite feelings; who present their defenceless bosoms to the storms of this rude world in all the graceful weakness of sensibility, are made to sigh out their sorrows in one unvaried strain of studied pathos, while this constant demand upon our feelings makes us absolutely incapable of answering it.‡ Thus, also, tyrants are represented as monsters of cruelty, unmixed with any feelings of humanity; and villains as delighting in all manner of treachery and deceit, and acting, upon many occasions, for the very love of villany itself; though the perfectly wicked are as ill fitted for the purposes of warning, as the perfectly virtuous are for those of ex-

* To a being perfectly free from all human infirmity our sympathy refuses to extend. Our Saviour himself, whose character is so beautiful, and so harmoniously consistent; in whom, with outward proofs of His mission less strong than those that are offered to us, I should still be compelled to believe, from being utterly unable to conceive how the idea of such a character could enter into the imagination of man, never touches the heart more nearly than when He says, "Father, let this cup pass from me." Had He been represented to us in all the unshaken strength of these tragic heroes, His disciples would have made fewer converts, and His precepts would have been listened to coldly. Plays in which heroes of this kind are held forth, and whose aim is, indeed, honourable and praiseworthy, have been admired by the cultivated and refined, but the tears of the simple, the applauses of the young and untaught, have been wanting.

† In all burlesque imitations of tragedy, those plays in which this hero is pre-eminent are always exposed to bear the great brunt of the ridicule, which proves how popular they have been, and how many poets, and good ones too, have been employed upon them. That they have been so popular, however, is not owing to the intrinsic merit of the characters they represent, but their opposition to those mean and contemptible qualities belonging to human nature, of which we are most ashamed. Besides, there is something in the human mind, independently of its love of applause, which inclines it to boast. This is ever the attendant of that elasticity of soul which makes us bound up from the touch of oppression; and if there is nothing in the accompanying circumstances to create disgust, or suggest suspicions of their sincerity (as in real life is commonly the case), we are very apt to be carried along with the boasting of others. Let us in good earnest believe that a man is capable of achieving all that human courage can achieve, and we shall suffer him to talk of impossibilities. Amidst all their pomp of words, therefore, our admiration of such heroes is readily excited (for the understanding is more easily deceived than the heart); but how stands our sympathy affected? As no cau-

ample.§ This spirit of imitation, and attention to effect, has likewise confined them very much in their choice of situations and events to bring their great characters into action: rebellions, conspiracies, contentions for empire, and rivalships in love, have alone been thought worthy of trying those heroes; and palaces and dungeons the only places magnificent or solemn enough for them to appear in.

They have, indeed, from this regard to the works of preceding authors, and great attention to the beauties of composition, and to dignity of design, enriched their plays with much striking and sometimes sublime imagery, lofty thoughts, and virtuous sentiments; but, in striving so eagerly to excel in those things that belong to Tragedy in common with many other compositions, they have very much neglected those that are peculiarly her own. As far as they have been led aside from the first labours of a tragic poet, by a desire to communicate more perfect moral instruction, their motive has been respectable, and they merit our esteem. But this praiseworthy end has been injured instead of promoted by their mode of pursuing it. Every species of moral writing has its own way of conveying instruction, which it can never, but with disadvantage, exchange for any other. The Drama improves us by the knowledge we acquire of our own minds, from the natural desire we have to look into the thoughts, and observe the behaviour of others. Tragedy brings to our view men placed in those

tion nor foresight, on their own account, is ever suffered to occupy the thoughts of such bold disinterested beings, we are the more inclined to care for them, and to take an interest in their fortune through the course of the play: yet, as their souls are unappalled by any thing; as pain and death are not at all regarded by them; and as we have seen them very ready to plunge their own swords into their own bosoms, on no very weighty occasion, perhaps their death distresses us but little, and they commonly fall unwept.

‡ Were it not, that in tragedies where these heroes preside, the same soft tones of sorrow are so often repeated in our ears, till we are perfectly tired of it, they are more fitted to interest us than any other; both because in seeing them, we own the ties of kindred between ourselves and the frail mortals we lament; and sympathise with the weakness of mortality unmixed with any thing to degrade or disgust; and also because the misfortunes, which form the story of the play, are frequently of the more familiar and domestic kind. A king driven from his throne will not move our sympathy so strongly as a private man torn from the bosom of his family.

§ I have said nothing here in regard to female character, though in many tragedies it is brought forward as the principal one of the piece, because what I have said of the above characters is likewise applicable to it. I believe there is no man that ever lived, who has behaved in a certain manner on a certain occasion, who has not had amongst women some corresponding spirit, who, on the like occasion, and every way similarly circumstanced, would have behaved in the like manner. With some degree of softening and refinement, each class of the tragic heroes I have mentioned has its corresponding one amongst the heroines. The tender and pathetic, no doubt, has the most numerous; but the great and magnanimous is not without it, and the passionate and impetuous boasts of one by no means inconsiderable in numbers, and drawn sometimes to the full as passionate and impetuous as itself.

elevated situations, exposed to those great trials, and engaged in those extraordinary transactions, in which few of us are called upon to act. As examples applicable to ourselves, therefore, they can but feebly affect us; it is only from the enlargement of our ideas in regard to human nature, from that admiration of virtue and abhorrence of vice which they excite, that we can expect to be improved by them. But if they are not represented to us as real and natural characters, the lessons we are taught from their conduct and their sentiments will be no more to us, than those which we receive from the pages of the poet or the moralist.

But the last part of the task which I have mentioned as peculiarly belonging to Tragedy, — unveiling the human mind under the dominion of those strong and fixed passions, which, seemingly unprovoked by outward circumstances, will from small beginnings brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature, are borne down before them, — her poets in general have entirely neglected, and even her first and greatest have but imperfectly attempted. They have made use of the passions to mark their several characters, and animate their scenes, rather than to open to our view the nature and portraiture of those great disturbers of the human breast, with whom we are all, more or less, called upon to contend. With their strong and obvious features, therefore, they have been presented to us, stripped almost entirely of those less obtrusive, but not less discriminating traits, which mark them in their actual operation. To trace them in their rise and progress in the heart, seems but rarely to have been the object of any dramatist. We commonly find the characters of a tragedy affected by the passions in a transient, loose, unconnected manner; or if they are represented as under the permanent influence of the more powerful ones, they are generally introduced to our notice in the very height of their fury, when all that timidity, irresolution, distrust, and a thousand delicate traits, which make the infancy of every great passion more interesting, perhaps, than its full-blown strength, are fled. The impassioned character is generally brought into view under those irresistible attacks of their power, which it is impossible to repel; whilst those gradual steps that lead him into this state, in some of which a stand might have been made against the foe, are left entirely in the shade. Those passions that may be suddenly excited, and are of short duration, as anger, fear, and oftentimes jealousy, may in this manner be fully represented; but those great masters of the soul, ambition, hatred, love, every passion that is permanent in its nature, and varied in

progress, if represented to us but in one stage of its course, is represented imperfectly. It is a characteristic of the more powerful passions, that they will increase and nourish themselves on very slender aliment; it is from within that they are chiefly supplied with what they feed on; and it is in contending with opposite passions and affections of the mind that we best discover their strength, not with events. But in Tragedy it is events, more frequently than opposite affections, which are opposed to them; and those often of such force and magnitude, that the passions themselves are almost obscured by the splendour and importance of the transactions to which they are attached. Besides being thus confined and mutilated, the passions have been, in the greater part of our tragedies, deprived of the very power of making themselves known. Bold and figurative language belongs peculiarly to them. Poets, admiring those bold expressions which a mind, labouring with ideas too strong to be conveyed in the ordinary forms of speech, wildly throws out, taking earth, sea, and sky, every thing great and terrible in nature, to image forth the violence of its feelings, borrowed them gladly to adorn the calm sentiments of their premeditated song. It has, therefore, been thought that the less animated parts of tragedy might be so embellished and enriched. In doing this, however, the passions have been robbed of their native prerogative; and in adorning with their strong figures and lofty expressions the calm speeches of the unruffled, it is found that, when they are called upon to raise their voice, the power of distinguishing themselves has been taken away. This is an injury by no means compensated, but very greatly aggravated, by embellishing, in return, the speeches of passion with the ingenious conceits and complete similes of premeditated thought.* There are many other things regarding the manner in which dramatic poets have generally brought forward the passions in Tragedy, to the greatest prejudice of that effect they are naturally fitted to produce upon the mind, which I forbear to mention, lest they should too much increase the length of this discourse; and leave an impression on the mind of my reader, that I write more in the spirit of criticism than becomes one who is about to bring before the public a work with, doubtless, many faults and imperfections on its head.

From this general view, which I have endeavoured to communicate to my reader of Tragedy, and those principles in the human mind upon which the success of her efforts depends, I have been led to believe, that an attempt to write a series of tragedies, of simpler construction, less embellished with poetical decorations, less constrained by that

* This, perhaps, more than any thing else, has injured the higher scenes of Tragedy. For, having made such free use of bold, hyperbolical language in the inferior parts, the poet, when he arrives at the highly-impassioned, sinks into total

inability; or, if he will force himself to rise still higher on the wing, he flies beyond nature altogether, into the regions of bombast and nonsense.

lofty seriousness which has so generally been considered as necessary for the support of tragic dignity, and in which the chief object should be to delineate the progress of the higher passions in the human breast, each play exhibiting a particular passion, might not be unacceptable to the public. And I have been the more readily induced to act upon this idea, because I am confident, that Tragedy, written upon this plan, is fitted to produce stronger moral effect than upon any other. I have said that Tragedy, in representing to us great characters struggling with difficulties, and placed in situations of eminence and danger, in which few of us have any chance of being called upon to act, conveys its moral efficacy to our minds by the enlarged views which it gives to us of human nature, by the admiration of virtue and execration of vice which it excites, and not by the examples it holds up for our immediate application. But, in opening to us the heart of man under the influence of those passions to which all are liable, this is not the case. Those strong passions that, with small assistance from outward circumstances, work their way in the heart till they become the tyrannical masters of it, carry on a similar operation in the breast of the monarch and the man of low degree. It exhibits to us the mind of man in that state when we are most curious to look into it, and is equally interesting to all. Discrimination of character is a turn of mind, though more common than we are aware of, which every body does not possess; but to the expressions of passion, particularly strong passion, the duller mind is awake; and its true unsophisticated language the duller understanding will not misinterpret. To hold up for our example those peculiarities in disposition and modes of thinking which nature has fixed upon us, or which long and early habit has incorporated with our original selves, is almost desiring us to remove the everlasting mountains, to take away the native land-marks of the soul; but representing the passions, brings before us the operation of a tempest that rages out its time and passes away. We cannot, it is true, amidst its wild uproar, listen to the voice of reason, and save ourselves from destruction; but we can foresee its coming, we can mark its rising signs, we can know the situations that will most expose us to its rage, and we can shelter our heads from the coming blast. To change a certain disposition of mind which makes us view objects in a particular light, and thereby, oftentimes, unknown to ourselves, influences our conduct and manners, is almost impossible; but in checking and subduing those visitations of the soul, whose causes and effects we are aware of, every one may make considerable progress, if he proves not entirely successful. Above all, looking back to the first rise, and tracing the progress of passion, points out to us those stages in the approach of the enemy, when he might have

been combated most successfully; and where the suffering him to pass may be considered as occasioning all the misery that ensues.

Comedy presents to us men, as we find them in the ordinary intercourse of the world, with all the weaknesses, follies, caprice, prejudices, and absurdities which a near and familiar view of them discovers. It is her task to exhibit them engaged in the busy turmoil of ordinary life, harassing and perplexing themselves with the endless pursuits of avarice, vanity, and pleasure; and engaged with those smaller trials of the mind by which men are most apt to be overcome, and from which he who could have supported with honour the attack of great occasions will oftentimes come off most shamefully foiled. It belongs to her to show the varied fashions and manners of the world, as, from the spirit of vanity, caprice, and imitation, they go on in swift and endless succession; and those disagreeable or absurd peculiarities attached to particular classes and conditions in society. It is for her also to represent men under the influence of the stronger passions; and to trace the rise and progress of them in the heart, in such situations, and attended with such circumstances, as take off their sublimity and the interest we naturally feel in a perturbed mind. It is hers to exhibit those terrible tyrants of the soul, whose ungovernable rage has struck us so often with dismay, like wild beasts tied to a post, who growl and paw before us for our derision and sport. In portraying the characters of men she has this advantage over Tragedy, that the smallest traits of nature, with the smallest circumstances which serve to bring them forth, may by her be displayed, however ludicrous and trivial in themselves, without any ceremony. And in developing the passions she enjoys a similar advantage; for they often more strongly betray themselves when touched by those small and familiar occurrences which cannot, consistently with the effect it is intended to produce, be admitted into Tragedy.

As Tragedy has been very much cramped in her endeavours to exalt and improve the mind, by that spirit of imitation and confinement in her successive writers, which the beauty of her earliest poets first gave rise to, so Comedy has been led aside from her best purposes by a different temptation. Those endless changes in fashions and in manners, which offer such obvious and ever-new subjects of ridicule; that infinite variety of tricks and manœuvres by which the ludicrous may be produced, and curiosity and laughter excited; the admiration we so generally bestow upon satirical remark, pointed repartee, and whimsical combinations of ideas, have too often led her to forget the warmer interest we feel, and the more profitable lessons we receive, from genuine representations of nature. The most interesting and instructive class of Comedy, therefore, the real characteristic, has been very much neglected; while

satirical, witty, sentimental, and, above all, busy or circumstantial Comedy, have usurped the exertions of the far greater proportion of dramatic writers.

In Satirical Comedy, sarcastic and severe reflections on the actions and manners of men, introduced with neatness, force, and poignancy of expression, into a lively and well-supported dialogue, of whose gay surface they are the embossed ornaments, make the most important and studied part of the work: character is a thing talked of rather than shown. The persons of the drama are indebted for the discovery of their peculiarities to what is said of them, rather than to any thing they are made to say or do for themselves. Much incident being unfavourable for studied and elegant dialogue, the plot is commonly simple, and the few events that compose it neither interesting nor striking. It only affords us that kind of moral instruction which an essay or a poem could as well have conveyed, and, though amusing in the closet, is but feebly attractive in the theatre.*

In what I have termed Witty Comedy, every thing is light, playful, and easy. Strong, decided condemnation of vice is too weighty and material to dance upon the surface of that stream, whose shallow currents sparkle in perpetual sunbeams, and cast up their bubbles to the light. Two or three persons of quick thought, and whimsical fancy, who perceive instantaneously the various connections of every passing idea, and the significations, natural or artificial, which single expressions or particular forms of speech can possibly convey, take the lead through the whole, and seem to communicate their own peculiar talent to every creature in the play. The plot is most commonly feeble rather than simple, the incidents being numerous enough, but seldom striking or varied. To amuse, and only to amuse, is its aim; it pretends not to interest nor instruct. It pleases when we read, more than when we see it represented; and pleases still more when we take it up by accident, and read but a scene at a time.

Sentimental Comedy treats of those embarrassments, difficulties, and scruples, which, though sufficiently distressing to the delicate minds who entertain them, are not powerful enough to gratify the sympathetic desire we all feel to look into the heart of man in difficult and trying situations, which is the sound basis of Tragedy, and are destitute of that seasoning of the lively and ludicrous, which prevents the ordinary transactions of Comedy from becoming insipid. In real life, those who, from the peculiar frame of their minds, feel most of this refined distress, are not generally communicative upon the subject; and those who do feel and talk about it at the same time, if any such there be, seldom find their friends

much inclined to listen to them. It is not to be supposed, then, long conversations upon the stage about small sentimental niceties, can be generally interesting. I am afraid plays of this kind, as well as works of a similar nature in other departments of literature, have only tended to increase amongst us a set of sentimental hypocrites, who are the same persons of this age that would have been the religious ones of another, and are daily doing morality the same kind of injury, by substituting the particular excellence which they pretend to possess, for plain simple uprightness and rectitude.

In Busy or Circumstantial Comedy, all those ingenious contrivances of lovers, guardians, governesses, and chambermaids; that ambushed bush-fighting amongst closets, screens, chests, easy-chairs, and toilet-tables, form a gay, varied game of dexterity and invention: which, to those who have played at hide and seek, who have crouched down with beating heart in a dark corner, whilst the enemy groped near the spot; who have joined their busy schoolmates in many a deep-laid plan to deceive, perplex, and torment the unhappy mortals deputed to have the charge of them, cannot be seen with indifference. Like an old hunter, who pricks up his ears at the sound of the chase, and starts away from the path of his journey, so, leaving all wisdom and criticism behind us, we follow the varied changes of the plot, and stop not for reflection. The studious man who wants a cessation from thought, the indolent man who dislikes it, and all those who, from habit or circumstances, live in a state of divorce from their own minds, are pleased with an amusement in which they have nothing to do but to open their eyes and behold. The moral tendency of it, however, is very faulty. That mockery of age and domestic authority, so constantly held forth, has a very bad effect upon the younger part of an audience; and that continual lying and deceit in the first characters of the piece, which is necessary for conducting the plot, has a most pernicious one.

But Characteristic Comedy, which represents to us this motley world of men and women in which we live, under those circumstances of ordinary and familiar life most favourable to the discovery of the human heart, offers to us a wide field of instruction adapted to general application. We find in its varied scenes an exercise of the mind analogous to that which we all, less or more, find out for ourselves, amidst the mixed groups of people whom we meet with in society, and which I have already mentioned as an exercise universally pleasing to man. As the distinctions which it is its highest aim to discriminate are those of nature and not situation, they are judged of by all ranks of men; for a peasant will very clearly perceive in the character of

* These plays are generally the work of men whose judgment and acute observation enable them admirably well to generalise, and apply to classes of men the remarks they

have made upon individuals, yet know not how to dress up, with any natural congruity, an imaginary individual in the attributes they have assigned to those classes.

a peer those native peculiarities which belong to him as a man, though he is entirely at a loss in all that regards his manners and address as a nobleman. It illustrates to us the general remarks we have made upon men; and in it we behold, spread before us, plans of those original ground-works upon which the general ideas we have been taught to conceive of mankind are founded. It stands but little in need of busy plot, extraordinary incidents, witty repartee, or studied sentiments. It naturally produces for itself all that it requires. Characters, who are to speak for themselves, who are to be known by their own words and actions, not by the accounts that are given of them by others, cannot well be developed without considerable variety of judicious incident; a smile that is raised by some trait of undisguised nature, and a laugh that is provoked by some ludicrous effect of passion, or clashing of opposite characters, will be more pleasing to the generality of men than either the one or the other when occasioned by a play upon words, or a whimsical combination of ideas; and to behold the operation and effects of the different propensities and weaknesses of men, will naturally call up in the mind of the spectator moral reflections more applicable, and more impressive than all the high-sounding sentiments with which the graver scenes of Satirical and Sentimental Comedy are so frequently interlarded. It is much to be regretted, however, that the eternal introduction of love as the grand business of the drama, and the consequent necessity for making the chief persons in it, such, in regard to age, appearance, manners, dispositions, and endowments, as are proper for interesting lovers, has occasioned so much insipid similarity in the higher characters. It is chiefly, therefore, on the second and inferior characters that the efforts, even of our best poets, have been exhausted; and thus we are called upon to be interested in the fortune of one man, whilst our chief attention is directed to the character of another, which produces a disunion of ideas in the mind, injurious to the general effect of the whole. From this cause, also, those characteristic varieties have been very much neglected, which men present to us in the middle stages of life; when they are too old for lovers or the confidants of lovers, and too young to be the fathers, uncles, and guardians, who are contrasted with them; but when they are still in full vigour of mind, eagerly engaged with the world, joining the activity of youth to the providence of age, and offer to our attention objects sufficiently interesting and instructive. It is to be regretted that strong contrasts of character are too often attempted, instead of those harmonious shades of it,

* Such plays, however excellent the parts may be of which they are composed, can never produce the same strength and unity of effect upon our minds which we receive from plays of a simpler undivided construction. If the serious and distressing scenes make a deep impression, we do not find ourselves in a humour for the comic ones that

which nature so beautifully varies, and which we so greatly delight in, whenever we clearly distinguish them. It is to be regretted that, in place of those characters which present themselves to the imagination of a writer from his general observations upon mankind, inferior poets have so often portrayed, with senseless minuteness, the characters of particular individuals. We are pleased with the eccentricities of individuals in real life, and also in history or biography; but in fictitious writings we regard them with suspicion, and no representation of nature, that corresponds not with some of our general ideas in regard to it, will either instruct or inform us. When the originals of such characters are known and remembered, the plays in which they are introduced are oftentimes popular; and their temporary success has induced a still inferior class of poets to believe, that, by making men strange, and unlike the rest of the world, they have made great discoveries, and mightily enlarged the boundaries of dramatic character. They will, therefore, distinguish one man from another by some strange whim or imagination, which is ever uppermost in his thoughts, and influences every action of his life; by some singular opinion, perhaps, about politics, fashions, or the position of the stars; by some strong unaccountable love for one thing, or aversion from another: entirely forgetting, that such singularities, if they are to be found in nature, can nowhere be sought for, with such probability of success, as in Bedlam. Above all it is to be regretted that those adventitious distinctions amongst men, of age, fortune, rank, profession, and country, are so often brought forward in preference to the great original distinctions of nature; and our scenes so often filled with courtiers, lawyers, citizens, Frenchmen, &c. &c., with all the characteristics of their respective conditions, such as they have been represented from time immemorial. This has introduced a great sameness into many of our plays, which all the changes of new fashions burlesqued, and new customs turned into ridicule, cannot conceal.

In Comedy, the stronger passions, love excepted, are seldom introduced but in a passing way. We have short bursts of anger, fits of jealousy and impatience; violent passion of any continuance we seldom find. When this is attempted, however, forgetting that mode of exposing the weakness of the human mind which peculiarly belongs to her, it is too frequently done in the serious spirit of Tragedy; and this has produced so many of those serious comic plays, which so much divide and distract our attention.* Yet we all know from our own experience in real life, that in certain situations, and

succeed; and if the comic scenes enliven us greatly, we feel tardy and unalert in bringing back our minds to a proper tone for the serious. As in Tragedy we smile at those native traits of character, or that occasional sprightliness of dialogue, which are sometimes introduced to animate her less interesting parts, so may we be moved by Comedy; but our

under certain circumstances, the stronger passions are fitted to produce scenes more exquisitely comic than any other: and one well-wrought scene of this kind will have a more powerful effect in repressing similar intemperance in the mind of a spectator, than many moral cautions, or even, perhaps, than the terrific examples of Tragedy. There are to be found, no doubt, in the works of our best dramatic writers, comic scenes descriptive of the stronger passions, but it is generally the inferior characters of the piece who are made the subjects of them, very rarely those in whom we are much interested, and consequently the useful effect of such scenes upon the mind is very much weakened. This general appropriation of them has tempted our less skilful dramatists to exaggerate, and step, in further quest of the ludicrous, so much beyond the bounds of nature, that the very effect they are so anxious to produce is thereby destroyed, and all useful application of it entirely cut off, for we never apply to ourselves a false representation of nature.

But a complete exhibition of passion, with its varieties and progress in the breast of man, has, I believe, scarcely ever been attempted in Comedy. Even love, though the chief subject of almost every play, has been portrayed in a loose, scattered, and imperfect manner. The story of the lovers is acted over before us, while the characteristics of that passion by which they are actuated, and which is the great master-spring of the whole, are faintly to be discovered. We are generally introduced to a lover after he has long been acquainted with his mistress, and wants but the consent of some stubborn relation, relief from some embarrassment of situation, or the clearing up some mistake or love-quarrel occasioned by malice or accident, to make him completely happy. To overcome these difficulties, he is engaged in a busy train of contrivance and exertion, in which the spirit, activity, and ingenuity of the man is held forth to view, whilst the lover, comparatively speaking, is kept out of sight. But even when this is not the case; when the lover is not so busied and involved, this state of the passion is exactly the one that is least interesting and least instructive; not to mention, as I have done already, that one stage of any passion must show it imperfectly.

From this view of the comic drama, I have been induced to believe, that, as companions to the forementioned tragedies, a series of comedies on a similar plan, in which bustle of plot, brilliancy of

dialogue, and even the bold and striking in character, should, to the best of the author's judgment, be kept in due subordination to nature, might likewise be acceptable to the public. I am confident that Comedy upon this plan is capable of being made as interesting as entertaining, and superior in moral tendency to any other. For even in ordinary life, with very slight cause to excite them, strong passions will foster themselves within the breast; and what are all the evils which vanity, folly, prejudice, or peculiarity of temper lead to, compared with those which such unquiet inmates produce? Were they confined to the exalted and the mighty, to those engaged in the great events of the world, to the inhabitants of palaces and camps, how happy, comparatively, would this world be! But many a miserable being, whom firm principle, timidity of character, or the fear of shame keeps back from the actual commission of crimes, is tormented in obscurity, under the dominion of those passions which place the seducer in ambush, rouse the bold spoiler to wrong, and strengthen the arm of the murderer. Though to those with whom such dangerous enemies have long found shelter, exposing them in an absurd and ridiculous light, may be shooting a finely-pointed arrow against the hardened rock; yet, to those with whom they are but new and less assured guests, this may prove a more successful mode of attack than any other.

It was the saying of a sagacious Scotchman, "Let who will make the laws of a nation, if I have the writing of its ballads." Something similar to this may be said in regard to the drama. Its lessons reach not, indeed, to the lowest classes of the labouring people, who are the broad foundation of society, which can never be generally moved without endangering every thing that is constructed upon it, and who are our potent and formidable ballad-readers; but they reach to the classes next in order to them, and who will always have over them no inconsiderable influence. The impressions made by it are communicated, at the same instant of time, to a greater number of individuals than those made by any other species of writing; and they are strengthened in every spectator, by observing their effects upon those who surround him. From this observation, the mind of my reader will suggest of itself what it would be unnecessary, and, perhaps, improper in me here to enlarge upon. The theatre is a school in which much good or evil may be learned. At the beginning of its career, the

tears should be called forth by those gentle strokes of nature which come at once with kindred kindness on the heart, and are quickly succeeded by smiles. Like a small summer-cloud, whose rain-drops sparkle in the sun, and which swiftly passes away, is the genuine pathetic of Comedy; the gathering foreseen storm, that darkens the whole face of the sky, belongs to Tragedy alone. It is often observed, I confess, that we are more apt to be affected by those scenes of distress which we meet with in Comedy than the high-wrought woes of Tragedy; and I believe it is true. But this arises from the

woes of Tragedy being so often appropriated to high and mighty personages, and strained beyond the modesty of nature, in order to suit their great dignity, or from the softened griefs of more gentle and familiar characters being rendered feeble and tiresome with too much repetition and whining. It arises from the greater facility with which we enter into the distresses of people more upon a level with ourselves, and whose sorrows are expressed in less studied and unnatural language.

drama was employed to mislead and excite ; and, were I not unwilling to refer to transactions of the present times, I might abundantly confirm what I have said by recent examples. The author, therefore, who aims in any degree to improve the mode of its instruction, and point to more useful lessons than it is generally employed to dispense, is certainly praiseworthy, though want of abilities may unhappily prevent him from being successful in his efforts.

This idea has prompted me to begin a work in which I am aware of many difficulties. In plays of this nature the passions must be depicted not only with their bold and prominent features, but also with those minute and delicate traits which distinguish them in an infant, growing, and repressed state ; which are the most difficult of all to counterfeit, and one of which, falsely imagined, will destroy the effect of a whole scene. The characters over whom they are made to usurp dominion must be powerful and interesting, exercising them with their full measure of opposition and struggle ; for the chief antagonists they contend with must be the other passions and propensities of the heart, not outward circumstances and events. Though belonging to such characters, they must still be held to view in the most baleful and unseductive light ; and those qualities in the impassioned which are necessary to interest us in their fate, must not be allowed, by any lustre borrowed from them, to diminish our abhorrence of guilt. The second, and even the inferior persons of each play, as they must be kept perfectly distinct from the great impassioned one, should generally be represented in a calm unagitated state, and therefore more pains are necessary than in other dramatic works to mark them by appropriate distinctions of character, lest they should appear altogether insipid and insignificant. As the great object here is to trace passion through all its varieties and in every stage, many of which are marked by shades so delicate, that in much bustle of events they would be little attended to or entirely overlooked, simplicity of plot is more necessary, than in those plays where only occasional bursts of passion are introduced, to distinguish a character or animate a scene. But where simplicity of plot is necessary, there is very great danger of making a piece appear bare and unvaried, and nothing but great force and truth in the delineations of nature will prevent it from being tiresome.* Soliloquy, or those overflowings of the perturbed soul, in which

* To make up for this simplicity of plot, the show and decorations of the theatre ought to be allowed to plays written upon this plan in their full extent. How fastidious soever some poets may be in regard to these matters, it is much better to relieve our tired-out attention with a battle, a banquet, or a procession, than an accumulation of incidents. In the latter case the mind is harassed and confused with those doubts, conjectures, and disappointments, which multiplied events occasion, and in a great measure unfitted for attending to the worthier parts of the piece ; but in the former it en-

it unburthens itself of those thoughts which it cannot communicate to others, and which, in certain situations, is the only mode that a dramatist can employ to open to us the mind he would display, must necessarily be often, and to considerable length, introduced. Here, indeed, as it naturally belongs to passion, it will not be so offensive as it generally is in other plays, when a calm unagitated person tells over to himself all that has befallen him, and all his future schemes of intrigue or advancement ; yet to make speeches of this kind sufficiently natural and impressive to excite no degree of weariness nor distaste, will be found to be no easy task. There are, besides these, many other difficulties belonging peculiarly to this undertaking, too minute and tedious to mention. If, fully aware of them, I have not shrunk back from the attempt, it is not from any idea that my own powers or discernment will at all times enable me to overcome them ; but I am emboldened by the confidence I feel in that candour and indulgence, with which the good and enlightened do ever regard the experimental efforts of those who wish in any degree to enlarge the sources of pleasure and instruction among men.

It will now be proper to say something of the particular plays which compose this volume. But, in the first place, I must observe, that as I pretend not to have overcome the difficulties attached to this design ; so, neither from the errors and defects, which, in these pages, I have thought it necessary to point out in the works of others, do I at all pretend to be blameless. To conceive the great moral object and outline of the story ; to people it with various characters, under the influence of various passions ; and to strike out circumstances and situations calculated to call them into action, is a very different employment of the mind from calmly considering those propensities of our nature, to which dramatic writings are most powerfully addressed, and taking a general view upon those principles of the works of preceding authors. They are employments which cannot well occupy it at the same time ; and experience has taught us that critics do not unfrequently write in contradiction to their own rules. If I should, therefore, sometimes appear, in the foregoing remarks, to have provided a stick wherewith to break my own pate, I entreat that my reader will believe I am neither confident nor boastful, and use it with gentleness.

In the first two plays, where love is the passion under review, their relation to the general plan may

joys a rest, a pleasing pause in its more serious occupation, from which it can return again without any incumbrance of foreign intruding ideas. The show of a splendid profession will afford to a person of the best understanding a pleasure in kind, though not in degree, with that which a child would receive from it ; but when it is past he thinks no more of it ; whereas some confusion of circumstances, some half-explained mistake, which gives him no pleasure at all when it takes place, may take his attention afterwards from the refined beauties of a natural and characteristic dialogue.

not be very obvious. Love is the chief groundwork of almost all our tragedies and comedies, and so far they are not distinguished from others. But I have endeavoured in both to give an unbroken view of the passion from its beginning, and to mark it as I went along, with those peculiar traits which distinguish its different stages of progression. I have in both these pieces grafted this passion, not on those open, communicative, impetuous characters, who have so long occupied the dramatic station of lovers, but on men of a firm, thoughtful, reserved turn of mind, with whom it commonly makes the longest stay, and maintains the hardest struggle. I should be extremely sorry if, from any thing at the conclusion of the tragedy, it should be supposed that I mean to countenance suicide, or condemn those customs whose object is the discouragement of it, by withholding from the body of the self-slain those sacred rites and marks of respect commonly shown to the dead. Let it be considered that whatever I have inserted there, which can at all raise any suspicion of this kind, is put into the mouths of rude uncultivated soldiers, who are roused with the loss of a beloved leader, and indignant at any idea of disgrace being attached to him. If it should seem inconsistent with the nature of this work, that in its companion, the comedy, I have made strong moral principle triumph over love, let it be remembered that, without this, the whole moral tendency of a play, which must end happily, would have been destroyed: and that it is not my intention to encourage the indulgence of this passion, amiable as it is, but to restrain it. The last play, the subject of which is hatred, will more clearly discover the nature and intention of my design. The rise and progress of this passion I have been obliged to give in retrospect, instead of representing it all along in its actual operation, as I could have wished to have done. But hatred is a passion of slow growth; and to have exhibited it from its beginnings would have included a longer period than even those who are least scrupulous about the limitation of dramatic time would have thought allowable. I could not have introduced my chief characters upon the stage as boys, and then as men. For this passion must be kept distinct from that dislike which we conceive for another when he has greatly offended us, and which is almost the constant companion of anger; and also from that eager desire to crush, and inflict suffering on him who has injured us, which constitutes revenge. This passion, as I have conceived it, is that rooted and settled aversion which, from opposition of character, aided by circumstances of little importance, grows at last into such antipathy and personal disgust as makes him who entertains it, feel, in the presence of him who is the object of it, a degree of torment and restlessness which is insufferable. It is a passion, I believe, less frequent than

any other of the stronger passions, but in the breast where it does exist it creates, perhaps, more misery than any other. To endeavour to interest the mind for a man under the dominion of a passion so baleful, so unamiable, may seem, perhaps, reprehensible. I therefore beg it may be considered, that it is the passion and not the man which is held up to our execration; and that this and every other bad passion does more strongly evince its pernicious and dangerous nature, when we see it thus counteracting and destroying the good gifts of Heaven, than when it is represented as the suitable associate in the breast of inmates as dark as itself. This remark will likewise be applicable to many of the other plays belonging to my work, that are intended to follow. A decidedly wicked character can never be interesting; and to employ such for the display of any strong passion would very much injure, instead of improving, the moral effect. In the breast of a bad man passion has comparatively little to combat; how then can it show its strength? I shall say no more upon this subject, but submit myself to the judgment of my reader.

It may, perhaps, be supposed, from my publishing these plays, that I have written them for the closet rather than the stage. If, upon perusing them with attention, the reader is disposed to think they are better calculated for the first than the last, let him impute it to want of skill in the author, and not to any previous design. A play but of small poetical merit, that is suited to strike and interest the spectator, to catch the attention of him who will not, and of him who cannot read, is a more valuable and useful production than one whose elegant and harmonious pages are admired in the libraries of the tasteful and refined. To have received approbation from an audience of my countrymen, would have been more pleasing to me than any other praise. A few tears from the simple and young would have been, in my eyes, pearls of great price; and the spontaneous, untutored plaudits of the rude and uncultivated would have come to my heart as offerings of no mean value. I should, therefore, have been better pleased to have introduced them to the world from the stage than from the press. I possess, however, no likely channel to the former mode of public introduction: and, upon further reflection, it appeared to me, that by publishing them in this way, I have an opportunity afforded me of explaining the design of my work, and enabling the public to judge, not only of each play by itself, but as making a part likewise of the whole; an advantage which, perhaps, does more than over-balance the splendour and effect of theatrical representation.

It may be thought that, with this extensive plan before me, I should not have been in a hurry to publish, but have waited to give a larger portion of it to the public, which would have enabled them to make a truer estimate of its merit. To bring forth

only three plays of the whole, and the last without its intended companion, may seem like the haste of those vain people, who, as soon as they have written a few pages of a discourse, or a few couplets of a poem, cannot be easy till every body has seen them. I do protest, in honest simplicity, it is distrust and not confidence that has led me, at this early stage of the undertaking, to bring it before the public. To labour in uncertainty is at all times unpleasant: but to proceed in a long and difficult work with any impression upon your mind that your labour may be in vain; that the opinion you have conceived of your ability to perform it may be a delusion, a false suggestion of self-love, the fantasy of an aspiring temper, is most discouraging and cheerless. I have not proceeded so far, indeed, merely upon the strength of my own judgment: but the friends to whom I have shown my manuscripts are partial to me, and their approbation, which, in the case of any indifferent person, would be in my mind completely decisive, goes but a little way in relieving me from these apprehensions. To step beyond the circle of my own immediate friends in quest of opinion, from the particular temper of my mind, I feel an uncommon repugnance: I can with less pain to myself bring them before the public at once, and submit to its decision.* It is to my countrymen at large I call for assistance. If this work is fortunate enough to attract their attention, let their strictures as well as their praise come to my aid: the one will encourage me in a long and arduous undertaking, the other will teach me to improve it as I advance. For there are many errors that may be detected, and improvements that may be suggested, in the prosecution of this work, which, from the observations of a great variety of readers, are more likely to be pointed out to me, than from those of a small number of persons, even of the best judgment. I am not possessed of that confidence in my own powers, which enables the concealed genius, under the pressure of present discouragement, to pursue his labours in security, looking firmly forward to other more enlightened times for his reward. If my own countrymen, with whom I live and converse, who look upon the same race of men, the same state of society, the same passing events with myself, receive not my offering, I presume not to look to posterity.

Before I close this discourse, let me crave the forbearance of my reader, if he has discovered in the course of it any unacknowledged use of the thoughts of other authors, which he thinks ought to have been noticed; and let me beg the same favour, if in reading the following plays, any similar neglect seems to occur. There are few writers who have sufficient originality of thought to strike out for

themselves new ideas upon every occasion. When a thought presents itself to me, as suited to the purpose I am aiming at, I would neither be thought proud enough to reject it, on finding that another has used it before me, nor mean enough to make use of it without acknowledging the obligation, when I can at all guess to whom such acknowledgments are due. But I am situated where I have no library to consult; my reading through the whole of my life has been of a loose, scattered, unmethodical kind, with no determined direction, and I have not been blessed by nature with the advantages of a retentive or accurate memory. Do not, however, imagine from this, I at all wish to insinuate that I ought to be acquitted of every obligation to preceding authors; and that when a palpable similarity of thought and expression is observable between us, it is a similarity produced by accident alone, and with perfect unconsciousness on my part. I am frequently sensible, from the manner in which an idea arises to my imagination, and the readiness with which words, also, present themselves to clothe it in, that I am only making use of some dormant part of that hoard of ideas which the most indifferent memories lay up, and not the native suggestions of my own mind. Whenever I have suspected myself of doing so, in the course of this work, I have felt a strong inclination to mark that suspicion in a note. But, besides that it might have appeared like an affectation of scrupulousness which I would avoid, there being likewise, most assuredly, many other places in it where I have done the same thing without being conscious of it, a suspicion of wishing to slur them over, and claim all the rest as unreservedly my own, would unavoidably have attached to me. If this volume should appear, to any candid and liberal critic, to merit that he should take the trouble of pointing out to me in what parts of it I seem to have made that use of other authors' writings, which, according to the fair laws of literature, ought to have been acknowledged, I shall think myself obliged to him. I shall examine the sources he points out as having supplied my own lack of ideas; and if this book should have the good fortune to go through a second edition, I shall not fail to own my obligations to him, and the authors from whom I may have borrowed.

How little credit soever, upon perusing these plays, the reader may think me entitled to in regard to the execution of the work, he will not, I flatter myself, deny me some credit in regard to the plan. I know of no series of plays, in any language, expressly descriptive of the different passions; and I believe there are few plays existing, in which the display of one strong passion is the chief business of the drama,

* The first of these plays, indeed, has been shown to two or three gentlemen whom I have not the honour of reckoning amongst my friends. One of them, who is a man of dis-

tinguished talents, has honoured it with very flattering approbation; and, at his suggestion, one or two slight alterations in it have been made.

so written that they could properly make part of such a series. I do not think that we should, from the works of various authors, be able to make a collection which would give us any thing exactly of the nature of that which is here proposed. If the reader, in perusing it, perceives that the abilities of the author are not proportioned to the task which is imposed upon them, he will wish in the spirit of kindness rather than of censure, as I most sincerely do, that they had been more adequate to it. However, if I perform it ill, I am still confident that this (pardon me if I call it so) noble design will not be suffered to fall to the ground: some one will arise after me who will do it justice; and there is no poet possessing genius for such a work, who will not at the same time possess that spirit of justice and of candour, which will lead him to remember me with respect.

I have now only to thank my reader, whoever he may be, who has followed me through the pages of this discourse, for having had the patience to do so. May he, in going through what follows (a wish the sincerity of which he cannot doubt), find more to reward his trouble than I dare venture to promise him; and for the pains he has already taken, and those which he intends to take for me, I request that he will accept of my grateful acknowledgments.

Note. — Shakspeare, more than any of our poets, gives peculiar and appropriate distinction to the characters of his tragedies. The remarks I have made, in regard to the little variety of character to be met with in tragedy, apply not to him. Neither has he, as other dramatists generally do, bestowed pains on the chief persons of his drama only, leaving the second and inferior ones insignificant and spiritless. He never wears out our capacity to feel by eternally pressing upon it. His tragedies are agreeably chequered with variety of scenes, enriched with good sense, nature, and vivacity,

which relieve our minds from the fatigue of continued distress. If he sometimes carries this so far as to break in upon that serious tone of mind, which disposes us to listen with effect to the higher scenes of tragedy, he has done so chiefly in his historical plays, where the distresses set forth are commonly of that public kind which do not, at any rate, make much impression upon the feelings.

ADVERTISEMENT.

[Prefixed to the first volume of Plays on the Passions.]

THE Plays contained in this volume were all laid by for at least one year, before they were copied out to prepare them for the press; I have therefore had the advantage of reading them over, when they were in some measure effaced from my memory, and judging of them in some degree like an indifferent person. The Introduction has not had the same advantage; it was copied out for the press immediately after I had finished it, and I have not had courage to open the book, or read any part of it, till it was put into my hands to be corrected for the third edition. Upon reading it over again, it appears to me that a tone of censure and decision is too often discoverable in it, which I have certainly no title to assume. It was, perhaps, difficult to avoid this fault, and at the same time completely to give the view I desired of my motives and plan in this work; but I sincerely wish that I had been skilful enough to have accomplished it without falling into this error. Though I have escaped, as far as I know, all censure on this account, yet I wish the Public to be assured, that I am both sensible of, and grateful for, their forbearance.

BASIL:

A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

COUNT BASIL, *a general in the Emperor's service.*
 COUNT ROSINBERG, *his friend.*
 DUKE OF MANTUA.
 GAURIECIO, *his minister.*
 VALTOMER, } *two officers of BASIL's troops.*
 FREDERIC, }
 GEOFFRY, *an old soldier very much maimed in the wars.*
 MIRANDO, *a little boy, a favourite of VICTORIA.*

WOMEN.

VICTORIA, *daughter to the Duke of Mantua.*
 COUNTESS OF ALBINI, *friend and governess to VICTORIA.*
 ISABELLA, *a lady attending upon VICTORIA.*

Officers, soldiers, and attendants, masks, dancers, &c

* * * *The Scene is in Mantua, and its environs. Time supposed to be the sixteenth century, when CHARLES the Fifth defeated FRANCIS the First, at the battle of Pavia.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

An open street, crowded with people, who seem to be waiting in expectation of some show.

Enter a Citizen.

First Man. Well, friend, what tidings of the grand procession? ↵

Cit. I left it passing by the northern gate.

Second Man. I've waited long, I'm glad it comes at last.

Young Man. And does the princess look so wondrous fair

As fame reports?

Cit. She is the fairest lady of the train,—
Yet all the fairest beauties of the court
Arc in her train.

Old Man. Bears she such off'rings to Saint Francis' shrine,

So rich, so marvellous rich, as rumour says?
—'Twill drain the treasury!

Cit. Since she, in all this splendid pomp returns
Her public thanks to the good patron Saint,
Who from his sick bed hath restor'd her father, ↵
Thou wouldst not have her go with empty hands?
She loves magnificence.—

[*Discovering amongst the crowd old GEOFFRY.*
Ha! art thou here, old remnant of the wars?
Thou art not come to see this courtly show,
Which sets the young agape?

Geof. I came not for the show; and yet, methinks,
It were a better jest upon me still,
If thou didst truly know my errand here.

Cit. I pri'thee say.

Geof. What, must I tell it thee?

As o'er my evening fire I musing sat,
Some few days since, my mind's eye backward
turn'd

Upon the various changes I have pass'd—
How in my youth with gay attire allur'd,
And all the grand accoutrements of war,
I left my peaceful home: then my first battles, ↵
When clashing arms, and sights of blood were new:
Then all the after chances of the war:
Ay, and that field, a well-fought field it was,
When with an arm (I speak not of it ort)
Which now (*pointing to his empty sleeve*) thou seest
is no arm of mine,

In a strait pass I stopp'd a thousand focs,
And turn'd my flying comrades to the charge;
For which good service, in his tented court,
My prince bestow'd a mark of favour on me; ↵
While his fair consort, seated by his side,
The fairest lady e'er mine eyes beheld,
Gave me what more than all besides I priz'd,—
Methinks I see her still—a gracious smile—

'Twas a heart-kindling smile,—a smile of praise—
Well, musing thus on all my fortunes past,
A neighbour drew the latchet of my door,
And full of news from town, in many words
Big with rich names, told of this grand procession; ↵
E'en as he spoke a fancy seiz'd my soul
To see the princess pass, if in her looks
I yet might trace some semblance of her mother. ↵
This is the simple truth; laugh as thou wilt.
I came not for the show.

Enter an Officer.

Off. to Geof. Make way that the procession may
have room:
Stand you aside, and let this man have place.

[*Pushing GEOFF. and endeavouring to put another
in his place.*

Geof. But that thou art the prince's officer,
I'd give thee back thy push with better blows.

Off. What, wilt thou not give place? the prince
is near:

I will complain to him, and have thee caged.

Geof. Yes, do complain, I pray; and when thou
dost,

Say that the private of the tenth brigade,
Who sav'd his army on the Danube's bank,
And since that time a private hath remain'd,
Dares, as a citizen, his right maintain
Against thy insolence. Go tell him this,
And ask him then what dungeon of his tower
He'll have me thrust into.

Cit. to Off. This is old Geoffry of the tenth
brigade.

Off. I knew him not: you should have told me
sooner. ↵ [Exit, looking much ashamed.

Martial music heard at a distance.

Cit. Hark, this is music of a warlike kind.

Enter second Citizen.

To Sec. Cit. What sounds are these, good friend,
which this way bear?

Sec. Cit. The brave Count Basil is upon his
march,

To join the emperor with some chosen troops,
And doth as our ally through Mantua pass.

Geof. I've heard a good report of this young
soldier.—

Sec. Cit. 'Tis said he disciplines his men severely
And over-much affects the old commander,
Which seems ungracious in so young a man.

Geof. I know he loves not ease and revelry;
He makes them soldiers at no dearer rate
Than he himself hath paid. What, dost thou think,
That e'en the very meaneast simple craft
Cannot without due diligence be learn'd,
And yet the nobler art of soldiiership
May be attained by loit'ring in the sun?
Some men are born to feast and not to fight:

Whose sluggish minds, e'en in fair honour's field
Still on their dinner turn —

Let such pot-boiling varlets stay at home,
And wield a flesh-hook rather than a sword.
In times of easy service, true it is,
An easy careless chief, all soldiers love ;
But O how gladly in the day of battle
Would they their jolly bottle-chief desert,
And follow such a leader as Count Basil !
So gath'ring herds, at pressing danger's call,
Confess the master deer.

[*Music is heard again, and nearer.* **GEOF.**
walks up and down with a military triumphant step.

Cit. What moves thee thus ?

Geof. I've march'd to this same tune in glorious days.

My very limbs catch motion from the sound,
As they were young again.

Sec. Cit. But here they come.

Enter Count BASIL, officers and soldiers in procession, with colours flying, and martial music. When they have marched half-way over the stage, an officer of the duke's enters from the opposite side, and speaks to BASIL, upon which he gives a sign with his hand, and the martial music ceases ; soft music is heard at a little distance, and VICTORIA, with a long procession of ladies, enters from the opposite side. The General &c. pay obeisance to her, as she passes ; she stops to return it, and then goes off with her train. After which the military procession moves on, and Exeunt.

Cit. to Geof. What thinkst thou of the princess ?

Geof. She is fair,

But not so fair as her good mother was.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A public walk on the ramparts of the town.

Enter Count ROSINBERG, VALTOMER, and FREDERIC. — VALTOMER enters by the opposite side of the stage, and meets them.

Valt. O what a jolly town for way-worn soldiers !
Rich steaming pots, and smell of dainty fare,
From every house salute you as you pass :
Light feats and juggler's tricks attract the eye ;
Music and merriment in ev'ry street ;
Whilst pretty damsels in their best attire,
Trip on in wanton groups, then look behind,
To spy the fools a-gazing after them.

Fred. But short will be the season of our ease,
For Basil is of flinty matter made,
And cannot be allur'd —
'Faith, Rosinberg, I would thou didst command us,
Thou art his kinsman, of a rank as noble,

Some years his elder too — How has it been
That he should be preferr'd ? I see not why.

Ros. Ah ! but I see it, and allow it well ;
He is too much my pride to wake my envy.

Fred. Nay, Count, it is thy foolish admiration
Which raises him to such superior height ;
And truly thou hast so infected us,
That I at times have felt me aw'd before him,
I knew not why. 'Tis cursed folly this.
Thou art as brave, of as good parts as lie.

Ros. Our talents of a diff'rent nature are ;
Mine for the daily intercourse of life,
And his for higher things.

Fred. Well, praise him as thou wilt ; I see it not ;
I'm sure I am as brave a man as he.

Ros. Yes, brave thou art, but 'tis subaltern bravery,
And doth respect thyself. Thou'lt bleed as well,
Give and receive as deep a wound as he.
When Basil fights he wields a thousand swords ;
For 'tis their trust in his unshaken mind,
O'erwatching all the changes of the field,
Calm and inventive 'midst the battle's storm,
Which makes his soldiers bold. —

There have been those, in early manhood slain,
Whose great heroic souls have yet inspir'd
With such a noble zeal their gen'rous troops,
That to their latest day of bearing arms,
Their grey-hair'd soldiers have all dangers brav'd
Of desp'rate service, claim'd with boastful pride,
As those who fought beneath them in their youth.
Such men have been ; of whom it may be said,
Their spirits conquer'd when their clay was cold.

Valt. Yes, I have seen in the eventful field,
When new occasion mock'd all rules of art,
E'en old commanders hold experience cheap,
And look to Basil ere his chin was dark.

Ros. One fault he has ; I know but only one ;
His too great love of military fame
Absorbs his thoughts, and makes him oft appear
Unsocial and severe.

Fred. Well, feel I not undaunted in the field ?
As much enthusiastic love of glory ?

Why am I not as good a man as he ?

Ros. He's form'd for great occasions, thou for small.

Valt. But small occasions in the path of life
Lie thickly sown, while great are rarely scatter'd.

Ros. By which you would infer that men like
Fred'ric

Should on the whole a better figure make,
Than men of higher parts. It is not so ;
For some show well, and fair applauses gain,
Where want of skill in other men is graceful.
Pray do not frown, good Fred'ric, no offence :
Thou canst not make a great man of thyself ;
Yet wisely deign to use thy native pow'rs,
And prove an honour'd courtly gentleman.
But hush ! no more of this ; here Basil comes.

Enter BASIL, who returns their salute without speaking.

Ros. What thinkest thou, Valtomer, of Mantua's princess? ✓

Valt. Fame prais'd her much, but hath not prais'd her more

Than on a better proof the eye consents to. ✓
With all that grace and nobleness of mien,
She might do honour to an emp'r's throne;
She is too noble for a petty court.
Is it not so, my lord? — (*To BASIL, who only bows assent.*)

Nay, she demeans herself with so much grace,
Such easy state, such gay magnificence,
She should be queen of revelry and show.

Fred. She's charming as the goddess of delight.

Valt. But after her, she most attracted me
Who wore the yellow scarf and walk'd the last; ✓
For, though Victoria is a lovely woman —

Fred. Nay, it is treason but to call her woman; ✓
She's a divinity, and should be worshipp'd. ✓
But on my life, since now we talk of worship, ✓
She worshipp'd Francis with right noble gifts!
They sparkled so with gold and precious gems —
Their value must be great; some thousand crowns.

Ros. I would not rate them at a price so mean;
The cup alone, with precious stones beset,
Would fetch a sum as great. That olive-branch
The princess bore herself, of fretted gold,
Was exquisitely wrought. I mark'd it more,
Because she held it in so white a hand.

Bas. (*in a quick voice.*) Mark'd you her hand? ✓
I did not see her hand. —
And yet she wav'd it twice.

Ros. It is a fair one, tho' you mark'd it not.

Valt. I wish some painter's eye had view'd the group,

As she and all her lovely damsels pass'd;
He would have found wherewith t'enrich his art.

Ros. I wish so too; for oft their fancied beauties
Have so much cold perfection in their parts,
'Tis plain they ne'er belong'd to flesh and blood.
This is not truth, and doth not please so well
As the varieties of lib'ral nature,
Where ev'ry kind of beauty charms the eye;
Large and small featur'd, flat and prominent,
Ay, by the mass! and snub-nos'd beauties too.
'Faith, ev'ry woman hath some witching charm,
If that she be not proud, or captious.

Valt. Demure, or over-wise, or giv'n to freaks.

Ros. Or giv'n to freaks! hold, hold, good Valtomer!

Thou'lt leave no woman handsome under heav'n.
Valt. But I must leave you for an hour or so;
I mean to view the town.

Fred. I'll go with thee.

Ros. And so will I.

[*Exeunt VALTOMER, FREDERIC, and ROSINBERG.*]

Re-enter ROSINBERG.

Ros. I have repented me, I will not go;
They will be too long absent. — (*Pauses, and looks at BASIL, who remains still musing without seeing him.*)

What mighty thoughts engage my pensive friend?

Bas. O it is admirable!

Ros. How runs thy fancy? what is admirable?

Bas. Her form, her face, her motion, ev'rything!

Ros. The princess; yes, have we not prais'd her much?

Bas. I know you prais'd her, and her off'rings too!

She might have giv'n the treasures of the East,

Ere I had known it. ✓

O! didst thou mark her when she first appear'd,

Still distant, slowly moving with her train;

Her robe and tresses floating on the wind,

Like some light figure in a morning cloud?

Then, as she onward to the eye became

The more distinct, how lovelier still she grew!

That graceful bearing of her slender form;

Her roundly spreading breast, her tow'ring neck,

Her face ting'd sweetly with the bloom of youth —

But when approaching near, she tow'rd's us turn'd,

Kind mercy! what a countenance was there!

And when to our salute she gently bow'd,

Didst mark that smile rise from her parting lips?

Soft swell'd her glowing cheek, her eyes smil'd too,

O how they smil'd! 'twas like the beams of heav'n!

I felt my roused soul within me start,

Like something wak'd from sleep. [wake

Ros. The beams of heav'n do many slumb'ers

To care and misery! [voice

Bas. There's something grave and solemn in your

As you pronounce these words. What dost thou

mean?

Thou wouldst not sound my knell?

Ros. No, not for all beneath the vaulted sky!

But to be plain, thus warmly from your lips,

Her praise displaces me. To men like you,

If love should come, he proves no easy guest.

Bas. What, dost thou think I am beside myself,

And cannot view the fairness of perfection?

With that delight which lovely beauty gives,

Without tormenting me by fruitless wishes,

Like the poor child who sees its brighten'd face,

And whimpers for the moon! Thou art not serious.

From early youth, war has my mistress been,

And tho' a rugged one, I'll constant prove,

And not forsake her now. There may be joys

Which, to the strange o'erwhelming of the soul,

Visit the lover's breast beyond all others;

E'en now, how dearly do I feel there may!

But what of them? they are not made for me —

The hasty flashes of contending steel

Must serve instead of glances from my love,

And for soft breathing sighs the cannon's roar.

Ros. (taking his hand). Now am I satisfied.
 Forgive me, Basil. [more;

Bas. I'm glad thou art; we'll talk of her no
 Why should I vex my friend?

Ros. Thou hast not issued orders for the march.

Bas. I'll do it soon; thou needst not be afraid.

To-morrow's sun shall bear us far from hence,
 Never perhaps to pass these gates again.

Ros. With last night's close, did you not curse
 this town

That would one single day your troops retard:
 And now, methinks, you talk of leaving it,
 As though it were the place that gave you birth;
 As though you had around these strangers' walls
 Your infant gambols play'd.

Bas. The sight of what may be but little priz'd,
 Doth cause a solemn sadness in the mind,
 When view'd as that we ne'er shall see again.

Ros. No, not a whit to wandering men like us.
 No, not a whit! What custom hath endear'd
 We part with sadly, though we prize it not:
 But what is new some powerful charm must own,
 Thus to affect the mind.

Bas. (hastily). We'll let it pass — It hath no con-
 sequence:
 Thou art impatient.

Ros. I'm not impatient. 'Faith, I only wish
 Some other route our destin'd march had been,
 That still thou mightst thy glorious course pursue
 With an untroubled mind.

Bas. O! wish it, wish it not! bless'd be that
 route!

What we have seen to-day, I must remember —
 I should be brutish if I could forget it.
 Oft in the watchful post, or weary march,
 Oft in the nightly silence of my tent,
 My fixed mind shall gaze upon it still;
 But it will pass before my fancy's eye,
 Like some delightful vision of the soul,
 To soothe, not trouble it.

Ros. What! 'midst the dangers of eventful war,
 Still let thy mind be haunted by a woman?
 Who would, perhaps, hear of thy fall in battle,
 As Dutchmen read of earthquakes in Calabria,
 And never stop to cry "alack a-day!"
 For me there is but one of all the sex,
 Who still shall hold her station in my breast,
 'Midst all the changes of inconstant fortune;
 Because I'm passing sure she loves me well,
 And for my sake a sleepless pillow finds
 When rumour tells bad tidings of the war;
 Because I know her love will never change,
 Nor make me prove uneasy jealousy. [woman?

Bas. Happy art thou! who is this wondrous

Ros. It is my own good mother, faith and truth?

Bas. (smiling). Give me thy hand; I love her
 dearly too.

Rivals we are not, though our love is one.

Ros. And yet I might be jealous of her love,

For she bestows too much of it on thee,
 Who hast no claim but to a nephew's share.

Bas. (going). I'll meet thee some time hence. I
 must to court.

Ros. A private conference will not stay thee long.
 I'll wait thy coming near the palace gate.

Bas. 'Tis to the public court I mean to go.

Ros. I thought you had determin'd otherwise.

Bas. Yes, but on further thought it did appear
 As though it would be failing in respect [berg!
 At such a time — That look doth wrong me, Rosin-
 For on my life, I had determin'd thus,
 Ere I beheld — Before we enter'd Mantua.
 But wilt thou change that soldier's dusty garb,
 And go with me thyself?

Ros. Yes, I will go.

[As they are going *Ros.* stops and looks at *BASIL*.

Bas. Why dost thou stop?

Ros. 'Tis for my wonted caution,
 Which first thou gav'st me — I shall ne'er forget it!
 'Twas at Vienna, on a public-day;
 Thou but a youth, I then a man full form'd;
 Thy stripling's brow grac'd with its first cockade,
 Thy mighty bosom swell'd with mighty thoughts.
 Thou'rt for the court, dear Rosinberg, quoth thou!
 "Now pray thee be not caught with some gay dame,
 To laugh and ogle, and befool thyself:
 It is offensive in the public eye,
 And suits not with a man of thy endowments."

So said your serious lordship to me, then,

And have on like occasions, often since,

In other terms repeated. —

But I must go to-day without my caution.

Bas. Nay, Rosinberg, I am impatient now:

Did I not say we'd talk of her no more?

Ros. Well, my good friend, God grant we keep
 our word! [Exeunt.

Note. — My first idea when I wrote this play was to represent Basil as having seen Victoria for the first time in the procession, that I might show more perfectly the passion from its first beginning, and also its sudden power over the mind; but I was induced, from the criticism of one whose judgment I very much respect, to alter it, and represent him as having formerly seen and loved her. The first Review that took notice of this work objected to Basil's having seen her before as a defect; and, as we are all easily determined to follow our own opinion, I have, upon after-consideration, given the play in this edition [thus], as far as this is concerned, exactly in its original state. Strong internal evidence of this will be discovered by any one who will take the trouble of reading attentively the second scenes of the first and second acts in the present and former editions of this book. Had Basil seen and loved Victoria before, his first speech, in which he describes her to Rosinberg as walking in the procession, would not be natural; and there are, I think, other little things besides, which will show that the circumstance of his former meeting with her is an interpolation.

The blame of this, however, I take entirely upon myself; the critic, whose opinion I have mentioned, judged of the piece entirely as an unconnected play, and knew nothing of the general plan of this work, which ought to have been communicated to him. Had it been, indeed, an unconnected play, and had I put this additional circumstance to it with proper judgment and skill, I am inclined to think it would have been an improvement.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A room of state. The DUKE of MANTUA, BASIL, ROSINBERG, and a number of Courtiers, Attendants, &c. The DUKE and BASIL appear talking together on the front of the stage.

Duke. But our opinions differ widely there; From the position of the rival armies, I cannot think they'll join in battle soon.

Bas. I am indeed beholden to your highness, But though unwillingly, we must depart. The foes are near, the time is critical; A soldier's reputation is too fine, To be expos'd e'en to the smallest cloud.

Duke. An untried soldier's is; but yours, my lord, Nurs'd with the bloody show'rs of many a field, And brightest sunshine of successful fortune, A plant of such a hardy stem hath grown, E'en envy's sharpest blasts assail it not. Yet after all, by the bless'd holy Cross! I feel too warm an interest in the cause To stay your progress here a single hour, Did I not know your soldiers are fatigu'd, And two days' rest would much recruit their strength.

Bas. Your highness will be pleas'd to pardon me; My troops are not o'ermarch'd, and one day's rest Is all our needs require.

Duke. Ah! hadst thou come Unfetter'd with the duties of command, I then had well retain'd thee for my guest, With claims too strong, too sacred for denial. Thy noble sire my fellow-soldier was; Together many a rough campaign we serv'd; I lov'd him well, and much it pleases me A son of his beneath my roof to see.

Bas. Were I indeed free master of myself, Strong inclination would detain me here; No other tie were wanting.

These gracious tokens of your princely favour I'll treasure with my best remembrances; For he who shows them for my father's sake, Does something sacred in his kindness bear, As though he shed a blessing on my head.

Duke. Well, bear my greetings to the brave Pescara,

And say how warmly I embrace the cause. Your third day's march will to his presence bring Your valiant troops: said you not so, my lord?

Enter VICTORIA, the COUNTESS of ALBINI, ISABELLA, and LADIES.

Bas. (who changes countenance upon seeing them). Yes, I believe—I think—I know not well— Yes, please your grace, we march by break of day.

Duke. Nay, that I know. I ask'd you, noble count, When you expect to join th' imperial force.

Bas. When it shall please your grace—I crave your pardon—

I somewhat have mistaken of your words.

Duke. You are not well? your colour changes, count.

What is the matter?

Bas. A dizzy mist that swims before my sight— A ringing in my ears—'tis strange enough—

'Tis slight—'tis nothing worth—'tis gone already.

Duke. I'm glad it is. Look to your friend, Count Rosinberg,

It may return again— (To ROSINBERG, who stands at a little distance, looking earnestly at BASIL—DUKE leaves them and joins VICTORIA'S party.)

Ros. Good heavens, Basil, is it thus with thee! Thy hand shakes too: (taking his hand.) Would we were far from hence!

Bas. I'm well again, thou needst not be afraid. 'Tis like enough my frame is indispos'd With some slight weakness from our weary march. Nay, look not on me thus, it is unkindly— I cannot bear thine eyes.

The DUKE, with VICTORIA and her ladies, advances to the front of the stage to BASIL.

Duke. Victoria, welcome here the brave Count Basil;

His kinsman too, the gallant Rosinberg, May you, and these fair ladies so prevail, Such gentle suitors cannot plead in vain, To make them grace my court another day. I shall not be offended when I see Your power surpasses mine.

Vict. Our feeble efforts will presumptuous seem, Attempting that in which your highness fails.

Duke. There's honour in th' attempt; success attend ye! (Duke retires, and mixes with the courtiers at the bottom of the stage.)

Vict. I fear we incommoded you, my lord, With the slow tedious length of our procession. E'en as I pass'd, it went against my heart, To stop so long upon their tedious way Your weary troops.—

Bas. Ah! madam, all too short! Time never bears such moments on his wing, But when he flies too swiftly to be mark'd.

Vict. Ah! surely then you make too good amends

By marking now his after-progress well. To-day must seem a weary length to him Who is so eager to be gone to-morrow.

Ros. They must not linger who would quit these walls;

For if they do, a thousand masked foes; Some under show of rich luxurious feasts, Gay, sprightly pastime, and high-zested game;— Nay, some, my gentle ladies, true it is, The very worst and fellest of the crew.

In fair alluring shape of beauteous dames,
Do such a barrier form t' oppose their way,
As few men may o'ercome.

Isab. From this last wicked foe should we infer
Yourself have suffer'd much?

Albin. No, Isabella, these are common words,
To please you with false notions of your pow'r.
So all men talk of ladies and of love.

Vict. 'Tis even so. If Love a tyrant be,
How dare his humble chained votaries
To tell such rude and wicked tales of him?

Bas. Because they most of lover's ills complain,
Who but affect it as a courtly grace,
Whilst he who feels is silent.

Ros. But there you wrong me; I have felt it oft.
Oft has it made me sigh at ladies' feet,
Soft ditties sing, and dismal sonnets scrawl.

Albin. In all its strange effects, most worthy
Rosinberg,

Has it e'er made thee in a corner sit,
Sad, lonely, moping sit, and hold thy tongue?

Ros. No, 'faith, it never has.

Albin. Ha, ha, ha, ha! then thou hast never lov'd.

Ros. Nay, but I have, and felt love's bondage too.

Vict. Eye! it is pedantry to call it bondage!

Love-marring wisdom, reason full of bars,
Deserve, methinks, that appellation more.

Is it not so, my lord? — (*To BASIL.*)

Bas. O surely, madam!
That is not bondage which the soul enthrall'd
So gladly bears, and quits not but with anguish.
Stern honour's laws, the fair report of men,
These are the fetters that enchain the mind,
But such as must not, cannot be unloos'd.

Vict. No, not unloos'd, but yet one day relax'd,
To grant a lady's suit unus'd to sue.

Ros. Your highness deals severely with us now,
And proves indeed our freedom is but small,
Who are constrain'd, when such a lady sues,
To say it cannot be.

Vict. It cannot be! Count Basil says not so.

Ros. For that I am his friend, to save him pain
I take th' ungracious office on myself.

Vict. How ill thy face is suited to thine office!

Ros. (*smiling.*) Would I could suit mine office to
my face,

If that would please your highness.

Vict. No, you are obstinate and perverse all,
And would not grant it if you had the pow'r.

Albin, I'll retire; come, Isabella.

Bas. (*aside to Ros.*) Ah, Rosinberg! thou hast
too far presum'd;

She is offended with us.

Ros. No, she is not —
What dost thou fear? be firm, and let us go.

Vict. (*pointing to a door leading to other apart-
ments, by which she is ready to go out.*)

These are apartments strangers love to see:
Some famous paintings do their walls adorn:

They lead you also to the palace court
As quickly as the way by which you came.

[*Exit VICT. led out by ROS., and followed by ISAB.*

Bas. (*aside, looking after them.*) O! what a fool
am I! where fled my thoughts?

I might as well as he, now, by her side,
Have held her precious hand enclos'd in mine.
As well as he, who cares not for it neither.

O but he does! that were impossible!

Albin. You stay behind, my lord.

Bas. Your pardon, madam; honour me so far —
[*Exeunt, BASIL handing out ALBIN.*

SCENE II.

*A gallery hung with pictures. VICTORIA discovered
in conversation with ROSINBERG, BASIL, ALBIN,
and ISABELLA.*

Vict. (*to Ros.*) It is indeed a work of wondrous art.
(*To ISAB.*) You call'd Francisco here?

Isab. He comes even now.

Enter Attendant.

Vict. (*to Ros.*) He will conduct you to the
northern gallery;

Its striking shades will call upon the eye.
To point its place there needs no other guide.

[*Exeunt Ros. and Attendant.*
(*To BAS.*) Loves not Count Basil too this charming
art?

It is an ancient painting much admir'd. [*moments :*

Bas. Ah! do not banish me these few short
Too soon they will be gone! for ever gone!

Vict. If they are precious to you, say not so,
But add to them another precious day.

A lady asks it. [*heart!*

Bas. Ah, madam! ask the life-blood from my
Ask all but what a soldier may not give.

Vict. 'Tis ever thus when favours are denied;
All had been granted but the thing we beg;

And still some great unlikely substitute,
Your life, your soul, your all of earthly good,

Is proffer'd in the room of one small boon.
So keep your life-blood, gen'rous, valiant lord,

And may it long your noble heart enrich,
Until I wish it shed. (*BAS. attempts to speak.*)

Nay, frame no new excuse;

I will not hear it.

[*She puts out her hand as if she would shut his
mouth, but at a distance from it; BAS. runs
eagerly up to her, and presses it to his lips.*

Bas. Let this sweet hand indeed its threat perform,
And make it heav'n to be for ever dumb!

(*VICT. looks stately and offended — BASIL kneels.*)
O pardon me! I know not what I do.

Frown not, reduce me not to wretchedness;
But only grant —

Vict. What should I grant to him,
Who has so oft my earnest suit denied?

Bas. By heav'n I'll grant it! I'll do any thing,
Say but thou art no more offended with me.

Vict. (raising him). Well, Basil, this good promise is thy pardon.

I will not wait your noble friend's return,
Since we shall meet again. —
You will perform your word?

Bas. I will perform it.

Vict. Farewell, my lord. [*Exit, with her ladies.*]

Bas. (alone). "Farewell, my lord." O! what delightful sweetness!

The music of that voice dwells on the ear! [so —
"Farewell, my lord!" — Ay, and then look'd she

The slightest glance of her bewitching eye,
Those dark blue eyes, commands the inmost soul.

Well, there is yet one day of life before me,
And, whatso'er betide, I will enjoy it.

Though but a partial sunshine in my lot,
I will converse with her, gaze on her still,
If all behind were pain and misery.

Pain! Were it not the easing of all pain,
E'en in the dismal gloom of after years,

Such dear remembrance on the mind to wear,
Like silv'ry moon-beams on the 'nighted deep,

When heav'n's blest sun is gone?

Kind mercy! how my heart within me beat

When she so sweetly pled the cause of love!

Can she have lov'd? why shrink I at the thought?

Why should she not? no, no, it cannot be —

No man on earth is worthy of her love.

Ah! if she could, how blest a man were he!

Where rove my giddy thoughts? it must not be.

Yet might she well some gentle kindness bear;

Think of him oft, his absent fate inquire,

And, should he fall in battle, mourn his fall.

Yes, she would mourn — such love might she
bestow;

And poor of soul the man who would exchange it

For warmest love of the most loving dame!

But here comes Rosinberg — have I done well?

He will not say I have.

Enter ROSINBERG.

Ros. Where is the princess?

I'm sorry I return'd not ere she went.

Bas. You'll see her still.

Ros. What, comes she forth again?

Bas. She does to-morrow.

Ros. Thou hast yielded then.

Bas. Come, Rosinberg, I'll tell thee as we go:

It was impossible I should not yield.

Ros. O Basil! thou art weaker than a child.

Bas. Yes, yes, my friend, but tis a noble weakness,

A weakness which hath greater things achiev'd

Than all the firm determin'd strength of reason.

By heav'n! I feel a new-born pow'r within me,

Shall make me twenty-fold the man I've been

Before this fated day.

Ros. Fated indeed! but an ill-fated day,

That makes thee other than thy former self.
Yet let it work its will; it cannot change thee
To aught I shall not love.

Bas. Thanks, Rosinberg! thou art a noble heart.
I would not be the man thou couldst not love
For an imperial crown. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A small apartment in the palace.

Enter DUKE and GAURICIO.

Duke. The point is gain'd; my daughter is successful;

And Basil is detain'd another day. [*aim?*]

Gaur. But does the princess know your secret

Duke. No, that had marr'd the whole; she is a
woman —

Her mind, as suits the sex, too weak and narrow

To relish deep-laid schemes of policy.

Besides, so far unlike a child of mine,

She holds its subtle arts in high derision,

And will not serve us but with bandag'd eyes.

Gauricio, could I trusty servants find,

Experienc'd, crafty, close, and unrestrain'd

By silly superstitious child-learn't fears,

What might I not effect?

Gaur.

O any thing!

The deep and piercing genius of your highness,

So ably serv'd, might e'en achieve the empire.

Duke. No, no, my friend, thou dost o'erprize my
parts;

Yet mighty things might be — deep subtle wits,

In truth, are master spirits in the world.

The brave man's courage, and the student's love,

Are but as tools his secret ends to work,

Who hath the skill to use them.

This brave Count Basil, dost thou know him well?

Much have we gain'd, but for a single day,

At such a time, to hold his troops detain'd;

When, by that secret message of our spy,

The rival pow'rs are on the brink of action:

But might we more effect? Knowst thou this
Basil?

Might he be tamper'd with?

Gaur.

That were most dang'rous. —

He is a man, whose sense of right and wrong

To such a high romantic pitch is wound,

And all so hot and fiery in his nature,

The slightest hint, as though you did suppose

Baseness and treach'ry in him, so he'll deem it,

Would be to rouse a flame that might destroy.

Duke. But int'rest, int'rest, man's all-ruling pow'r,

Will tame the hottest spirit to your service,

And skilfully applied, mean service too;

E'en as there is an element in nature

Which, when subdu'd, will on your hearth fulfil

The lowest uses of domestic wants. [*spark,*]

Gaur. Earth-kindled fire, which from a little

On hidden fuel feeds its growing strength,
Till o'er the lofty fabric it aspires
And rages out its pow'r, may be subdu'd,
And in your base domestic service bound ;
But who would madly in its wild career
The fire of heav'n arrest to boil his pot ?
No, Basil will not serve your secret schemes,
Though you had all to give ambition strives for.
We must beware of him.

Duke. His father was my friend,—I wish'd to
gain him :

But since fantastic fancies bind him thus,
The sin be on his head ; I stand acquitted,
And must deceive him, even to his ruin.

Gaur. I have prepar'd Bernardo for your service ;
To-night he will depart for th' Austrian camp,
And should he find them on the eve of battle,
I've bid him wait the issue of the field.
If that our secret friends victorious prove,
With the arrow's speed he will return again :
But should fair Fortune crown Pescara's arms,
Then shall your soothing message greet his ears ;
For till our friends some sound advantage gain,
Our actions still must wear an Austrian face.

Duke. Well hast thou school'd him. Didst thou
add withal,

That 'tis my will he garnish well his speech,
With honied words of the most dear regard,
And friendly love I bear him ? This is needful ;
And lest my slowness in the promis'd aid
Awake suspicion, bid him e'en rehearse
The many favours on my house bestow'd
By his imperial master, as a theme
On which my gratitude delights to dwell.

Gaur. I have, an' please your highness.

Duke. Then 'tis well.

Gaur. But for the yielding up that little fort
There could be no suspicion.

Duke. My Governor I have severely punish'd,
As a most daring traitor to my orders.

He cannot from his darksome dungeon tell ;

Why then should they suspect ? [victorious.

Gaur. He must not live, should Charles prove

Duke. He's done meservice ; say not so, Gauricicio.

Gaur. A traitor's name he will not calmly bear ;
He'll tell his tale aloud—he must not live.

Duke. Well, if it must—we'll talk of this again.

Gaur. But while with anxious care and crafty
wiles

You would enlarge the limits of your state,
Your highness must beware lest inward broils
Bring danger near at hand : your northern subjects
E'en now are discontented and unquiet.

Duke. What, dare the ungrateful miscreants
thus return

The many favours of my princely grace ?

'Tis ever thus ; indulgence spoils the base ;

Raising up pride, and lawless turbulence,
Like noxious vapours from the fulsome marsh

When morning shines upon it.—
Did I not lately with parental care,
When dire invaders their destruction threaten'd,
Provide them all with means of their defence ?
Did I not, as a mark of gracious trust,
A body of their vagrant youth select
To guard my sacred person ? till that day
An honour never yet allow'd their race.
Did I not suffer them, upon their suit,
T' establish manufactures in their towns ?
And after all some chosen soldiers spare
To guard the blessings of interior peace ? [allow,

Gaur. Nay, please your highness, they do well
That when your enemies, in fell revenge,
Your former inroads threaten'd to repay,
Their ancient arms you did to them restore,
With kind permission to defend themselves :
That so far have they felt your princely grace,
In drafting from their fields their goodliest youth
To be your servants : that you did vouchsafe,
On paying of a large and heavy fine,
Leave to apply the labour of their hands
As best might profit to the country's weal :
And to encourage well their infant trade, [grace,
Quarter'd your troops upon them.—Please your
All this they do most readily allow.

Duke. They do allow it, then, ungrateful varlets !
What would they have ? that would they have,
Gauricicio ?

Gaur. Some mitigation of their grievous burdens,
Which, like an iron weight around their necks,
Do bend their care-worn faces to the earth,
Like creatures form'd upon its soil to creep,
Not stand erect and view the sun of heav'n.

Duke. But they beyond their proper sphere would
rise ;

Let them their lot fulfil as we do ours.

Society of various parts is form'd ;

They are its grounds, its mud, its sediment,

And we the mantling top which crowns the whole.

Calm, steady labour is their greatest bliss ;

To aim at higher things besecms them not.

To let them work in peace my care shall be ;

To slacken labour is to nourish pride.

Methinks thou art a pleader for these fools :

What may this mean, Gauricicio ?

Gaur. They were resolv'd to lay their cause
before you,

And would have found some other advocate

Less pleasing to your Grace, had I refus'd

Duke. Well, let them know, some more con-
venient season

I'll think of this, and do for them as much

As suits the honour of my princely state.

Their prince's honour should be ever dear

To worthy subjects as their precious lives.

Gaur. I fear, unless you give some special promise,
They will be violent still—

Duke. Then do it, if the wretches are so bold ;

We can retract it when the times allow ;
'Tis of small consequence. Go see Bernardo,
And come to me again. [*Exit.*]

Gaur. (solus). O happy people ! whose indulgent
lord

From ev'ry care, with which increasing wealth,
With all its hopes and fears, doth ever move,
The human breast, most graciously would free,
And kindly leave you nought to do but toil !
This creature now, with all his reptile cunning,
Writhing and turning through a maze of wiles,
Believes his genius form'd to rule mankind ;
And calls his sordid wish for territory
That noblest passion of the soul, ambition.
Born had he been to follow some low trade,
A petty tradesman still he had remain'd,
And us'd the art with which he rules a state
To circumvent his brothers of the craft,
Or cheat the buyers of his paltry ware.
And yet he thinks—ha, ha, ha, ha !—he thinks
I am the tool and servant of his will.

Well, let it be ; through all the maze of trouble
His plots and base oppression must create,
I'll shape myself a way to higher things :
And who will say 'tis wrong ?

A sordid being, who expects no faith
But as self-interest binds ; who would not trust
The strongest ties of nature on the soul,
Deserves no faithful service. Perverse fate !
Were I like him, I would despise this dealing :
But being as I am, born low in fortune,
Yet with a mind aspiring to be great,
I must not scorn the steps which lead to it :
And if they are not right, no saint am I :
I follow nature's passion in my breast,
Which urges me to rise in spite of fortune. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

An apartment in the palace. VICTORIA and ISABELLA are discovered playing at chess ; the Countess ALBINI sitting by them reading to herself.

Vict. Away with it, I will not play again.
May men no more be foolish in my presence
If thou art not a cheat, an arrant cheat !

Isab. To swear that I am false by such an oath,
Should prove me honest, since its forfeiture
Would bring your highness gain.

Vict. Thou'rt wrong, my Isabella, simple maid ;
For in the very forfeit of this oath,
There's death to all the dearest pride of women.
May man no more be foolish in my presence !

Isab. And does your grace, hail'd by applauding
crowds,

In all the graceful eloquence address'd
Of most accomplish'd, noble, courtly youths,
Prais'd in the songs of heav'n-inspired bards,
Those awkward proofs of admiration prize,
Which rustic swains their village fair ones pay ?

Vict. O, love will master all the power of art !
Ay, all ! and she who never has beheld
The polish'd courtier, or the tuneful sage,
Before the glances of her conquering eye
A very native simple swain become,
Has only vulgar charms.

To make the cunning artless, tame the rude,
Subdue the haughty, shake th' undaunted soul ;
Yea, put a bridle in the lion's mouth,
And lead him forth as a domestic cur,
These are the triumphs of all-powerful beauty !
Did nought but flatt'ring words and tuneful praise,
Sighs, tender glances, and obsequious service,
Attend her presence, it were nothing worth :
I'd put a white coif o'er my braided locks,
And be a plain, good, simple, fire-side dame.

Alb. (raising her head from her book). And is,
indeed, a plain domestic dame,

Who fills the duties of an useful state,
A being of less dignity than she,
Who vainly on her transient beauty builds,
A little poor ideal tyrannny ?

Isab. Ideal too !

Alb. Yes, most unreal pow'r :

For she who only finds her self-esteem
In others' admiration, begs an alms ;
Depends on others for her daily food,
And is the very servant of her slaves ;
Though oftentimes, in a fantastic hour,
O'er men she may a childish pow'r exert,
Which not ennobles, but degrades her state.

Vict. You are severe, Albini, most severe :
Were human passions plac'd within the breast
But to be curb'd, subdu'd, pluck'd by the roots ?
All heaven's gifts to some good end were giv'n.

Alb. Yes, for a noble, for a generous end.

Vict. Am I ungen'rous then ?

Alb. Yes, most ungen'rous !

Who, for the pleasure of a little pow'r,
Would give most unavailing pain to those
Whose love you ne'er can recompense again.
E'en now, to-day, O ! was it not ungen'rous

To fetter Basil with a foolish tie,
Against his will, perhaps against his duty ? [*friend ?*]

Vict. What, dost thou think against his will, my
Alb. Full sure I am against his reason's will.

Vict. Ah ! but indeed thou must excuse me here ;

For duller than a shelled crab were she,
Who could suspect her pow'r in such a mind,
And calmly leave it doubtful and unprov'd.
But wherefore dost thou look so gravely on me ?
Ah ! well I read those looks ! methinks they say,
" Your mother did not so." [*so.*]

Alb. Your highness reads them true, she did not
If foolish vanity e'er soil'd her thoughts,
She kept it low, withheld its aliment ;
Not pamper'd it with ev'ry motley food,
From the fond tribute of a noble heart
To the lisp'd flattery of a cunning child.

Vict. Nay, speak not thus, Albini, speak not thus
Of little blue-eyed, sweet, fair-hair'd Mirando.
He is the orphan of a hapless pair,
A loving, beautiful, but hapless pair,
Whose story is so pleasing, and so sad,
The swains have turn'd it to a plaintive lay,
And sing it as they tend their mountain sheep.
Besides, (to ISAB.) I am the guardian of his choice.
When first I saw him—dost thou not remember?
Isab. 'Twas in the public garden.

Vict. Even so;
Perch'd in his nurse's arms, a rustic quean,
Ill suited to the lovely charge she bore.
Who stedfastly he fix'd his looks upon me,
His dark eyes shining through forgotten tears,
Then stretch'd his little arms and call'd me mother!
What could I do? I took the bantling home—
I could not tell the imp he had no mother.

Alb. Ah! there, my child, thou hast indeed no blame. [Albini!]

Vict. Now this is kindly said: thanks, sweet
Still call me child, and chide me as thou wilt.
O! would that I were such as thou couldst love!
Couldst dearly love, as thou didst love my mother!

Alb. (pressing her to her breast.) And do I not?
all-perfect as she was,

I know not that she went so near my heart
As thou with all thy faults. [known!]

Vict. And sayst thou so? would I had sooner
I had done any thing to give thee pleasure.

Alb. Then do so now, and put thy faults away.

Vict. No, say not faults; the freaks of thought-
less youth.

Alb. Nay, very faults they must indeed be call'd.

Vict. O! say but foibles! youthful foibles only!

Alb. Faults, faults, real faults you must confess
they are.

Vict. In truth I cannot do your sense the wrong
To think so poorly of the one you love.

Alb. I must be gone: thou hast o'ercome me now:
Another time I will not yield it so. [Exit.

Isab. The countess is severe, she's too severe:
She once was young though now advanc'd in years.

Vict. No, I deserve it all: she is most worthy.

Unlike those faded beauties of the court,

But now the wither'd stems of former flowers

With all their blossoms shed, her nobler mind

Procures to her the privilege of man,

Ne'er to be old till nature's strength decays.

Some few years hence, if I should live so long,

I'd be Mirando rather than myself.

Isab. Here comes your little fav'rite.

Vict. I am not in the humour for him now.

Enter MIRANDO, running up to VICTORIA, and
taking hold of her gown, whilst she takes no notice
of him, as he holds up his mouth to be kissed.

Isab. (to MIR.) Thou seest the princess can't be
troubled with thee.

Mir. O but she will! I'll scramble up her robe,
As naughty boys do when they climb for apples.

Isab. Come here, sweet child; I'll kiss thee in her
stead.

Mir. Nay, but I will not have a kiss of thee.
Would I were tall! O were I but so tall!

Isab. And how tall wouldst thou be?

Mir. Thou dost not know?
Just tall enough to reach Victoria's lips.

Vict. (embracing him.) O! I must bend to this,
thou little urchin!

Who taught thee all this wit, this childish wit?

Whom does Mirando love? [Embraces him again.

Mir. He loves Victoria.

Vict. And wherefore loves he her?

Mir. Because she's pretty.

Isab. Hast thou no little prate to-day, Mirando?

No tale to earn a sugar-plum withal? [grace.

Mir. Ay, that I have: I know who loves her

Vict. Who is it, pray? thou shalt have comfits
for it.

Mir. (looking slyly at her.) It is—it is—it is the
Count of Maldo.

Vict. Away, thou little chit! that tale is old,

And was not worth a sugar-plum when new.

Mir. Well then, I know who loves her highness
well.

Vict. Who is it then?

Isab. Who is it, naughty boy?

Mir. It is the handsome Marquis of Carlatzi.

Vict. No, no, Mirando, thou art naughty still:

Twice have I paid thee for that tale already.

Mir. Well then, indeed—I know who loves
Victoria.

Vict. And who is he?

Mir. It is Mirando's self.

Vict. Thou little imp! this story is not new,

But thou shalt have thy hire. Come, let us go.

Go, run before us, boy. [look'd,

Mir. Nay, but I'll show you how Count Wolvar

When he conducted Isabel from court.

Vict. How did he look?

Mir. Give me your hand: he held his body thus:

(putting himself in a ridiculous bowing posture.)

And then he whisper'd softly; then look'd so;

(ogling with his eyes affectedly.)

Then she look'd so, and smil'd to him again.

(throwing down his eyes affectedly.)

Isab. Thou art a little knave, and must be whipp'd.

[Exit, MIRANDO leading out VICTORIA affectedly.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

An open street, or square.

Enter ROSINBERG and FREDERIC, by opposite sides
of the stage.

Fred. So Basil, from the pressing calls of war,

Another day to rest and pastime gives.
How is it now? methinks thou art not pleas'd.

Ros. It matters little if I am or not.

Fred. Now pray thee do confess thou art asham'd:
Thou, who art wisely wont to set at naught
The noble fire of individual courage,
And call calm prudence the superior virtue,
What sayst thou now, my candid Rosinberg,
When thy great captain, in a time like this,
Denies his weary troops one day of rest
Before the exertions of approaching battle,
Yet grants it to a pretty lady's suit?

Ros. Who told thee this? it was no friendly tale;
And no one else, besides a trusty friend,
Could know his motives. Then thou wrongst me
too;

For I admire, as much as thou dost, Fred'ric,
The fire of valour, e'en rash headless valour;
But not, like thee, do I depreciate
That far superior, yea that god-like talent,
Which doth direct that fire, because indeed
It is a talent nature has denied me.

Fred. Well, well, and greatly he may boast his
virtue,

Who risks perhaps th' imperial army's fate,
To please a lady's freaks—

Ros. Go, go, thou'rt prejudic'd:
A passion which I do not choose to name
Has warp'd thy judgment.

Fred. No, by heav'n, thou wrongst me!
I do, with most enthusiastic warmth,
True valour love: wherever he is found,
I love the hero too; but hate to see
The praises due to him so cheaply earn'd.

Ros. Then mayst thou now these gen'rous feelings
prove.

Behold that man, whose short and grizzly hair
In clust'ring locks his dark brown face o'ershades;
Where now the scars of former sabre wounds,
In hon'rabl' companionship are seen
With the deep lines of age; whose piercing eye
Beneath its shading eye-brow keenly darts
Its yet unquenched beams, as tho' in age
Its youthful fire had been again renew'd,
To be the guardian of its darken'd mate.
See with what vig'rous steps his upright form
He onward bears; nay, e'en that vacant sleeve,
Which droops so sadly by his better side,
Suits not ungracefully the vet'ran's mien.
This is the man, whose glorious acts in battle,
We heard to-day related o'er our wine.
I go to tell the gen'ral he is come:
Enjoy the gen'rous feelings of thy breast,
And make an old man happy.

[*Exit.*]

Enter GEOFFREY.

Fred. Brave soldier, let me profit by the chance
That led me here; I've heard of thy exploits.

Geof. Ah! then you have but heard an ancient
tale.

Which has been long forgotten.

Fred. But it is true, and should not be forgotten;
Though gen'erals, jealous of their soldiers' fame,
May dash it with neglect.

Geof. There are, perhaps, who may be so un-
gen'rous.

Fred. Perhaps, sayst thou? in very truth there
are.

How art thou else rewarded with neglect,
Whilst many a paltry fellow in thy corps
Has been promoted? It is ever thus,
Serv'd not Mardini in your company?
He was, though honour'd with a valiant name,
To those who knew him well, a paltry soldier.

Geof. Your pardon, sir, we did esteem him much,
Although inferior to his gallant friend,
The brave Sebastian.

Fred. The brave Sebastian!

He was, as I am told, a learned coxcomb,
And lov'd a goose-quill better than a sword.
What, dost thou call him brave?

Thou, who dost bear about that war-worn trunk,
Like an old target, hack'd and rough with wounds,
Whilst, after all his mighty battles, he
Was with a smooth skin in his coffin laid,
Unblemish'd with a scar.

Geof. His duty call'd not to such desprate service.
For I have fought where few alive remain'd,
And none unscath'd; where but a few remain'd,
Thus marr'd and mangled; (*showing his wounds*)

As belike you've seen,
O' summer nights, around the evening lamp,
Some wretched moths, wingless, and half consum'd,
Just feebly crawling o'er their heaps of dead.—
In Savoy, on a small, though desprate post,
Of full three hundred goodly chosen men,
But twelve were left, and right dear friends were we
For ever after. They are all dead now:
I'm old and lonely.—We were valiant hearts—
Fred'ric Dewalter would have stoop'd a breach
Against the devil himself. I'm lonely now!

Fred. I'm sorry for thee. Hang ungrateful chiefs!
Why wert thou not promoted?

Geof. After that battle, where my happy fate
Had led me to fulfil a glorious part,
Chaf'd with the giting insults of a slave,
The worthless fav'rite of a great man's fav'rite,
I rashly did affront; our cautious prince,
With narrow policy dependant made,
Dar'd not, as I am told, promote me then,
And now he is asham'd, or has forgot it.

Fred. Fye, fye upon it! let him be asham'd!
Here is a trifle for thee—(*offering him money.*)

Geof. No, good sir,

I have enough to live as poor men do.
When I'm in want I'll thankfully receive,
Because I'm poor, but not because I'm brave.

Fred. You're proud, old soldier.

Geof. No, I am not proud;
For if I were, methinks I'd be morose,
And willing to depreciate other men.

Enter ROSINBERG.

Ros. (*clapping GEOFF. on the shoulder*). How goes it with thee now, my good field-marshal?

Geof. The better that I see your honour well,
And in the humour to be merry with me.

Ros. Faith, by my sword, I've rightly nam'd thee too:

What is a good field-marshal, but a man,
Whose gen'rous courage and undaunted mind,
Doth marshal others on in glory's way?
Thou art not one by princely favour dubb'd,
But one of nature's making.

Geof. You show, my lord, such pleasant courtesy,
I know not how——

Ros. But see, the gen'ral comes.

Enter BASIL.

Ros. (*pointing to GEOFFRY*). Behold the worthy vet'ran.

Ros. (*taking him by the hand*). Brave honourable man, your worth I know,
And greet it with a brother soldier's love.

Geof. (*taking away his hand in confusion*). My gen'ral, this is too much, too much honour.

Bas. (*taking his hand again*). No, valiant soldier, I must have it so.

Geof. My humble state agrees not with such honour.

Bas. Think not of it, thy state is not thyself.
Let mean souls, highly rank'd, look down on thee,
As the poor dwarf, perch'd on a pedestal,
O'erlooks the giant: 'tis not worth a thought.
Art thou not Geoffry of the tenth brigade,
Whose warlike feats child, maid, and matron know,
And oft, cross-elbow'd, o'er his nightly bowl,
The jolly toper to his comrade tells;
Whose glorious feats of war, by cottage door,
The ancient soldier, tracing in the sand
The many movements of the varied field,
In warlike terms to list'ning swains relates;
Whose bosoms glowing at the wondrous tale,
First learn to scorn the hind's inglorious life?
Shame seize me, if I would not rather be
The man thou art, than court-created chief,
Known only by the dates of his promotion.

Geof. Ah! would I were, would I were young again,

To fight beneath your standard, noble gen'ral!
Methinks what I have done were but a jest,
Ay, but a jest to what I now should do,
Were I again the man that I have been,
O! I could fight!

Bas. And wouldst thou fight for me?

Geof. Ay, to the death!

Bas. Then come, brave man, and be my champion still:

The sight of thee will fire my soldiers' breasts.

Come, noble vet'ran, thou shalt fight for me.

[*Exit with GEOFFRY.*]

Fred. What does he mean to do?

Ros. We'll know ere long.

Fred. Our gen'ral bears it with a careless face,
For one so wise.

Ros. A careless face! on what?

Fred. Now, feign not ignorance, we know it all.
News which have spread in whispers from the court,
Since last night's messenger arriv'd from Milan.

Ros. As I'm an honest man, I know it not!

Fred. 'Tis said the rival armies are so near,
A battle must immediately ensue.

Ros. It cannot be. Our gen'ral knows it not.

The Duke is of our side a sworn ally,
And had such messenger to Mantua come,
He would have been appriz'd upon the instant.

It cannot be; it is some idle tale.

Fred. So may it prove till we have joined them too,
Then heaven grant they may be nearer still!

For O! my soul for war and danger pants,

As doth the noble lion for his prey.

My soul delights in battle.

Ros. Upon my simple word, I'd rather see
A score of friendly fellows shaking hands,
Than all the world in arms. Hast thou no fear?

Fred. What dost thou mean?

Ros. Hast thou no fear of death?

Fred. Fear is a name for something in the mind,
But what, from inward sense, I cannot tell.

I could as little anxious march to battle,

As when a boy to childish games I ran.

Ros. Then as much virtue hast thou in thy valour

As when a child thou hadst in childish play.

The brave man is not he who feels no fear,

For that were stupid and irrational;

But he, whose noble soul its fear subdues,

And bravely dares the danger nature shrinks from.

As for your youth, whom blood and blows delight,

Away with them! there is not in the crew

One valiant spirit—Ha! what sound is this?

[*Shouting is heard without.*]

Fred. The soldiers shout; I'll run and learn the cause.

Ros. But tell me first, how didst thou like the vet'ran? [me]

Fred. He is too proud; he was displeas'd with
Because I offer'd him a little sum.

Ros. What money! O! most gen'rous noble spirit!
Noble rewarder of superior worth!

A halpenny for Belisarius!

But hark! they shout again—here comes Valtomer.

[*Shouting heard without.*]

Enter VALTOMER.

What does this shouting mean ?

Valt. O ! I have seen a sight, a glorious sight !
Thou wouldst have smil'd to see it. [with tears.

Ros. How smile ? methinks thine eyes are wet

Valt. (passing the back of his hands across his eyes).
'Faith so they are ; well, well, but I smil'd too.

You heard the shouting.

Ros. and Fred. Yes.

Valt. O had you seen it !

Drawn out in goodly ranks, there stood our troops ;
Here, in the graceful state of manly youth,
His dark face brighten'd with a gen'rous smile,
Which to his eyes such flashing lustre gave,
As though his soul, like an unsheathed sword,
Had through them gleam'd, our noble gen'ral stood ;
And to his soldiers, with heart-moving words,
The vet'ran showing, his brave deeds rehears'd ;
Who by his side stood like a storm-scaith'd oak,
Beneath the shelter of some noble tree,
In the green honours of its youthful prime.

Ros. How look'd the veteran ?

Valt. I cannot tell thee !

At first he bore it up with cheerful looks,
As one who fain would wear his honours bravely,
And greet the soldiers with a comrade's face :
But when Count Basil, in such moving speech,
Told o'er his actions past, and bade his troops
Great deeds to emulate, his count'nance chang'd ;
High-heav'd his manly breast, as it had been
By inward strong emotion half convuls'd ;
Trembled his nether lip ; he shed some tears.
The gen'ral paus'd, the soldiers shouted loud ;
Then hastily he brush'd the drops away, [voice,
And wav'd his hand, and clear'd his tear-chok'd
As though he would some grateful answer make ;
When back with double force the whelming tide
Of passion came ; high o'er his hoary head
His arm he toss'd, and heedless of respect,
In Basil's bosom hid his aged face,
Sobbing aloud. From the admiring ranks
A cry arose ; still louder shouts resound.
I felt a sudden tightness grasp my throat
As it would strangle me ; such as I felt,
I knew it well, some twenty years ago,
When my good father shed his blessing on me :
I hate to weep, and so I came away.

Ros. (giving VALT. his hand). And there, take
thou my blessing for the tale.

Hark ! how they shout again ! 'tis nearer now.

This way they march.

[*Martial music heard.* Enter Soldiers marching
in order, bearing GEOFFRY in triumph on
their shoulders. After them enter BASIL : the
whole preceded by a band of music. They cross
over the stage, are joined by ROS. &c., and
Exit.

SCENE II.

Enter GAURICIO and a Gentleman, talking as
they enter.

Gaur. So slight a tie as this we cannot trust,
One day her influence may detain him here,
But love a feeble agent may be found
With the ambitious.

Gent. And so you think this boyish odd conceit
Of bearing home in triumph with his troops
That aged soldier, will your purpose serve ?

Gaur. Yes, I will make it serve ; for though my
Is little scrupulous of right and wrong, [prince
I have possess'd his mind, as though it were
A flagrant insult on his princely state
To honour thus the man he has neglected,
Which makes him relish, with a keener taste,
My purpos'd scheme. Come, let us fall to work.
With all their warm heroic feelings rous'd,
We'll spirit up his troops to mutiny,
Which must retard, perhaps undo him quite.
Thanks to his childish love, which has so well
Procur'd us time to tamper with the fools.

Gent. Ah ! but those feelings he has wak'd with-
in them

Are gen'rous feelings, and endear himself. [nature,

Gaur. It matters not, though gen'rous in their
They yet may serve a most ungen'rous end ;
And he who teaches men to think ; though nobly,
Doth raise within their minds a busy judge
To scan his actions. Send thine agents forth,
And sound it in their ears how much Count Basil
Affects all difficult and desprate service,
To raise his fortunes by some daring stroke ;
Having unto the emperor pledg'd his word,
To make his troops all dreadful hazards brave :
For which intent he fills their simple minds
With idle tales of glory and renown ;
Using their warm attachment to himself
For most unworthy ends.
This is the busy time ; go forth, my friend ;
Mix with the soldiers, now in jolly groups
Around their ev'ning cups. There, spare no cost.

[Gives him a purse.

Observe their words, see how the poison takes,

And then return again.

Gent.

I will, my lord.

[Exit severally.

SCENE III.

A suite of grand apartments, with their wide doors
thrown open, lighted up with lamps, and filled with
company in masks. Enter several masks, and pass
through the first apartment to the other rooms.
Then enter BASIL in the disguise of a wounded
soldier.

Bas. (alone). Now am I in the region of delight !
Within the blessed compass of these walls

She is; the gay light of those blazing lamps
Doth shine upon her, and this painted floor
Is with her footsteps press'd. E'en now, perhaps,
Amidst that motley rout she plays her part:
There will I go; she cannot be conceal'd;
For but the flowing of her graceful robe
Will soon betray the lovely form that wears it,
Though in a thousand masks. Ye homely weeds,—

(*looking at his habit.*)

Which half conceal, and half declare my state,
Beneath your kind disguise, O! let me prosper,
And boldly take the privilege ye give:
Follow her mazy steps, crowd by her side;
Thus, near her face my list'ning ear incline,
And feel her soft breath fan my glowing cheek;
Her fair hand seize, yea, press it closely too!
May it not be e'en so? by heav'n it shall!
This once, O! serve me well, and ever after
Ye shall be treasur'd like a monarch's robes;
Lodg'd in my chamber, near my pillow kept;
And oft with midnight lamp I'll visit ye,
And gazing wistfully, this night recall,
With all its past delights.—But yonder moves
A slender form, dress'd in an azure robe;
It moves not like the rest—it must be she!

[*Goes hastily into another apartment, and mixes with the masks.*]

Enter ROSINBERG, fantastically dressed, with a willow upon his head, and scraps of sonnets and torn letters fluttering round his neck, pursued by a group of masks from one of the inner apartments, who hoot at him, and push him about as he enters.

1st Mask. Away, thou art a saucy jeering knave,
And fain wouldst make a jest of all true love.

Ros. Nay, gentle ladies,—do not buffet me:
I am a right true servant of the fair;
And as this woeful chaplet on my brow,
And these tear-blotted sonnets would denote,
A poor abandon'd lover out of place;
With any lady ready to engage,
Who will enlist me in her loving service.
Of a convenient kind my talents are,
And to all various humours may be shap'd.

2nd Mask. What canst thou do?

3d Mask. Ay, what besides offending?

Ros. O! I can sigh so deeply, look so sad;
Pule out a piteous tale on bended knee;
Groan like a ghost; so very wretched be,
As would delight a tender lady's heart
But to behold.

1st Mask. Pooh, pooh, insipid fool!

Ros. But should my lady brisker mettle own,
And tire of all those gentle dear delights,
Such pretty little quarrels I'd invent—
As whether such a fair one (some dear friend)
Whose squirrel's tail was pinch'd, or the soft maid,
With fav'rite lap-dog of a surfeit sick,

Have greatest cause of delicate distress:
Or whether—

1st Mask. Go, thou art too bad indeed—
(*aside.*) How could he know I quarrell'd with the
Count? fame?

2nd Mask. Wilt thou do nothing for thy lady's
Ros. Yes, lovely shepherdess, on ev'ry tree
I'll carve her name, with true-love garlands bound:
Write madrigals upon her roseate cheeks;
Odes to her eye; 'faith, ev'ry wart and mole
That spots her snowy skin, shall have its sonnet!
I'll make love-poses for her thimble's edge,
Rather than please her not. [thou brave?]

3d Mask. But for her sake what dangers wilt
Ros. In truth, fair nun, I stomach dangers less
Than other service, and were something loath
To storm a convent's walls for one dear glance;
But if she'll wisely manage this alone,
As maids have done, come o'er the wall herself,
And meet me fairly on the open plain,
I will engage her tender steps to aid
In all annoyance of rude briar or stone,
Or crossing rill, some half-foot wide, or so,
Which that fair lady should unaided pass,
Ye gracious pow'rs, forbid! I will defend
Against each hideous fly, whose dreadful buzz—

4th Mask. Such paltry service suits thee best
indeed.

What maid of spirit would not spurn thee from her?

Ros. Yes, to recall me soon, sublime Sultana!

For I can stand the burst of female passion,
Each change of humour and affected storm,
Be scolded, frown'd upon, to exile sent,
Recall'd, caress'd, chid, and disgrac'd again;
And say what maid of spirit would forego
The bliss of one to exercise it thus?

O! I can bear ill treatment like a lamb!—

4th Mask (beating him). Well, bear it then, thou
hast deserv'd it well. [blows;]

Ros. Zounds, lady! do not give such heavy
I'm not your husband, as belike you guess.

5th Mask. Come, lover, I enlist thee for my swain;
Therefore, good lady, do forbear your blows,
Nor thus assume my rights. [prove?]

Ros. Agreed. Wilt thou a gracious mistress

5th Mask. Such as thou wouldst, such as thy
genius suits;

For since of universal scope it is,
All women's humour shalt thou find in me.
I'll gently soothe thee with such winning smiles—
To nothing sink thee with a scornful frown:
Teaze thee with peevish and affected freaks;
Caress thee, love thee, hate thee, break thy pate;
But still between the whiles I'll careful be,
In feigned admiration of thy parts,
Thy shape, thy manners, or thy graceful mien,
To bind thy giddy soul with flatt'ry's charm;
For well thou knowst that flatt'ry ever is
The tickling spice, the pungent seasoning

Which makes this motley dish of monstrous scraps
So pleasing to the dainty lover's taste.
Thou canst not leave, though violent in extreme,
And most vexatious in her teasing moods,
Thou canst not leave the fond admiring soul,
Who did declare, when calmer reason rul'd,
Thou hadst a pretty leg.

Ros. Marry, thou hast the better of me there.

5th Mask. And more! I'll pledge to thee my
honest word,

That when your noble swainship shall bestow
More faithful homage on the simple maid,
Who loves you with sincerity and truth,
Than on the changeful and capricious tyrant,
Who mocking leads you like a trammell'd ass,
My studied woman's wiles I'll lay aside,
And such an one become.

Ros. Well said, brave lady, I will follow thee.

[*Follows her to the corner of the stage.*]

Now on my life these ears of mine I'd give,
To have but one look of that little face,
Where such a biting tongue doth hold its court
To keep the fools in awe. Nay, nay, unmask:
I'm sure thou hast a pair of wicked eyes,
A short and saucy nose; now prithee do.

[*Unmasking.*]

Alb. (*unmasking*). Well, hast thou guess'd me
right?

Ros. (*bowing low*). Wild freedom, chang'd to most
profound respect,

Doth make an awkward booby of me now.

Alb. I've joined your frolic with a good intent,
For much I wish'd to gain your private ear.
The time is precious, and I must be short.

Ros. On me thy slightest word more pow'r will
have,

Most honour'd lady, than a conn'd oration.

Thou art the only one of all thy sex,

Who wearest thy years with such a winning grace.

Thou art the more admir'd the more thou fad'st.

Alb. I thank your lordship for these courteous
words;

But to my purpose—You are Basil's friend:

Be friendly to him then, and warn him well

This court to leave, nor be allur'd to stay;

For if he does, there's mischief waits him here

May prove the bane of all his future days.

Remember this, I must no longer stay.

God bless your friend and you: I love you both.

[*Exit.*]

Ros. (*alone*). What may this warning mean?

I had my fears.

There's something hatching that I know not of.

I've lost all spirit for this masking now.

[*Throwing away his papers and his willows.*]

Away, ye scraps! I have no need of you.

I would I knew what garment Basil wears:

I watch'd him, yet he did escape my sight;

But I must search again and find him out. [*Exit.*]

Enter BASIL *much agitated, with his mask in his hand.*

Bas. In vain I've sought her, follow'd every
form

Where aught appear'd of dignity or grace:

I've listen'd to the tone of ev'ry voice;

I've watch'd the entrance of each female mask,

My flutt'ring heart rous'd like a startled hare,

With the imagin'd rustling of her robes,

At ev'ry dame's approach. Deceitful night,

How art thou spent! where are thy promis'd joys?

How much of thee is gone! O spiteful fate!

And yet within the compass of these walls

Somewhere she is, although to me she is not.

Some other eye doth gaze upon her form,

Some other ear doth listen to her voice;

Some happy fav'rite doth enjoy the bliss

My spiteful stars deny.

Disturber of my soul! what veil conceals thee?

What dev'lish spell is o'er this cursed hour?

O! heav'n's and earth, where art thou!

Enter a mask in the dress of a female conjurer.

Mask. Methinks thou art impatient, valiant sol-
dier:

Thy wound doth gall thee sorely; is it so?

Bas. Away, away! I cannot fool with thee.

Mask. I have some potent drugs may ease thy
smart.

Where is thy wound? is't here?

[*Pointing to the bandage on his arm.*]

Bas.

Pooh, pooh, begone!

Thou canst do nought—'tis in my head, my
heart—

'Tis ev'ry where, where med'cine cannot cure.

Mask. If wounded in the heart, it is a wound

Which some ungrateful fair one hath inflicted,

And I may conjure something for thy good.

Bas. Ah! if thou couldst! what, must I fool
with thee?

Mask. Thou must awhile, and be examin'd too.

What kind of woman did the wicked deed?

Bas. I cannot tell thee. In her presence still

My mind in such a wild delight hath been,

I could not pause to picture out her beauty,

Yet nought of woman e'er was form'd so fair.

Mask. Art thou a soldier, and no weapon bearst
To send her wound for wound? [*height,*]

Bas. Alas! she shoots from such a hopeless
No dart of mine hath plume to mount so far;

None but a prince may dare. [*love.*]

Mask. But if thou hast no hope, thou hast no

Bas. I love, and yet in truth I had no hope,

But that she might at least with some good will,

Some gentle pure regard, some secret kindness,

Within her dear remembrance give me place.

This was my all of hope, but it is flown:

For she regards me not : despises, scorns me :
Scorns, I must say it too, a noble heart,
That would have bled for her.

[*Mask, discovering herself to be VICTORIA, by speaking in her true voice.*

O! no, she does not.
[*Exit hastily in confusion.*

Bas. (*stands for a moment riveted to the spot, then holds up both his hands in an ecstasy.*)

It is herself! it is her blessed self!
O! what a fool am I, that had no power
To follow her, and urge th' advantage on.
Begone, unmanly fears! I must be bold.

[*Exit after her.*

A dance of masks.

Enter DUKE and GAURIECIO, unmasked.

Duke. This revelry, methinks, goes gaily on.
The hour is late, and yet your friend returns not.

Gaur. He will return ere long—nay, there he comes.

Enter Gentleman.

Duke. Does all go well? (*going close up to him.*)
Gent. All as your grace could wish.

For now the poison works, and the stung soldiers
Rage o'er their cups, and, with fire-kindled eyes,
Swear vengeance on the chief who would betray
them.

That Frederic too, the discontented man
Of whom your highness was so lately told,
Swallows the bait, and does his part most bravely.
Gauriecio counsell'd well to keep him blind,
Nor with a bribe attempt him. On my soul!
He is so fiery he had spurn'd us else,

And ruin'd all the plot. [*private.*
Duke. Speak softly, friend—I'll hear it all in
A gay and careless face we now assume.

[*DUKE, GAUR, and GENT. retire into the inner apartment, appearing to laugh and talk gaily to the different masks as they pass them.*

Re-enter VICTORIA, followed by BASIL.

Vict. Forbear, my lord; these words offend mine ear.

Bas. Yet let me but this once, this once offend,
Nor thus with thy displeasure punish me;
And if my words against all prudence sin,
O! hear them, as the good of heart do list
To the wild ravings of a soul distraught

Vict. If I indeed should listen to thy words,
They must not talk of love. [*Speak,*

Bas. To be with thee, to speak, to hear thee
To claim the soft attention of thine eye,
I'd be content to talk of any thing,
If it were possible to be with thee,
And think of aught but love.

Vict. I fear, my lord, you have too much presum'd
On those unguarded words, which were in truth

Utter'd at unawares, with little heed,
And urge their meaning far beyond the right.

Bas. I thought, indeed, that they were kindly
meant,

As though thy gentle breast did kindly feel
Some secret pity for my hopeless pain,
And would not pierce with scorn, ungen'rous scorn,
A heart so deeply stricken.

Vict. So far thou'st read it well.

Bas. Ha! have I well?
Thou dost not hate me then?

Vict. My father comes;
He were displeas'd if he should see thee thus.

Bas. Thou dost not hate me then?

Vict. Away! he'll be displeas'd—I cannot say—

Bas. Well, let him come: it is thyself I fear:
For did destruction thunder o'er my head,

By the dread pow'r of heav'n I would not stir
Till thou hadst answer'd my impatient soul!
Thou dost not hate me?

Vict. Nay, nay, let go thy hold—I cannot hate
thee. [*Breaks from him and exit.*

Bas. (alone.) Thou canst not hate me! no, thou
canst not hate me!

For I love thee so well, so passing well,
With such o'erflowing heart, so very dearly,
That it were sinful not to pay me back
Some small, some kind return.

Enter MIRANDO, dressed like Cupid.

Mir. Bless thee, brave soldier! [*fair*
Bas. What sayst thou, pretty child! what playful
Has deck'd thee out in this fantastic guise?

Mir. It was Victoria's self; it was the princess.

Bas. Thou art her fav'rite then?
Mir. They say I am:

And now, between ourselves, I'll tell thee, soldier,
I think in very truth she loves me well.

Such merry little songs she teaches me—
Sly riddles too, and when I'm laid to rest,
Oftimes on tip-toe near my couch she steals,
And lifts the cov'ring so, to look upon me.
And oftentimes I feign as though I slept;
For then her warm lips to my cheeks she lays,
And pats me softly with her fair white hands;
And then I laugh, and through mine eye-lids peep,
And then she tickles me, and calls me cheat;
And then we do so laugh, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Bas. What does she even so, thou happiest child?
And have those rosy cheeks been press'd so dearly?
Delicious urchin! I will kiss thee too.

[*Takes him eagerly up in his arms and kisses him.*

Mir. No, let me down, thy kisses are so rough,
So furious rough—she doth not kiss me so.

Bas. Sweet boy, where is thy chamber? by
Victoria's?

Mir. Hard by her own.

Bas. Then will I come beneath thy window soon;

And, if I could, some pretty song I'd sing,
To lull thee to thy rest.

Mir. O no, thou must not! 'tis a frightful place;
It is the church-yard of the neighbour's dome.
The princess loves it for the lofty trees,
Whose spreading branches shade her chamber walls:
So do not I; for when 'tis dark o' nights,
Goblins howl there, and ghosts rise through the
ground.

I hear them many a time when I'm a bed,
And hide beneath the clothes my cowering head.
O! is it not a frightful thing, my lord,
To sleep alone i' the dark? [sweet.

Bas. Poor harmless child! thy prate is wondrous

Enter a group of masks.

1st Mask. What dost thou here, thou little
truant boy?
Come play thy part with us.

*Masks place MIRANDO in the middle, and range
themselves round him.*

SONG. — A GLEE.

Child, with many a childish wile,
Timid look, and blushing smile,
Downy wings to steal thy way,
Gilded bow, and quiver gay,
Who in thy simple mien would trace
The tyrant of the human race?

Who is he whose flinty heart
Hath not felt the flying dart?
Who is he that from the wound
Hath not pain and pleasure found?
Who is he that hath not shed
Curse and blessing on thy head?

Ah Love! our weal, our woe, our bliss, our bane,
A restless life have they who wear thy chain!
Ah Love! our weal, our woe, our bliss, our bane,
More hapless still are they who never felt thy pain!

[*All the masks dance round Cupid. Then enter a
band of satyrs, who frighten away Love and
his votaries; and conclude the scene, dancing
in a grotesque manner.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The street before BASIL's lodging.

Enter ROSINBERG and two Officers.

Ros. (*speaking as he enters.*) Unless we find him
quickly, all is lost.

1st Off. His very guards, methinks, have left
their post
To join the mutiny.

Ros. (*knocking very loud.*) Holla! who's there
within? confound this door!
It will not yield. O for a giant's strength!
Holla, holla, within! will no one hear?

Enter a porter from the house.

Ros. (*eagerly to the porter.*) Is he return'd? is
he return'd? not yet!
Thy face doth tell me so.

Port. Not yet, my lord.
Ros. Then let him ne'er return! —
Tumult, disgrace, and ruin have their way!
I'll search for him no more.

Port. He hath been absent all the night, my lord.
Ros. I know he hath.

2nd Off. And yet 'tis possible
He may have enter'd by the secret door;
And now, perhaps, in deepest sleep entranc'd,
Is dead to ev'ry sound.

[*Ros., without speaking, rushes into the house,
and the rest follow him.*

Enter BASIL.

Bas. The blue air of the morning pinches keenly.
Beneath her window all the chilly night,
I felt it not. Ah! night has been my day;
And the pale lamp which from her chamber
gleam'd,
Has to the breeze a warmer temper lent
Than the red burning east.

Re-enter ROSINBERG, &c. from the house.

Ros. Himself! himself! he's here! he's here! O
Basil!

What fiend at such a time could lead thee forth?
Bas. What is the matter that disturbs you thus?
Ros. Matter that would a wiser man disturb.
Treason's abroad: thy men have mutinied.

Bas. It is not so; thy wits have mutinied,
And left their sober station in thy brain.

1st Off. Indeed, my lord, he speaks in sober
earnest.

Some secret enemies have been employ'd
To fill your troops with strange imaginations:
As though their gen'ral would, for selfish gain,
Their gen'rous valour urge to desprate deeds.
All to a man, assembled on the ramparts,
Now threaten vengeance, and refuse to march.

Bas. What! think they vilely of me? threaten
too!

O! most ungen'rous, most unmanly thought!
Didst thou attempt (*to Ros.*) to reason with their
folly?

Folly it is; baseness it cannot be.

Ros. Yes, truly, I did reason with a storm,
And bid it cease to rage. —

Their eyes look fire on him who questions them:
The hollow murmurs of their mutter'd wrath

Sound dreadful through the dark extended ranks,
Like subterraneous grumbings of an earthquake.

— The vengeful hurricane

Does not with such fantastic writhings toss
The woods' green boughs, as does convulsive rage
Their forms with frantic gestures agitate.

Around the chief of hell such legions throng'd,
To bring back curse and discord on creation. [ones.

Bas. Nay they are men, although impassion'd
I'll go to them—

Ros. And we will stand by thee.
My sword is thine against ten thousand strong,
If it should come to this.

Bas. No, never, never!
There is no mean: I with my soldiers must
Or their commander or their victim prove.

But are my officers all staunch and faithful?

Ros. All but that devil, Fred'ric—
He, disappointed, left his former corps,
Where he, in truth, had been too long neglected,
Thinking he should all on the sudden rise,
From Basil's well-known love of valiant men;
And now, because it still must be deferr'd,
He thinks you seek from envy to depress him,
And burns to be reveng'd.

Bas. Well, well— This grieves me too—
But let us go. [Exit.

SCENE II.

The ramparts of the town. The soldiers are discovered, drawn up in a disorderly manner, hollaing and speaking loudly, and clashing their arms tumultuously.

1st Sol. No, comrade, no; hell gape and swallow me,

If I do budge for such most dev'lish orders!

2nd Sol. Huzza! brave comrades! Who says otherwise?

3d Sol. No one, huzza! confound all treach'rous leaders!

[*The soldiers huzza and clash their arms.*
4th Sol. Heav'n dart its fiery light'ning on his head!

We're men, we are not cattle to be slaughter'd!

2nd Sol. They who do long to caper high in air,
Into a thousand bloody fragments blown,
May follow our brave gen'ral.

1st Sol. Curse his name!
I've fought for him till my strain'd nerves have crack'd!

2nd Sol. We will command ourselves: for Milan,

4th Sol. Ay, ay, for Milan, valiant hearts, huzza!

[*All the soldiers cast up their caps in the air, and huzza.*

2nd Sol. Yes, comrades, tempting booty waits
us there,

And easy service: keep good hearts, my soldiers!

The gen'ral comes, good hearts! no flinching, boys!
Look bold and fiercely: we're the masters now.

[*They all clash their arms and put on a fierce threatening aspect to receive their general, who now enters, followed by ROSINBERG and officers.*

BASIL walks close along the front ranks of the soldiers, looking at them very stedfastly; then retires a few paces back, and raising his arm, speaks with a very full loud voice.

Bas. How is it, soldiers, that I see you thus,
Assembled here, unsummon'd by command?

[*A confused murmur is heard amongst the soldiers; some of them call out*

But we command ourselves; we wait no orders.

[*A confused noise of voices is heard, and one louder than the rest calls out*

Must we be butcher'd, for that we are brave?

[*A loud clamour and clashing of arms, then several voices call out*

Damn hidden treach'ry! we defy thy orders.

Fred'ric shall lead us now—

[*Other voices call out*

We'll march where'er we list, for Milan march.

Bas. [*waving his hand, and beckoning them to be silent, speaks with a very loud voice.*

Yes, march where'er ye list; for Milan march.

Sol. Hear him, hear him!

[*The murmur ceases—a short pause.*

Bas. Yes, march where'er ye list: for Milan march:

But as banditti, not as soldiers go;

For on this spot of earth I will disband,

And take from you the rank and name of soldiers.

[*A great clamour amongst the ranks; some call out*

What wear we arms for?

[*Others call out*

No, he dares not do it.

[*One voice very loud*

Disband us at thy peril, treach'rous Basil!

[*Several of the soldiers brandish their arms, and threaten to attack him; the officers gather round BASIL, and draw their swords to defend him.*

Bas. Put up your swords, my friends, it must not be.

I thank your zeal, I'll deal with them alone.

Ros. What, shall we calmly stand and see thee butcher'd?

Bas. [*very earnestly.*] Put up, my friends! [*Officers still persist.*] What! are you rebels too?

Will no one here his gen'ral's voice obey?

I do command you to put up your swords.

Retire, and at a distance wait th' event.

Obey, or henceforth be no friends of mine.

[*Officers retire very unwillingly. BASIL waves them off with his hand till they are all gone, then walks up to the front of his soldiers, who still hold themselves in a threatening posture.*

Soldiers! we've fought together in the field,

And bravely fought: i' the face of horrid death,

At honour's call, I've led you dauntless on ;
Nor do I know the man of all your bands,
That ever poorly from the trial shrink,
Or yielded to the foe contended space.
Am I the meanest then of all my troops,
That thus ye think, with base unmanly threats,
To move me now ? Put up those paltry weapons ✓
They edgeless are to him who fears them not :
Rocks have been shaken from the solid base ;
But what shall move a firm and dauntless mind ?
Put up your swords, or dare the threaten'd deed —
Obey, or murder me. —

(A confused murmur — some of the soldiers call out)

March us to Milan, and we will obey thee.

(Others call out)

Ay, march us there, and be our leader still.

Bas. Nay, if I am your leader, I'll command ye ;

And where I do command, there shall you go,

But not to Milan. No, nor shall you deviate ✓

E'en half a furlong from your destin'd way,

To seize the golden booty of the East.

Think not to gain, or temporise with me ;

For should I this day's mutiny survive,

Much as I've lov'd you, soldiers, ye shall find me ✓

Still more relentless in pursuit of vengeance ; ✓

Tremendous, cruel, military vengeance.

There is no mean — a desp'rate game ye play ;

Therefore, I say, obey, or murder me.

Do as ye will, but do it manfully.

He is a coward who doth threaten me :

The man who slays me, but an angry soldier ; ✓

Acting in passion, like the frantic son,

Who struck his sire and wept.

(Soldiers call out) It was thyself who sought to murder us.

1st Sol. You have unto the emp'r'or pledg'd your faith,

To lead us foremost in all desp'rate service : ✓

You have agreed to sell your soldiers' blood,

And we have shed our dearest blood for you.

Bas. Hear me, my soldiers — [you.

2d Sol. No, hear him not, he means to cozen Fred'rick will do you right —

[Endeavouring to stir up a noise and confusion amongst them.] [hell

Bas. What cursed fiend art thou, cast out from To spirit up rebellion ? damned villain !

[Seizes upon 2d soldier, drags him out from the ranks, and wrests his arms from him ; then takes a pistol from his side, and holds it to his head.]

Stand there, damn'd meddling villain, and be silent ; ✓

For if thou utt'rest but a single word,

A cough or hem, to cross me in my speech,

I'll send thy cursed spirit from the earth,

To bellow with the damn'd !

[The soldiers hear a dead silence. After a pause, BASIL resumes his speech.]

Listen to me, my soldiers. — ✓

You say that I am to the emp'r'or pledg'd
To lead you foremost in all desp'rate service, ✓
For now you call it not the path of glory ;
And if in this I have offended you,
I do indeed repent me of the crime.

But new from battles, where my native troops

So bravely fought, I felt me proud at heart,

And boasted of you, boasted foolishly.

I said, fair glory's palm ye would not yield

To e'er the bravest legion train'd to arms.

I swore the meanest man of all my troops

Would never shrink before an armed host,

If honour bade him stand. My royal master

Smil'd at the ardour of my heedless words,

And promis'd when occasion claim'd our arms,

To put them to the proof.

But ye do peace, and ease, and booty love,

Safe and ignoble service — be it so —

Forgive me that I did mistake you thus,

But do not earn with savage mutiny,

Your own destruction. We'll for Pavia march,

To join the royal army near its walls,

And there with blushing forehead will I plead,

That ye are men with warlike service worn,

Requiring ease and rest. Some other chief,

Whose cold blood boils not at the trumpet's sound,

Will in your rearward station head you then,

And so, my friends, we'll part. As for myself,

A volunteer, unheeded in the ranks,

I'll rather fight, with brave men for my fellows, ✓

Than be the leader of a sordid band.

(A great murmur rises amongst the ranks, soldiers call out)

We will not part ! no, no, we will not part !

(All call out together)

We will not part ! be thou our gen'ral still !

Bas. How can I be your gen'ral ? ye obey

As caprice moves you ; I must be obey'd,

As honest men against themselves perform

A sacred oath. —

Some other chief will more indulgent prove —

You're weary grown — I've been too hard a master.

Soldiers. Thyself, and only thee, will we obey.

Bas. But if you follow me, yourselves ye pledge

Unto no easy service : — hardships, toils,

The hottest dangers of most dreadful fight

Will be your portion ; and when all is o'er,

Each, like his gen'ral, must contented be

Home to return again, a poor brave soldier. ✓

How say ye now ? I spread no tempting lure —

A better fate than this, I promise none.

Soldiers. We'll follow Basil.

Bas. What token of obedience will ye give ?

[A deep pause.]

Soldiers, lay down your arms !

[They all lay down their arms.]

If any here are weary of the service,

Now let them quit the ranks, and they shall have

A free discharge, and passport to their homes ;

And from my scanty fortune I'll make good
The well-earn'd pay their royal master owes them.
Let those who follow me their arms resume,

[*They all resume their arms.*

(*BASIL, holding up his hands.*) High heaven be
prais'd!

I had been griev'd to part with you, my soldiers.
Here is a letter from my gracious master,
With offers of preferment in the north,
Most high preferment, which I did refuse,
For that I would not leave my gallant troops.

[*Takes out a letter, and throws it amongst them.*

(*A great commotion amongst the soldiers; many
of them quit their ranks, and crowd about
him, calling out*)

Our gallant gen'ral!

(*Others call out*)

We'll spend our hearts' blood for thee, noble Basil!

Bas. And so you thought me false? this bites to
the quick!

My soldiers thought me false!

[*They all quit their ranks, and crowd eagerly
around him. BASIL, waving them off with his
hands.*

Away, away, you have disgusted me!

[*Soldiers retire to their ranks.*

'Tis well — retire, and hold yourselves prepar'd

To march upon command; nor meet again

Till you are summon'd by the beat of drum.

Some secret enemy has tamper'd with you,

For yet I will not think that in these ranks

There moves a man who wears a traitor's heart.

[*The soldiers begin to march off, and music
strikes up.*

Bas. (*holding up his hand.*) Cease, cease, trium-
phant sounds;

Which our brave fathers, men without reproach,

Rais'd in the hour of triumph! but this hour

To us no glory brings —

Then silent be your march — ere that again

Our steps to glorious strains like these shall move,

A day of battle o'er our heads must pass,

And blood be shed to wash out this day's stain.

[*Exeunt soldiers, silent and dejected.*

*Enter FREDERIC, who starts back on seeing BASIL
alone.*

Bas. Advance, lieutenant; wherefore shrink you
back?

I've ever seen you bear your head erect, [death.
And front your man, though arm'd with frowning
Have you done aught the valiant should not do?

I fear you have.

[*FRED. looks confused.*

With secret art, and false insinuation,

The simple untaught soldiers to seduce

From their sworn duty, might become the base,

Become the coward well; but O! what villain

Had the dark pow'r t' engage thy valiant worth

In such a work as this?

Fred. Is Basil, then, so lavish of his praise
On a neglected pitiful subaltern?

It were a libel on his royal master;

A foul reproach upon fair fortune cast,

To call me valiant:

And surely he has been too much their debtor,

To mean them this rebuke.

Bas. Is nature then so sparing of her gifts,

That it is wonderful when they are found

Where fortune smiles not?

Thou art by nature brave, and so am I;

But in those distant ranks moves there not one

[*Pointing off the stage.*

Of high ennobled soul, by nature form'd

A hero and commander, who will yet

In his untrouphed grave forgotten lie

With meaner men? I dare be sworn there does.

Fred. What need of words? I crave of thee no
favour.

I have offended, 'gainst arm'd law offended,

And shrink not from my doom. [death;

Bas. I know thee well, I know thou fearst not

On scaffold or in field with dauntless breast

Thou wilt engage him; and if thy proud soul,

In sullen obstinacy, scorns all grace,

E'en be it so. But if with manly gratitude

Thou truly canst receive a brave man's pardon,

Thou hast it freely.

Fred. It must not be. I've been thine enemy —
I've been unjust to thee —

Bas. I know thou hast;

But thou art brave, and I forgive thee all.

Fred. My lord! my gen'ral! Oh, I cannot speak!
I cannot live and be the wretch I am!

Bas. But thou canst live and be an honest man
From error turn'd, — canst live and be my friend.

[*Raising FRED. from the ground.*

Forbear, forbear! see where our friends advance

They must not think thee suing for a pardon;

That would disgrace us both. Yet ere they come,

Tell me, if that thou mayst with honour tell,

What did seduce thee from thy loyal faith?

Fred. No cunning traitor did my faith attempt,

For then I had withstood him: but of late,
I know not how — a bad and restless spirit

Has work'd within my breast, and made me
wretched.

I've lent mine ear to foolish idle tales,

Of very zealous, though but recent friends.

Bas. Softly, our friends approach — of this
again. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

*An apartment in BASIL's lodgings. Enter BASIL and
ROSINBERG.*

Ros. Thank heaven I am now alone with thee.
Last night I sought thee with an anxious mind,
And curs'd thine ill-tim'd absence. —

There's treason in this most deceitful court,
Against thee plotting, and this morning's tumult
Hath been its damn'd effect.

Bas. Nay, nay, my friend!

The nature of man's mind too well thou knowst,
To judge as vulgar hoodwink'd statesmen do;
Who, ever with their own poor wiles misled,
Believe each popular tumult or commotion
Must be the work of deep-laid policy.
Poor, mean, mechanic souls, who little know
A few short words of energetic force,
Some powerful passion on the sudden rous'd,
The animating sight of something noble,
Some fond trait of the mem'ry finely wak'd,
A sound, a simple song without design,
In revolutions, tumults, wars, rebellions,
All grand events, have oft effected more
Than deepest cunning of their paltry art.
Some drunken soldier, eloquent with wine,
Who loves not fighting, hath harangue'd his mates,
For they in truth some hardships have endur'd:
Wherefore in this should we suspect the court?

Ros. Ah! there is something, friend, in Mantua's court,

Will make the blackest trait of barefac'd treason
Seem fair and guiltless to thy partial eye.

Bas. Nay, 'tis a weakness in thee, Rosinberg,
Which makes thy mind so jealous and distrustful.
Why should the duke be false?

Ros. Because he is a double, crafty prince—
Because I've heard it rumour'd secretly,
That he in some dark treaty is engag'd,
E'en with our master's enemy the Frank.

Bas. And so thou thinkst—

Ros. Nay, hear me to the end.

Last night that good and honourable dame,
Noble Albini, with most friendly art,
From the gay clam'rous throng my steps beguil'd,
Unmask'd before me, and with earnest grace
Entreated me, if I were Basil's friend,
To tell him hidden danger waits him here,
And warn him earnestly this court to leave.
She said she lov'd thee much; and hadst thou seen
How anxiously she urg'd—

Bas. (interrupting him). By heav'n and earth,
There is a ray of light breaks through thy tale,
And I could leap like madmen in their freaks,
So blessed is the gleam! Ah! no, no, no!
It cannot be! alas, it cannot be!

Yet didst thou say she urg'd it earnestly?

She is a woman, who avoids all share

In secret politics; one only charge

Her int'rest claims, Victoria's guardian friend—

And she would have me hence—it must be so.

O! would it were! how saidst thou, gentle Rosin-
berg?

She urg'd it earnestly—how did she urge it?

Nay, pri'thee do not stare upon me thus,

But tell me all her words. What said she else?

Ros. O Basil! I could laugh to see thy folly,
But that thy weakness doth provoke me so.
Most admirable, brave, determin'd man!
So well, so lately tried, what art thou now?
A vain deceitful thought transports thee thus.
Thinkst thou—

Bas. I will not tell thee what I think.

Ros. But I can guess it well, and it deceives thee.
Leave this detested place, this fatal court,
Where dark deceitful cunning plots thy ruin.
A soldier's duty calls thee loudly hence.
The time is critical. How wilt thou feel
When they shall tell these tidings in thine ear,
That brave Pescara and his royal troops,
Our valiant fellows, have the en'my fought,
Whilst we, so near at hand, lay loit'ring here?

Bas. Thou dost disturb thy brain with fancied
fears.

Our fortunes rest not on a point so nice,
That one short day should be of all this moment;
And yet this one short day will be to me
Worth years of other time.

Ros. Nay, rather say,

A day to darken all thy days beside.

Confound the fatal beauty of that woman,
Which hath bewitch'd thee so!

Bas. 'Tis most ungen'rous
To push me thus with rough unsparing hand,
Where but the slightest touch is felt so dearly.
It is unfriendly. [pain;

Ros. God knows my heart! I would not give thee
But it disturbs me, Basil, vexes me,
To see thee so enthralled by a woman.

If she be fair, others are fair as she.

Some other face will like emotions raise,

When thou canst better play a lover's part:

But for the present,—fie upon it, Basil!

Bas. What, is it possible thou hast beheld,
Hast tarried by her too, her converse shar'd,
Yet talkst as though she were a common fair one,
Such as a man may fancy and forget?

Thou art not, sure, so dull and brutish grown;

It is not so; thou dost belie thy thoughts,

And vainly try'st to gain me with the cheat.

Ros. So thinks each lover of the maid he loves,

Yet, in their lives, some many maidens love.

Fie on it! leave this town, and be a soldier!

Bas. Have done, have done! why dost thou bait
me thus?

Thy words become disgusting to me, Rosinberg.

What claim hast thou my actions to control?

I'll Mantua leave when it is fit I should. [it now;

Ros. Then, 'faith! 'tis fitting thou shouldst leave

Ay, on the instant. Is't not desperation

To stay and hazard ruin on thy fame,

Though yet uncheer'd e'en by that tempting lure,

No lover breathes without? thou hast no hope.

Bas. What, dost thou mean—curse on the paltry
thought!

That I should count and bargain with my heart,
 Upon the chances of unstinted favour,
 As little souls their base-bred fancies feed ?
 O ! were I conscious that within her breast
 I held some portion of her dear regard,
 Though pent for life within a prison's walls,
 Where through my grate I yet might sometimes see
 E'en but her shadow sporting in the sun ;
 Though plac'd by fate where some obstructing bound,
 Some deep impassable between us roll'd,
 And I might yet from some high tow'ring cliff
 Perceive her distant mansion from afar,
 Or mark its blue smoke rising eve and morn ;
 Nay, though within the circle of the moon
 Some spell did fix her, never to return,
 And I might wander in the hours of night,
 And upward turn my ever-gazing eye,
 Fondly to mark upon its varied disk
 Some little spot that might her dwelling be ;
 My fond, my fixed heart would still adore,
 And own no other love. Away, away !
 How canst thou say to one who loves like me,
 Thou hast no hope ?

Ros. But with such hope, my friend, how stand
 thy fears ?

Are they so well refin'd ? how wilt thou bear
 Ere long to hear, that some high-favour'd prince
 Has won her heart, her hand, has married her ?
 Though now unshackled, will it always be ?

Bas. By heav'n thou dost contrive but to torment,
 And hast a pleasure in the pain thou giv'st !
 There is malignity in what thou sayst.

Ros. No, not malignity, but kindness, Basil,
 That fain would save thee from the yawning gulf,
 To which blind passion guides thy heedless steps.

Bas. Go, rather save thyself
 From the weak passion which has seiz'd thy breast,
 T' assume authority with sage-like brow,
 And shape my actions by thine own caprice.
 I can direct myself.

Ros. Yes, do thyself,
 And let no artful woman do it for thee.

Bas. I scorn thy thought : it is beneath my scorn :
 It is of meanness sprung — an artful woman !
 O ! she has all the loveliness of heav'n,
 And all its goodness too !

Ros. I mean not to impute dishonest arts,
 I mean not to impute —

Bas. No, 'faith, thou canst not.
 Ros. What, can I not ? their arts all women have.

But now of this no more ; it moves thee greatly.
 Yet once again, as a most loving friend,
 Let me conjure thee, if thou prizest honour,
 A soldier's fair repute, a hero's fame,
 What noble spirits love, and well I know
 Full dearly dost thou prize them, leave this place,
 And give thy soldiers orders for the march.

Bas. Nay, since thou must assume it o'er me thus,
 Be gen'ral, and command my soldiers too.

Ros. What, hath this passion in so short a space,
 O ! curses on it ! so far chang'd thee, Basil,
 That thou dost take with such ungentle warmth,
 The kindly freedom of thine ancient friend ?
 Methinks the beauty of a thousand maids
 Would not have mov'd me thus to treat my friend,
 My best, mine earliest friend !

Bas. Say kinsman rather ; chance has link'd us
 so :

Our blood is near, our hearts are sever'd far ;
 No act of choice did e'er unite our souls.
 Men most unlike we are ; our thoughts unlike ;
 My breast disowns thee — thou'rt no friend of mine.

Ros. Ah ! have I then so long, so dearly lov'd
 thee ;

So often, with an elder brother's care,
 Thy childish rambles tended, shar'd thy sports ;
 Fill'd up by stealth thy weary school-boy's task ;
 Taught thy young arms thine earliest feats of
 strength ;

With boastful pride thine early rise beheld
 In glory's paths, contented then to fill
 A second place, so I might serve with thee ;
 And sayst thou now, I am no friend of thine ?
 Well, be it so ; I am thy kinsman then,
 And by that title will I save thy name
 From danger of disgrace. Indulge thy will.

I'll lay me down and feign that I am sick :
 And yet I shall not feign — I shall not feign ;
 For thy unkindness makes me so indeed.

It will be said that Basil tarried here
 To save his friend, for so they'll call me still ;
 Nor will dishonour fall upon thy name
 For such a kindly deed. —

[BASIL walks up and down in great agitation,
 then stops, covers his face with his hands,
 and seems to be overcome. ROSINBERG
 looks at him earnestly.]

O ! blessed heav'n, he weeps !

[Runs up to him, and catches him in his arms.]
 O Basil ! I have been too hard upon thee.
 And is it possible I've mov'd thee thus ?

Bas. (in a convulsed broken voice). I will re-
 nounce — I'll leave —

Ros. What says my Basil ?

Bas. I'll Mantua leave — I'll leave this seat of
 bliss —

This lovely woman — tear my heart in twain —
 Cast off at once my little span of joy —
 Be wretched — miserable — whate'er thou wilt —
 Dost thou forgive me ?

Ros. O my friend ! my friend !
 I love thee now more than I ever lov'd thee.
 I must be cruel to thee to be kind :
 Each pang I see thee feel strikes through my heart ;
 Then spare us both, call up thy noble spirit,
 And meet the blow at once. Thy troops are
 ready —

Let us depart, nor lose another hour.

[*BASIL shrinks from his arms, and looks at him with somewhat of an upbraiding, at the same time a sorrowful look.*

Bas. Nay, put me not to death upon the instant ; I'll see her once again, and then depart.

Ros. See her but once again, and thou art ruin'd ! It must not be—if thou regardest me—

Bas. Well then, it shall not be. Thou hast no mercy !

Ros. Ah ! thou wilt bless me all thine after-life For what now seems to thee so merciless.

Bas. (*sitting down very dejectedly*). Mine after-life ! what is mine after-life ?

My day is clos'd ! the gloom of night is come !

A hopeless darkness settles o'er my fate.

I've seen the last look of her heavenly eyes ;

I've heard the last sounds of her blessed voice ;

I've seen her fair form from my sight depart :

My doom is clos'd !

Ros. (*hanging over him with pity and affection*).

Alas ! my friend !

Bas. In all her lovely grace she disappear'd, Ah ! little thought I never to return !

Ros. Why so desponding ? think of warlike glory. The fields of fair renown are still before thee ; Who would not burn such noble fame to earn ?

Bas. What now are arms, or fair renown to me ? Strive for it those who will—and yet, a while, Welcome rough war ; with all thy scenes of blood ;

[*Starting from his seat.*

Thy roaring thunders, and thy clashing steel !

Welcome once more ! what have I now to do

But play the brave man o'er again, and die ?

Enter ISABELLA.

Isab. (*to Bas.*) My princess bids me greet you, noble count—

Bas. (*starting*). What dost thou say ?

Ros. Damn this untimely message !

Isab. The princess bids me greet you, noble count

In the cool grove, hard by the southern gate,

She with her train—

Bas. What, she indeed, herself ?

Isab. Herself, my lord, and she requests to see you.

Bas. Thank heav'n for this ! I will be there anon.

Ros. (*taking hold of him*). Stay, stay, and do not be a madman still.

Bas. Let go thy hold : what, must I be a brute, A very brute to please thee ? no, by heav'n !

[*Breaks from him, and Exit.*

Ros. (*striking his forehead*). All lost again ! ill fortune light upon her !

[*Turning eagerly to ISAB.*

And so thy virtuous mistress sends thee here

To make appointments, honourable dame ?

Isab. Not so, my lord, you must not call it so :

The court will hunt to-morrow, and Victoria

Would have your noble gen'ral of her train.

Ros. Confound these women, and their artful snares,

Since men will be such fools !

Isab. Yes, grumble at our empire as you will—

Ros. What, boast ye of it ? empire do ye call it ? It is your shame ! a short-liv'd tyranny,

That ends at last in hatred and contempt.

Isab. Nay, but some women do so wisely rule, Their subjects never from the yoke escape.

Ros. Some women do, but they are rarely found.

There is not one in all your paltry court

Hath wit enough for the ungen'rous task.

'Faith ! of you all, not one, but brave Albini,

And she disdains it— Good be with you, lady !

[*Going.*

Isab. O would I could but touch that stubborn heart,

How dearly should he pay for this hour's scorn !

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE IV.

A summer apartment in the country, the windows of which look to a forest. Enter VICTORIA in a hunting dress, followed by ALBINI and ISABELLA, speaking as they enter.

Vict. (*to ALB.*) And so you will not share our sport to-day ?

Alb. My days of frolic should ere this be o'er, But thou, my charge, hast kept me youthful still.

I should most gladly go ; but, since the dawn,

A heavy sickness hangs upon my heart ;

I cannot hunt to-day.

Vict. I'll stay at home and nurse thee, dear Albini.

Alb. No, no, thou shalt not stay.

Vict. Nay, but I will.

I cannot follow to the cheerful horn,

Whilst thou art sick at home.

Alb. Not very sick.

Rather than thou shouldst stay, my gentle child, I'll mount my horse, and go e'en as I am.

Vict. Nay, then I'll go, and soon return again.

Meanwhile, do thou be careful of thyself.

Isab. Hark, hark ! the shrill horns call us to the field :

Your highness hears them ? [*Music without.*

Vict. Yes, my Isabella ;

I hear them, and methinks e'en at the sound

I vault already on my leathern seat,

And feel the fiery steed beneath me shake

His mantled sides, and paw the fretted earth ;

Whilst I aloft, with gay equestrian grace,

The low salute of gallant lords return,

Who, waiting round with eager watchful eye,

And reined steeds, the happy moment seize.

O ! didst thou never hear, my Isabell,

How nobly Basil in the field becomes

His fiery courser's back ?

Isab. They say most gracefully.

Alb. What, is the valiant count not yet departed?

Vict. You would not have our gallant Basil go
When I have bid him stay? not so, Albini. [thee,

Alb. Fie! reigns that spirit still so strongly in
Which vainly covets all men's admiration,
And is to others cause of cruel pain?

O! would thou couldst subdue it! [severe :

Vict. My gentle friend, thou shouldst not be
For now in truth I love not admiration

As I was wont to do; in truth I do not.

But yet, this once, my woman's heart excuse,
For there is something strange in this man's love,
I never met before, and I must prove it.

Alb. Well, prove it then, be stricken too thyself,
And bid sweet peace of mind a sad farewell.

Vict. O no! that rather will my peace restore :

For after this, all folly of the kind

Will quite insipid and disgusting seem ;

And so I shall become a prudent maid,

And passing wise at last. [Music heard without.

Hark, hark ! again !

All good be with you ! I'll return ere long.

[*Exeunt* VICTORIA and ISABELLA.

Alb. (*sola*). Ay, go, and ev'ry blessing with thee go,

My most tormenting and most pleasing charge !

Like vapour from the mountain stream art thou,

Which lightly rises on the morning air,

And shifts its fleeting form with ev'ry breeze,

For ever varying, and for ever graceful.

Endearing, gen'rous, bountiful and kind ;

Vain, fanciful, and fond of worthless praise ;

Courteous and gentle, proud and magnificent :

And yet these adverse qualities in thee,

No dissonance, nor striking contrast make ;

For still thy good and amiable gifts

The sober dignity of virtue wear not,

And such a 'witching mien thy follies show,

They make a very idiot of reproof,

And smile it to disgrace.—

What shall I do with thee?—It grieves me much

To hear Count Basil is not yet departed.

When from the chace he comes, I'll watch his steps,

And speak to him myself.—

O ! I could hate her for that poor ambition,

Which silly adoration only claims,

But that I well remember in my youth

I felt the like— I did not feel it long :

I tore it soon indignant from my breast,

As that which did degrade a noble mind. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

A very beautiful grove in the forest. Music and horns heard afar off, whilst huntsmen and dogs appear passing over the stage, at a great distance. Enter VICTORIA and BASIL, as if just alighted from their horses.

Vict. (*speaking to attendants without*). Lead on
our horses to the further grove,

And wait us there.—

(*To Bas.*) This spot so pleasing and so fragrant is,

'Twere sacrilege with horses' hoofs to wear

Its velvet turf, where little elfins dance,

And fairies sport beneath the summer's moon :

I love to tread upon it.

Bas. O ! I would quit the chariot of a god

For such delightful footing !

Vict.

I love this spot.

Bas. It is a spot where one would live and die.

Vict. See, through the twisted boughs of those
high elms,

The sun-beams on the bright'ning foliage play,

And tinge the scaled bark with ruddy brown.

Is it not beautiful ?

Bas. 'Tis passing beautiful.

To see the sunbeams on the foliage play,

(*in a soft voice.*)

And tinge the scaled bark with ruddy brown.

Vict. And here I've stood full often, and ad-
mir'd

The graceful bending, o'er that shady pool,

Of yon green willow, whose fair sveeepy boughs

So kiss their image on the glassy plain,

And bathe their leafy tresses in the stream.

Bas. And I too love to see its drooping boughs

So kiss their image on the glassy plain,

And bathe their leafy tresses in the stream.

Vict. My lord, it is uncivil in you thus

My very words with mock'ry to repeat.

Bas. Nay, pardon me, did I indeed repeat ?

I meant it not ; but when I hear thee speak,

So sweetly dwells thy voice upon mine ear,

My tongue e'en unawares assumes the tone ;

As mothers on their lisping infants gaze,

And catch their broken words. I pri'thee, pardon !

Vict. But we must leave this grove : the birds fly
low :

This should forebode a storm, and yet o'erhead

The sky, bespread with little downy clouds

Of purest white, would seem to promise peace.

How beautiful those pretty snowy clouds !

Bas. Of a most dazzling brightness ! [brightness,

Vict. Nay, nay, a veil that tempers heav'n's
Of softest, purest white.

Bas. As though an angel, in his upward flight,

Had left his mantle floating in mid air. [sever'd :

Vict. Still most unlike a garment ; small and

[*Turning round, and perceiving that he is gazing
at her.*

But thou regardst them not.

[gaze ?

Bas. Ah ! what should I regard, where should I

For in that far-shot glance, so keenly wak'd,

That sweetly rising smile of admiration,

Far better do I learn how fair heav'n is,

Than if I gaz'd upon the blue scene.

Vict. Remember you have promis'd, gentle count,
No more to vex me with such foolish words. [mute ?

Bas. Ah ! wherefore should my tongue alone be

When every look and every motion tell,
So plainly tell, and will not be forbid,
That I adore thee, love thee, worship thee!

[VICTORIA looks haughty and displeas'd.

Ah! pardon me, I know not what I say.
Ah! frown not thus! I cannot see thee frown.
I'll do what'er thou wilt, I will be silent:
But, O! a reined tongue, and bursting heart,
Are hard at once to bear.—Wilt thou forgive me?

Vict. We'll think no more of it; we'll quit this spot;

I do repent me that I led thee here.
But 'twas the fav'rite path of a dear friend;
Here many a time we wander'd, arm in arm;
We lov'd this grove, and now that he is absent,
I love to haunt it still. [BASIL starts.

Bas. His fav'rite path—a friend—here arm in arm—

(Clasping his hands, and raising them to his head.)

Then there is such an one!

(Drooping his head, and looking distractedly upon the ground.)

I dream'd not of it.

Vict. (pretending not to see him). That little lane, with woodbine all o'ergrown,
He lov'd so well!—it is a fragrant path,
Is it not, count?

Bas. It is a gloomy one!

Vict. I have, my lord, been wont to think it cheerful.

Bas. I thought your highness meant to leave this spot?

Vict. I do, and by this lane we'll take our way;
For here he often walk'd with saunt'ring pace,
And listen'd to the woodlark's evening song.

Bas. What, must I on his very footsteps go?
Accurs'd be the ground on which he trode!

Vict. And is Count Basil so uncourtly grown,
That he would curse my brother to my face?

Bas. Your brother! gracious God! is it your brother?

That dear, that loving friend of whom you spoke,
Is he indeed your brother?

Vict. He is, indeed, my lord.

Bas. Then heaven bless him! all good angels
bless him!

I could weep o'er him now, shed blood for him!

I could—O what a foolish heart have I!

[Walks up and down with a hurried step, tossing about his arms in transport; then stops short, and runs up to VICTORIA.

Is it indeed your brother? [so?

Vict. It is indeed: what thoughts disturb'd thee
Bas. I will not tell thee; foolish thoughts they were.

Heav'n bless your brother!

Vict. Ay, heav'n bless him too!

I have but him; would I had two brave brothers,
And thou wert one of them!

Bas. I would fly from thee to earth's utmost
Were I thy brother— [bounds,
And yet, methinks, I would I had a sister.

Vict. And wherefore would ye so?

Bas.

To place her near thee,
The soft companion of thy hours to prove,
And, when far distant, sometimes talk of me.
Thou couldst not chide a gentle sister's cares.
Perhaps, when rumour from the distant war,
Uncertain tales of dreadful slaughter bore,
Thou'dst see the tear hang on her pale wan cheek,
And kindly say, How does it fare with Basil?

Vict. No more of this—indeed there must no more.

A friend's remembrance I will ever bear thee.

But see where Isabella this way comes:

I had a wish to speak with her alone;

Attend us here, for soon will we return,

And then take horse again.

[Exit.

Bas. (looking after her for some time). See with
what graceful steps she moves along,

Her lovely form, in ev'ry action lovely!

If but the wind her ruffled garment raise,

It twists it into some light pretty fold,

Which adds new grace. Or should some small
mishap,

Some tangling branch, her fair attire derange,

What would in others strange or awkward seem,

But lends to her some wild bewitching charm.

See, yonder does she raise her lovely arm

To pluck the dangling hedge-flow'r as she goes;

And now she turns her head, as though she view'd

The distant landscape; now methinks she walks

With doubtful ling'ring steps—will she look back?

Ah, no! yon thicket hides her from my sight.

Bless'd are the eyes that may behold her still,

Nor dread that ev'ry look shall be the last!

And yet she said she would remember me.

I will believe it: Ah! I must believe it,

Or be the saddest soul that sees the light!

But, lo, a messenger, and from the army!

He brings me tidings; grant they may be good!

Till now I never fear'd what man might utter;

I dread his tale, God grant it may be good!

Enter Messenger.

From the army?

Mess. Yes, my lord.

Bas. What tidings bringst thou?

Mess. Th' imperial army, under brave Pescara,
Has beat the enemy near Pavia's walls.

Bas. Ha! have they fought? and is the battle o'er?

Mess. Yes, conquer'd; ta'en the French king
prisoner,

Who, like a noble, gallant gentleman,

Fought to the last, nor yielded up his sword

Till, being one amidst surrounding foes,

His arm could do no more.

Bas. What dost thou say? who is made pris'ner?
What kind did fight so well?

Mess. The king of France.

Bas. Thou saidst—thy words do ring so in mine ears,

I cannot catch their sense—the battle's o'er?

Mess. It is, my lord. Pescara staid your coming,
But could no longer stay. His troops were bold,
Oceasion press'd him, and they bravely fought—
They bravely fought, my lord!

Bas. I hear, I hear thee.
Accurs'd am I, that it should wring my heart
To hear they bravely fought!—

They bravely fought, while we lay ling'ring here.
O! what a fated blow to strike me thus!

Perdition! shame! disgrace! a damned blow!
Mess. Ten thousand of the enemy are slain;

We too have lost full many a gallant soul.
I view'd the closing armies from afar;

Their close pik'd ranks in goodly order spread,
Which seem'd, alas! when that the fight was o'er,

Like the wild marsh's erop of stately reeds,
Laid with the passing storm. But woe is me!

When to the field I came, what dismal sights!
What waste of life! what heaps of bleeding slain!

Bas. Would I were laid a red, disfigur'd corse,
Amid those heaps! They fought, and we were
absent!

[Walks about distractedly, then stops short.

Who sent thee here?

Mess. Pescara sent me to inform Count Basil,
He needs not now his aid, and gives him leave
To march his tardy troops to distant quarters.

Bas. He says so, does he? well, it shall be so.
[Tossing his arms distractedly.

I will to quarters, narrow quarters go,
Where voice of war shall rouse me forth no more.

[Exit.

Mess. I'll follow after him; he is distracted:—
And yet he looks so wild, I dare not do it.

Enter VICTORIA, as if frightened, followed by
ISABELLA.

Vict. (to ISAB.) Didst thou not mark him as he
pass'd thee too?

Isab. I saw him pass, but with such hasty steps
I had no time.

Vict. I met him with a wild disorder'd air,
In furious haste; he stopp'd distractedly,
And gaz'd upon me with a mournful look,

But pass'd away, and spoke not. Who art thou?
(To the messenger.)

I fear thou art a bearer of bad tidings. [madam,

Mess. No, rather good, as I should deem it,
Although unwelcome tidings to Count Basil.

Our army hath a glorious battle won; [captive.
Ten thousand French are slain, their monareh

Vict. (to *Mess.*) Ah, there it is! he was not in
the fight.

Run after him I pray—nay, do not so—

Run to his kinsman, good Count Rosinberg,
And bid him follow him—I pray thee run! [well;

Mess. Nay, lady, by your leave, you seem not
I will conduct you hence, and then I'll go.

Vict. No, no, I'm well enough; I'm very well;
Go, hie thee hence, and do thine errand swiftly.

[Exit messenger.
O what a wretch am I! I am to blame!

I only am to blame!

Isab. Nay, wherefore say so?
What have you done that others would not do?

Vict. What have I done? I've fool'd a noble
heart—

I've wreck'd a brave man's honour!

[Exit, leaning upon ISABELLA.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A dark night; no moon; but a few stars glimmering; the stage represents (as much as can be discovered for the darkness) a churchyard with part of a chapel, and a wing of the ducal palace adjoining to it. Enter BASIL, with his hat off, his hair and his dress in disorder, stepping slowly, and stopping several times to listen, as if he was afraid of meeting any one.

Bas. No sound is here: man is at rest, and I
May near his habitations venture forth,

Like some unblessed creature of the night,
Who dares not meet his face.—Her window's dark;

No streaming light doth from her chamber beam,
That I once more may on her dwelling gaze,

And bless her still. All now is dark for me!
[Pauses for some time, and looks upon the graves.

How happy are the dead, who quietly rest
Beneath these stones! each by his kindred laid,

Still in a hallow'd neighbourhood with those,
Who when alive his social converse shar'd:

And now perhaps some dear surviving friend
Doth here at times the grateful visit pay,

Read with sad eyes his short memorial o'er,
And bless his mem'ry still!—

But I must like an outcast of my kind,
In some lone spot lay my unburied corse,

To rot above the earth; where, if perchance
The steps of human wand'rer e'er approach,

He'll stand aghast, and flee the horrid place,
With dark imaginations frightful made,—

The haunt of damned sprites. O cursed wretch!
If the fair and honour'd field shouldst thou have
died,

Where brave friends, proudly smiling through their
tears,

Had pointed out the spot where Basil lay!
[A light seen in VICTORIA'S window.

But, ha ! the wonted, welcome light appears.
How bright within I see her chamber wall !
Athwart it too, a dark'ning shadow moves,
A slender woman's form : it is herself !
What means that motion of its clasped hands ?
That drooping head ? alas ! is she in sorrow ?
Alas ! thou sweet enchantress of the mind,
Whose voice was gladness, and whose presence bliss,
Art thou unhappy too ? I've brought thee woe ;
It is for me thou weepst. Ah ! were it so,
Fallen as I am, I yet could life endure,
In some dark den from human sight conceal'd,
So, that I sometimes from my haunt might steal,
To see and love thee still. No, no, poor wretch !
She weeps thy shame, she weeps, and scorns thee
She moves again ; e'en darkly imag'd thus, [too.
How lovely is that form !

[Pauses, still looking at the window.

To be so near thee, and for ever parted !
For ever lost ! what art thou now to me ?
Shall the departed gaze on thee again ?
Shall I glide past thee in the midnight hour,
While thou perceiv'st it not, and thinkst perhaps
'Tis but the mournful breeze that passes by ?

[Pauses again, and gazes at the window, till the light disappears.

'Tis gone, 'tis gone ! these eyes have seen their last !
The last impression of her heavenly form
The last sight of those walls wherein she lives :
The last best ray of light from human dwelling.
I am no more a being of this world.

Farewell ! farewell ! all now is dark for me !
Come fated deed ! come horror and despair !
Here lies my dreadful way.

Enter GEOFFRY, from behind a tomb.

Geof. O ! stay, my gen'ral !

Bas. Art thou from the grave ?

Geof. O, my brave gen'ral ! do you know me not ?
I am old Geoffry, the old maimed soldier,
You did so nobly honour.

Bas. Then go thy way, for thou art honourable ;
Thou hast no shame, thou needst not seek the dark
Like fallen, famelike men. I pray thee go !

Geof. Nay, speak not thus, my noble gen'ral !
Ah ! speak not thus ! thou'rt brave, thou'rt hon-
our'd still.

Thy soldier's fame is far too surely rais'd
To be o'erthrown with one unhappy chance.
I've heard of thy brave deeds with swelling heart,
And yet shall live to cast my cap in air
At glorious tales of thee. —

Bas. Forbear, forbear ! thy words but wring my
soul.

Geof. O ! pardon me ! I am old maimed Geoffry.
O ! do not go ! I've but one hand to hold thee.

[Laying hold of BASIL as he attempts to go
away. BASIL stops, and looks round upon
him with softness.

Bas. Two would not hold so well, old honour'd
vet'ran !

What wouldst thou have me do ?

Geof. Return, my lord ; for love of blessed heaven,
Seek not such desperate ways ! where would you
go ?

Bas. Does Geoffry ask where should a soldier go
To hide disgrace ? there is no place but one.

[Struggling to get free.

Let go thy foolish hold, and force me not
To do some violence to thy hoary head —

What, wilt thou not ? nay, then it must be so.

[Breaks violently from him, and Exit.

Geof. Curs'd feeble hand ! he's gone to seek
perdition !

I cannot run. Where is that stupid hind ?

He should have met me here. Holla, Fernando !

Enter FERNANDO.

We've lost him, he is gone, he's broke from me !
Did I not bid thee meet me early here,
For that he has been known to haunt this place ?

Fer. And which way has he gone ?

Geof. Towards the forest, if I guess aright.

But do thou run with speed to Rosinberg,

And he will follow him : run swiftly, man !

[Exit.

SCENE II.

A wood, wild and savage ; an entry to a cave, very
much tangled with brushwood, is seen in the back-
ground. The time represents the dawn of morning.
BASIL is discovered standing near the front of the
stage in a thoughtful posture, with a couple of pistols
laid by him on a piece of projecting rock ; he pauses
for some time.

Bas. (alone). What shall I be some few short
moments hence ?

Why ask I now ? who from the dead will rise
To tell me of that awful state unknown ?
But be it what it may, or bliss or torment,
Annihilation, dark and endless rest,
Or some dread thing, man's wildest range of thought
Hath never yet conceiv'd, that change I'll dare
Which makes me any thing but what I am.
I can bear scorpions' stings, tread fields of fire,
In frozen gulfs of cold eternal lie,
Be toss'd aloft through tracts of endless void,
But cannot live in shame. — (Pauses.) O impious
thought !

Will the great God of mercy, mercy have
On all but those who are most miserable ?

Will he not punish with a pitying hand

The poor, fall'n, froward child ? (Pauses.)

And shall I then against His will offend,

Because He is most good and merciful ?

O ! horrid baseness ? what, what shall I do ?

I'll think no more — it turns my dizzy brain —

It is too late to think — what must be, must be —
I cannot live, therefore I needs must die.

[*Takes up the pistols, and walks up and down, looking wildly around him, then discovering the cave's mouth.*

Here is an entry to some darksome cave,
Where an uncoffin'd corse may rest in peace,
And hide its foul corruption from the earth.
The threshold is unmark'd by mortal foot.
I'll do it here.

[*Enters the cave and Exit; a deep silence; then the report of a pistol is heard from the cave, and soon after, enter ROSINBERG, VALTOMER, two officers and soldiers, almost at the same moment, by different sides of the stage.*

Ros. This way the sound did come. [report?

Valt. How came ye, soldiers? heard ye that
1st Sol. We heard it, and it seem'd to come
from hence,

Which made us this way hie.

Ros. A horrid fancy darts across my mind.

[*A groan heard from the cave.*

(To VALT.) Ha! heardst thou that?

Valt. Methinks it is the groan of one in pain.

[*A second groan.*

Ros. Ha! there again!

Valt. From this cave's mouth, so dark and
chok'd with weeds,

It seems to come.

Ros. I'll enter first.

1st Off. My lord, the way is tangled o'er with
briers:

Hard by a few short paces to the left,
There is another mouth of easier access;

I pass'd it even now.

Ros. Then show the way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The inside of the cave. BASIL discovered lying on the ground, with his head raised a little upon a few stones and earth, the pistols lying beside him, and blood upon his breast. Enter ROSINBERG, VALTOMER, and officers. ROSINBERG, upon seeing BASIL, stops short with horror, and remains motionless for some time.

Valt. Great God of heaven! what a sight is this!

[*ROSINBERG runs to BASIL, and stoops down by his side.*

Ros. O Basil! O my friend! what hast thou done?

Bas. (*covering his face with his hand*). Why art
thou come? I thought to die in peace.

Ros. Thou knowst me not — I am thy Rosinberg,
Thy dearest, truest friend, thy loving kinsman!
Thou dost not say to me, Why art thou come?

Bas. Shame knows no kindred: I am fall'n,
disgrac'd;

My fame is gone, I cannot look upon thee.

Ros. My Basil, noble spirit! talk not thus!
The greatest mind untoward fate may prove:
Thou art our gen'rous, valiant leader still,
Fall'n as thou art — and yet thou art not fall'n;
Who says thou art, must put his harness on,
And prove his words in blood.

Bas. Ah, Rosinberg! this is no time to boast!
I once had hopes a glorious name to gain;
Too proud of heart, I did too much aspire;
The hour of trial came, and found me wanting.
Talk not of me, but let me be forgotten. —

And O! my friend! something upbraids me here,
[*Laying his hand on his breast.*

For that I now remember how oftimes

I have usurp'd it o'er thy better worth,
Most vainly teaching where I should have learnt:
But thou wilt pardon me. —

Ros. (*taking BASIL's hand, and pressing it to his breast*). Rend not my heart in twain! O!
talk not thus!

I knew thou wert superior to myself,
And to all men beside: thou wert my pride;
I paid thee defence with a willing heart.

Bas. It was delusion, all delusion, Rosinberg!
I feel my weakness now, I own my pride.

Give me thy hand, my time is near the close:
Do this for me: thou knowst my love, Victoria —

Ros. O curse that woman! she it is alone —
She has undone us all!

Bas. It doubles unto me the stroke of death
To hear thee name her thus. O curse her not!
The fault is mine; she's gentle, good and blameless —

Thou wilt not then my dying wish fulfil?

Ros. I will! I will! what wouldst thou have
me do?

Bas. See her when I am gone; be gentle with
her;

And tell her that I bless'd her in my death;
E'en in my agonies I lov'd and bless'd her.

Wilt thou do this? —

Ros.

I'll do what thou desir'st
Bas. I thank thee, Rosinberg; my time draws
near.

[*Raising his head a little, and perceiving officers.*
Is there not some one here? are we alone?

Ros. (*making a sign for the officers to retire*).
'Tis but a sentry, to prevent intrusion.

Bas. Thou knowst this desp'rate deed from
sacred rites

Hath shut me out: I am unblest'd of men,
And what I am in sight of th' awful God,
I dare not think; when I am gone, my friend,
O! let a good man's prayers to heav'n ascend
For an offending spirit! — Pray for me.

What thinkest thou? although an outcast here,
May not some heavenly mercy still be found?

Ros. Thou wilt find mercy — my beloved Basil —
It cannot be that thou shouldst be rejected.

I will with bended knee—I will implore—
It chokes mine utterance—I will pray for thee—

Bas. This comforts me—thou art a loving friend.

[*A noise without.*]

Ros. (to *off.* without). What noise is that?

Enter VALTOMER.

Valt. (to *Ros.*) My lord, the soldiers all insist to enter.

What shall I do? they will not be denied:

They say that they will see their noble gen'ral.

Bas. Ah, my brave fellows! do they call me so?

Ros. Then let them come.

[*Enter soldiers, who gather round BASIL, and look mournfully upon him; he holds out his hand to them with a faint smile.*]

Bas. My gen'rous soldiers, this is kindly meant.

I'm low i' the dust; God bless you all, brave hearts!

1st *Sol.* And God bless you, my noble, noble gen'ral!

We'll never follow such a leader more.

2nd *Sol.* Ah! had you staid with us, my noble gen'ral,

We would have died for you.

[*3d soldier endeavours next to speak, but cannot; and kneeling down by BASIL, covers his face with his cloak. ROSINBERG turns his face to the wall and weeps.*]

Bas. (in a very faint broken voice). Where art thou? do not leave me, Rosinberg—

Come near to me—these fellows make me weep:

I have no power to weep—give me thy hand—

I love to feel thy grasp—my heart beats strangely—

It beats as though its breathings would be few—

Remember—

Ros. Is there aught thou wouldst desire?

Bas. Nought but a little earth to cover me,

And lay the smooth sod even with the ground—

Let no stone mark the spot—give no offence.

I fain would say—what can I say to thee?

[*A deep pause; after a feeble struggle, BASIL expires.*]

1st *Sol.* That motion was his last.

2nd *Sol.* His spirit's fled.

1st *Sol.* God grant it peace! it was a noble spirit!

4th *Sol.* The trumpet's sound did never rouse a braver.

1st *Sol.* Alas! no trumpet e'er shall rouse him more,

Until the dreadful blast that wakes the dead.

2nd *Sol.* And when that sounds it will not wake a braver. [toil!]

3d *Sol.* How pleasantly he shar'd our hardest
Our coarsest food the daintiest fare he made.

4th *Sol.* Ay, many a time i' the cold damp plain
has he

With cheerful count'nance cried, "Good rest, my hearts!"

Then wrapp'd him in his cloak, and laid him down
E'en like the meanest soldier in the field.

[*ROSINBERG all this time continues hanging over the body, and gazing upon it. VALTOMER now endeavours to draw him away.*]

Valt. This is too sad, my lord. [pale!]

Ros. There, seest thou how he lies? so fix'd, so Ah! what an end is this! thus lost! thus fall'n!

To be thus taken in his middle course,

Where he so nobly strove; till curs'd passion

Came like a sun-stroke on his mid-day toil,

And cut the strong man down. O Basil! Basil!

Valt. Forbear, my friend, we must not sorrow here.

Ros. He was the younger brother of my soul.

Valt. Indeed, my lord, it is too sad a sight.

Time calls us, let the body be remov'd.

Ros. He was—O! he was like no other man!

Valt. (still endeavouring to draw him away).
Nay, now forbear.

Ros. I lov'd him from his birth!

Valt. Time presses, let the body be remov'd.

Ros. What sayst thou?

Valt. Shall we not remove him hence?

Ros. He has forbid it, and has charg'd me well

To leave his grave unknown? for that the church

All sacred rites to the self-slain denies.

He would not give offence. [wretch,

1st *Sol.* What! shall our gen'ral, like a very

Be laid unhonour'd in the common ground?

No last salute to bid his soul farewell?

No warlike honours paid? it shall not be.

2nd *Sol.* Laid thus? no, by the blessed light of
heav'n!

In the most holy spot in Mantua's walls

He shall be laid; in face of day be laid:

And though black priests should curse us in the teeth,

We will fire o'er him whilst our hands have power

To grasp a musket.

Several soldiers. Let those who dare forbid it!

Ros. My brave companions, be it as you will.

[*Spreading out his arms as if he would embrace the soldiers.—They prepare to remove the body.*]

Valt. Nay, stop a while, we will not move it now,

For see a mournful visitor appears,

And must not be denied.

Enter VICTORIA and ISABELLA.

Vict. I thought to find him here; where has he fled?

[*ROSINBERG points to the body without speaking; VICTORIA shrieks out and falls into the arms of ISABELLA.*]

Isab. Alas! my gentle mistress, this will kill thee.

Vict. (recovering). Unloose thy hold, and let me look upon him.

O! horrid, horrid sight! my ruin'd Basil!

Is this the sad reward of all thy love ?

O ! I have murder'd thee !

[*Kneels down by the body, and bends over it.*

These wasted streams of life ! this bloody wound !

[*Laying her hand upon his heart.*

Is there no breathing here ? all still ! all cold !

Open thine eyes, speak, be thyself again,

And I will love thee, serve thee, follow thee,

In spite of all reproach. Alas ! alas !

A lifeless corse art thou for ever laid,

And dost not hear my call.

Ros. No, madam ; now your pity comes too late.

Vict. Dost thou upbraid me ? O ! I have deserv'd it !

Ros. No, madam, no, I will not now upbraid :

But woman's grief is like a summer storm,

Short as it violent is ; in gayer scenes,

Where soon thou shalt in giddy circles blaze,

And play the airy goddess of the day,

Thine eye, perchance, amidst th' observing crowd,

Shall mark th' indignant face of Basil's friend,

And then it will upbraid.

Vict. No, never, never ! thus it shall not be.

To the dark, shaded cloister wilt thou go,

Where sad and lonely, through the dismal grate

Thou'lt spy my wasted form, and then upbraid me.

Ros. Forgive me, heed me not ; I'm griev'd at heart ;

I'm fretted, gall'd, all things are hateful to me.

If thou didst love my friend, I will forgive thee ;

I must forgive thee : with his dying breath

He bade me tell thee, that his latest thoughts

Were love to thee ; in death he lov'd and bless'd thee.

[*VICTORIA goes to throw herself upon the body, but is prevented by VALTOMER and ISABELLA, who support her in their arms, and endeavour to draw her away from it.*

Vict. Oh ! force me not away ! by his cold corse

Let me lie down and weep. O ! Basil, Basil !

The gallant and the brave ! how hast thou lov'd me !

If there is any holy kindness in you,

[*To ISAB. and VALT.*

Tear me not hence.

For he lov'd me in thoughtless folly lost,

With all my faults, most worthless of his love ;

And him I'll love in the low bed of death,

In horror and decay. —

Near his lone tomb I'll spend my wretched days

In humble pray'r for his departed spirit :

Cold as his grave shall be my earthy bed,

As dark my cheerless cell. Force me not hence.

I will not go, for grief hath made me strong.

[*Struggling to get loose.*

Ros. Do not withhold her, leave her sorrow free.

[*They let her go, and she throws herself upon the body in an agony of grief.*

It doth subdue the sternness of my grief

To see her mourn him thus. — Yet I must curse. —

Heav'n's curses light upon her damned father,
Whose crooked policy has wrought this wreck !

Isab. If he has done it, you are well reveng'd,

For all his hidden plots are now detected.

Gauriecio, for some int'rest of his own,

His master's secret dealings with the foe

Has to Lannoy betray'd ; who straight hath sent,

On the behalf of his imperial lord,

A message full of dreadful threats to Mantua.

His discontented subjects aid him not ;

He must submit to the degrading terms

A haughty conqu'ring power will now impose.

Ros. And art thou sure of this ?

Isab.

I am, my lord.

Ros. Give me thy hand, I'm glad on't, O ! I'm glad on't !

It should be so ! how like a hateful ape,

Detected, grinning, 'midst his pilfer'd hoard,

A cunning man appears, whose secret frauds

Are open'd to the day ! scorn'd, hooted, mock'd !

Scorn'd by the very fools who most admir'd

His worthless art. But when a great mind falls,

The noble nature of man's gen'rous heart

Doth bear him up against the shame of ruin ;

With gentle censure using but his faults

As modest means to introduce his praise ;

For pity like a dewy twilight comes

To close th' oppressive splendour of his day,

And they who but admir'd him in his height,

His alter'd state lament, and love him fallen.

[*Exeunt.*

THE TRIAL:

A COMEDY

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

MR. WITHRINGTON.
 MR. HARWOOD.
 COLONEL HARDY.
 SIR LOFTUS PRETTYMAN.
 MR. OPAL.
 MR. ROYSTON.
 HUMPHRY.
 JONATHAN.
 THOMAS.
 Servants, &c.

WOMEN.

AGNES. }
 MARIANE, } *Nieces to WITHRINGTON.*
 MISS ESTON.
 MRS. BETTY, *Maid to AGNES.*

* * *Scene in Bath, and in MR. WITHRINGTON'S house in the environs of Bath.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

MR. WITHRINGTON'S house: *Enter WITHRINGTON and his two nieces hanging upon his arms, coaxing him in a playful manner as they advance towards the front of the stage.*

With. Pooh, pooh, get along, young gipsies, and don't tease me any more.

Ag. So we will, my good sir, when you have granted our suit.

Mar. Do, dear uncle, it will be so pleasant!

With. Get along, get along. Don't think to wheedle me into it. It would be very pleasant, truly, to see an old fellow, with a wig upon his bald pate, making one in a holiday mummery with a couple of madcaps.

Ag. Nay, don't lay the fault upon the wig, good sir, for it is as youthful, and as sly, and as saucy looking as the best head of hair in the county. As for your old wig, indeed, there was so much curmudgeon-like austerity about it, that young people fled from before it, as, I dare say, the birds do at present; for I am sure it is stuck up in some cherry-orchard, by this time, to frighten away the sparrows.

With. You are mistaken, young mistress, it is upstairs in my wig-box.

Ag. Well, I am glad it is anywhere but upon your pate, uncle. (*Turning his face towards MARIANE.*) Look at him, pray! is he not ten years younger since he wore it? Is there one bit of an old grumbler to be seen about him now?

Mar. He is no more like the man he was, than I am like my godmother. (*Clapping his shoulder.*) You must even do as we have bid you, sir, for this excuse will never bring you off.

With. Pooh, pooh, it is a foolish girl's whimsey: I'll have nothing to do with it.

Ag. It is a reasonable woman's desire, gentle guardian, and you must consent to it. For if I am to marry at all, I am resolved to have a respectable man, and a man who is attached to me; and to find out such an one in my present situation is impossible. I am provoked beyond all patience with your old greedy lords, and match-making aunts, introducing their poor noodle heirs-apparent to me. Your ambitious esquires, and proud obsequious baronets, are intolerable; and your rakish younger brothers are nauseous: such creatures only surround me, while men of sense stand at a distance, and think me as foolish as the company I keep. One would swear I was made of amber, to attract all the dust and chaff of the community.

With. There is some truth in this, 'faith.

Ag. You see how it is with me: so, my dear, loving good uncle (*coaxing him*), do let Mariane take my place for a little while. We are newly come to Bath; nobody knows us: we have been but at one ball, and as Mariane looks so much better than me, she has already been mistaken for the heiress, and I for her portionless cousin. I have told you how we shall manage it; do lend us your assistance!

With. So, in the disguise of a portionless spinster, you are to captivate some man of sense, I suppose?

Ag. I would fain have it so.

With. Go, go, thou art a fool, Agnes! who will fall in love with a little ordinary girl like thee? why, there is not one feature in thy face that a man would give a farthing for.

Mar. You are very saucy, uncle.

Ag. I should despair of my beauty, to be sure, since I am reckoned so much like you, my dear sir; yet old nurse told me that a rich lady, a great lady, and the prettiest lady that ever wore silk, fell in love, once on a time, with Mr. Anthony, and would have followed him to the world's end too, if it had not

been for an old hunk of a father, who deserved to be drubbed for his pains. Don't you think he did, sir?

With. (endeavouring to look angry). Old nurse is a fool, and you are an impudent hussy. I'll hear no more of this nonsense. *(Breaks from them and goes towards the door: they run after him, and draw him back again.)*

Ag. Nay, good sir, we have not quite done with you yet: grant our request, and then scamper off as you please.

Mar. I'll hold both your arms till you grant it.

With. (to MAR.) And what makes you so eager about it, young lady? you expect, I suppose, to get a husband by the trick. O fy, fy! the poorest girl in England would blush at such a thought, who calls herself an honest one.

Ag. And Mariane would reject the richest man in England who could harbour such a suspicion. But give yourself no uneasiness about this, sir; she need not go a husband-hunting, for she is already engaged. — *(MARIANE looks frightened, and makes signs to AGNES over her uncle's shoulder, which she answers with a smile of encouragement.)*

With. Engaged! she is very good, truly, to manage all this matter herself, being afraid to give me any trouble, I suppose. And pray what fool has she picked out from the herd, to enter into this precious engagement with?

Ag. A foolish fellow enough to be sure, your favourite nephew, cousin Edward.

With. Hang the silly booby! how could he be such an idiot! but it can't be, it shan't be! — it is folly to put myself into a passion about it. *(To MARIANE, who puts her hand on his shoulder to soothe him.)* Hold off your hands, ma'am! This is news indeed to amuse me with of a morning.

Ag. Yes, uncle, and I can tell you more news; for they are not only engaged, but as soon as he returns from abroad they are to be married.

With. Well, well, let them marry in the devil's name, and go a-begging if they please.

Ag. No, gentle guardian, they need not go a-begging; they will have a good fortune to support them.

With. Yes, yes, they will get a prize in the lottery, or find out the philosopher's stone, and coin their old shoes into guineas.

Ag. No, sir, it is not that way the fortune is to come.

With. No; he has been following some knight-errant, then, I suppose, and will have an island in the South Sea for his pains.

Ag. No, you have not guessed it yet, *(stroking his hand gently).* Did you never hear of a good, kind, rich uncle of theirs, the generous Mr. Withrington? He is to settle a handsome provision upon them as soon as they are married, and leave them his fortune at last.

With. (lifting up his hands). Well, I must say thou art the sauciest little jade in the kingdom! But did you never hear that this worthy uncle of theirs, having got a new wig, which makes him ten years younger than he was, is resolved to embrace the opportunity, and seek out a wife for himself?

Ag. O! that is nothing to the purpose; for what I have said about the fortune must happen, though he should seek out a score of wives for himself.

With. Must happen! but I say it shall not happen. Whether should you or I know best?

Ag. Why I, to be sure.

With. Ha, ha, ha! how so, baggage?

Ag. (resting her arm on his shoulder, looking archly in his face). You don't know, perhaps, that when I went to Scotland last summer, I travelled far, and far, as the tale says, and farther than I can tell, till I came to the Isle of Sky, where every body has the second sight, and has nothing to do but tear a little hole in a tartan-plaid, and peering through it, in this manner, sees every thing past, present, and to come. Now, you must know, I gave an old woman half-a-crown and a roll of tobacco for a peep or two through her plaid; and what do you think I saw, uncle?

With. The devil dancing a hornpipe, I suppose.

Ag. There was somebody dancing, to be sure, but it was not the devil, though. Who do you think it was now?

With. Pooh, pooh!

Ag. It was uncle himself, at Mariane's wedding, leading down the first dance with the bride. I saw a sheet of parchment in a corner, too, signed with his own blessed hand, and a very handsome settlement it was. So he led down the first dance himself, and we all followed after him, as merry as so many hay-makers.

With. Thou hast had a sharp sight, 'faith!

Ag. And I took a second peep through the plaid, and what do you think I saw then, sir?

With. Nay, prate on as thou wilt.

Ag. A genteel family-house, where Edward and Mariane dwelt, and several little brats running up and down in it. Some of them so tall, and so tall, and some of them no taller than this. And there came good uncle among them, and they all flocked about him so merrily; every body was so glad to see him, the very scullions from the kitchen were glad; and methought he looked as well pleased himself as any of them. Don't you think he did, sir?

With. Have done with thy prating.

Ag. I have not done yet, good sir; for I took another peep still, and then I saw a most dismal changed family indeed. There was a melancholy sick bed set out, in the best chamber; every face was sad, and all the children were weeping. There was one dark-eyed rogue among them, called little

Anthony, and he threw away his bread and butter, and roared like a young bull, for woe's me ! old uncle was dying. (*Observing WITHRINGTON affected.*) But old uncle recovered though, and looked as stout as a veteran again. So I gave the old woman her plaidy, and would not look through any more.

With. Thou art the wildest little witch in the world, and wilt never be at rest till thou hast got every thing thine own way, I believe.

Ag. I thank you, I thank you, dear uncle ! (*leaping round his neck.*) It shall be even so, and I shall have my own little boon into the bargain.

With. I did not say so.

Ag. But I know it will be so, and many thanks to you, my dear good uncle ! (*MARIANE ventures to come from behind, — WITHRINGTON looks gently to her, she holds out her hand, he hesitates, and AGNES joins their hands together, giving them a hearty shake.*)

With. Come, come, let me get away from you now : you are a couple of insinuating gipsies.

[*Exit hastily.*]

Mar. (*embracing AGNES.*) Well, heaven bless thee, my sweet Agnes ! thou hast done marvels for me. You gave me a fright, though ; I thought we were ruined.

Ag. O ! I knew I should get the better of him some way or other. What a good, worthy heart he has ! you don't know how dearly I love this old uncle of ours.

Mar. I wonder how it is. I used to think him severe and unreasonable, with his fiddle-faddle fancies about delicacy and decorum ; but since you came among us, Agnes, you have so coaxed him, and laughed at him, and played with him, that he has become almost as frolicsome as ourselves.

Ag. Let us set about our project immediately. Nobody knows us here but Lady Fade and Miss Eston : we must let them both into the secret : Lady Fade is confined with bad health, and though Miss Eston, I believe, would rather tell a secret than hold her tongue, yet as long as there are streets and carriages, and balls and ribbons, and feathers and fashions, to talk of, there can be no great danger from her.

Mar. O ! we shall do very well. How I long to frolic it away, in all the rich trappings of heirship, amongst those sneaking wretches, the fortune-hunters ! They have neglected me as a poor girl, but I will have my revenge upon them as a rich one.

Ag. You will acquit yourself very handsomely I dare say, and find no lack of admirers.

Mar. I have two or three in my eye just now, but of all men living I have set my heart upon humbling Sir Loftus. He insulted a friend of mine last winter, to ingratiate himself with an envious woman of quality, but I will be revenged upon him ; O ! how I will scorn him, and toss up my nose at him.

Ag. That is not the way to be revenged upon

him, silly girl ! He is haughty and reserved in his manners ; and though not altogether without understanding, has never suffered a higher idea to get footing in his noddle than that of appearing a man of consequence and fashion ; and though he has no happiness but in being admired as a fine gentleman, and no existence but at an assembly, he appears there with all the haughty gravity and careless indifference of a person superior to such paltry amusements. Such a man as this must be laughed at, not scorned ; contempt must be his portion.

Mar. He shall have it then. And as for his admirer and imitator, Jack Opal, who has for these ten years past so successfully performed every kind of fine gentlemanship that every new fool brought into fashion, any kind of bad treatment, I suppose, that happens to come into my head will be good enough for him.

Ag. Quite good enough. You have set him down for one of your admirers too ?

Mar. Yes, truly, and a great many more besides.

Ag. Did you observe in the ball-room last night, a genteel young man, with dark grey eyes, and a sensible countenance, but with so little of the foppery of the fashion about him, that one took him at a distance for a much older man ?

Mar. Wore he not a plain brownish coat ? and stood he not very near us great part of the evening ?

Ag. Yes, the very same. Pray endeavour to attract him, Mariane.

Mar. If you are very desirous to see him in my train, I will.

Ag. No, not desirous, neither.

Mar. Then wherefore should I try ?

Ag. Because I would have you try every art to win him, and I would not have him to be won.

Mar. O ! I comprehend it now ! this is the sensible man we are in quest of.

Ag. I shall not be sorry if it proves so. I have inquired who he is, as I shall tell you by and bye, and what I have learnt of him I like. Is not his appearance prepossessing ?

Mar. I don't know, he is too grave and dignified for such a girl as thou art ; I fear we shall waste our labour upon him.

Ag. But he does not look always so. He kept very near me ; if it did not look vain, I should say followed me all the evening, and many a varied expression his countenance assumed. But when I went away arm in arm with my uncle, in our usual good-humoured way, I shall never forget the look of pleasant approbation with which he followed me. I had learnt but a little while before the mistake which the company made in regard to us, and at that moment the idea of this project came across my mind like a flash of lightning.

Mar. Very well, gentle cousin ; the task you assign me is pleasing to my humour, and the idea

of promoting your happiness at the same time will make it delightful. Let me see, how many lovers shall I have—one, two, three. (*Counting on her fingers.*)

Ag. I can tell you of one lover more than you wot of.

Mar. Pray who is he ?

Ag. Our distant cousin, the great 'squire, and man of business, from—shire : he writes to my uncle that he will be in Bath to-day, upon business of the greatest importance, which he explains to him in three pages of close-written paper ; but whether he is to court me for himself, or for his son, or to solicit a great man, who is here, for a place, no mortal on earth can discover.

Mar. Well, let him come, I shall manage them all. O ! if my Edward were here just now, how he would laugh at us !

Enter Servant.

Ser. Miss Eston.

Mar. Let us run out of her way, and say we are not at home. She will sit and talk these two hours.

Ag. But you forgot, we have something to say to her. (*To the servant.*) Show her up-stairs to my dressing-room. [*Exit servant.*]

Mar. Pray let us run up stairs before her, or she will arrest us here with her chat. [*Exeunt.*]

Miss Eston (without). And it is a very bad thing for all that ; I never could abide it. I wonder your master don't stop (*Enters, walking straight across the stage, still speaking*) up those nasty chinks ; there is such a wind in the hall, 'tis enough to give one a hoarseness. By the bye, Mrs. Mumblecake is sadly to-day ; has your lady sent to inquire for her, William ? I wonder if her (*Exit, still talking without*) old coachman has left her ! I saw a new face on the, &c. &c.

SCENE II.

The fields before Mr. WITHRINGTON'S house.

Enter AGNES, MARIANE, and MISS ESTON, who seem still busy talking, from the house, and passing over the stage, arm in arm, Exeunt. Enter by the same side by which they went out, SIR LOFTUS PRETTYMAN, and HARWOOD, who stands looking behind him, as if he followed something with his eyes very eagerly.

Sir Loft. (*advancing to the front of the stage, and speaking to himself.*) How cursedly unlucky this is now ! if she had come out but a few moments sooner, I should have passed her walking arm in arm with a British peer. How provokingly these things always happen with me ! (*Observing HARWOOD.*) What ! is he staring after her too ? (*Aloud.*) What are you looking at, Harwood ? does she walk well ?

Har. I can't tell how she walks, but I could

stand and gaze after her till the sun went down upon me.

Sir Loft. She is a fine woman, I grant you.

Har. (*vastly pleased.*) I knew she would please, it is impossible she should not ! There is something so delightful in the play of her countenance, it would even make a plain woman beautiful.

Sir Loft. She is a fine woman, and that is no despicable praise from one who is accustomed to the elegance of fashionable beauty.

Har. I would not compare her to any thing so trifling and insipid.

Sir Loft. She has one advantage which fashionable beauty seldom possesses.

Har. What do you mean ?

Sir Loft. A large fortune.

Har. (*looking disappointed.*) It is not the heiress I mean.

Sir Loft. Is it t'other girl you are raving about ? She is showy at a distance, I admit, but as awkward as a dairy-maid when near you ; and her tongue goes as fast as if she were repeating a paternoster.

Har. What, do you think I am silly enough to be caught with that magpie ?

Sir Loft. Who is it then, Harwood ? I see nobody with Miss Withrington but Miss Eston, and the poor little creature her cousin.

Har. Good heav'ns ! what a contemptible perversion of taste do interest and fashion create ! But it is all affectation. (*Looking contemptuously at him.*)

Sir Loft. (*smiling contemptuously in return.*) Ha, ha, ha ! I see how it is with you, Harwood, and I beg pardon too. The lady is very charming, I dare say ; upon honour I never once looked in her face. She is a dependent relation of Miss Withrington's, I believe : now I never take notice of such girls, for if you do it once, they expect you to do it again. I am sparing of my attentions, that she on whom I really bestow them may have the more reason to boast.

Har. You are right, Prettyman : she who boasts of your attentions should receive them all herself, that nobody else may know their real worth.

Sir Loft. You are severe this morning, Mr. Harwood, but you do not altogether comprehend me, I believe. I know perhaps more of the world than a studious Templar can be supposed to do ; and I assure you, men of fashion, upon this principle, are sparing of their words too, that they may be listened to more attentively when they do speak.

Har. You are very right still, Sir Loftus ; for if they spoke much, I'll be hang'd if they would get any body to listen to them at all.

Sir Loft. (*haughtily.*) There is another reason why men of fashion are apt to forget themselves, and despise what is too familiar.

Har. Don't take so much pains to make me comprehend that the more fools speak the more people will despise them; I never had a clearer conviction of it in my life.

Sir Loft. (*haughtily*). Good morning, sir; I see Lord Saunter in the other walk, and I must own I prefer the company of one who knows, at least, the common rules of politeness. [*Exit.*]

Har. (*alone*). What a contemptible creature it is! He would prefer the most affected idiot, who boasts a little fashion or consequence, as he calls it, to the most beautiful native character in the world. Here comes another fool, who has been gazing too, but I will not once mention her before him.

Enter OPAL.

Op. Good morning, Harwood: I have been fortunate just now; I have met some fine girls, 'faith.

Har. I am glad you have met with any thing so agreeable; they are all equally charming to you, I suppose.

Op. Nay, Harwood, I know how to distinguish. There is a little animated creature amongst them, all life and spirit: on my soul I could almost be in love with her.

Har. Ha! thou hast more discernment than I reckoned upon. If that goose, Sir Loftus, did not spoil thee, Jack, thou wouldst be a very good fellow after all. Why, I must tell you, my good Opal, that lady whom you admire is the sweetest little gipsy in England.

Op. Is she indeed? I wish I had taken a better look of her face then; but she wears such a cursed plume of blue feathers nodding over her nose, there is scarcely one half of it to be seen.

Har. (*staring at him with astonishment*). As I breathe! he has fallen in love with the magpie!

Op. And what is so surprising in this, pray? Does not all the world allow Miss Withrington the heiress to be a fine woman?

Har. That is not the heiress, Jack, (*pointing off the stage*) the tall lady in the middle is her. But if your Dulcinea could coin her words into farthings, she would be one of the best matches in the kingdom.

Op. Pest take it! she was pointed out to me as Miss Withrington. Pest take my stupidity! the girl is well enough, but she is not altogether—

[*Mumbling to himself.*]

Har. So you bestowed all your attention on this blue-feathered lady, and let the other two pass by unnoticed.

Op. No, not unnoticed neither; Miss Withrington is too fine a figure to be overlooked any where; and for the other poor little creature, who hung upon her arm so familiarly, I could not help observing her too, because I wondered Miss

Withrington allowed such a dowdy-looking thing to walk with her in public. Faith! I sent a vulgar-looking devil out of the way on a fool's errand the other morning, who insisted upon going with Prettyman and me to the pump-room: men of fashion, you know, are always plagued with paltry fellows dangling after them.

Har. Hang your men of fashion! mere paltry fellows are too good company for them.

Op. Damn it, Harwood! speak more respectfully of that class of men to whom I have the honour to belong.

Har. You mistake me, Opal, it was only the men of fashion I abused; I am too well bred to speak uncivily, in our presence, of the other class you mentioned.

Op. I scorn your insinuation, sir; but whatever class of men I belong to, I praise heaven I have nothing of the sour plodding book-worm about me.

Har. You do well to praise heaven for the endowments it has bestowed upon you, Opal; if all men were as thankful as you for this blessed gift of ignorance, we could not be said to live in an ungrateful generation.

Op. Talk away; laugh at your own wit as much as you please, I don't mind it. I don't trouble my head to find out bons mots of a morning.

Har. You are very right, Jack, for it would be to no purpose if you did.

Op. I speak whatever comes readiest to me; I don't study speeches for company, Harwood.

Har. I hope so, Opal; you would have a laborious life of it indeed, if you could not speak nonsense extempore.

Op. (*drawing himself up, and walking haughtily to the other side of the stage*). I had no business to be so familiar with him. Sir Loftus is right; a reserved manner keeps impertinent people at a distance, (*aside—Turns about, makes a very stiff bow to HARWOOD, and Exit.*)

Har. (*alone*). I am glad he is gone. What do I see? (*Here MARIANE, AGNES, and MISS ESTON walk over the bottom of the stage attended by SIR LOFTUS and OPAL, and Exit by the opposite side. HAR. looking after them.*) Alas, now! that such impudent fellows should be so successful, whilst I stand gazing at a distance. How lightly she trips; does she not look about to me? by heaven, I'll run to her. (*Runs to the bottom of the stage, and stops short.*) Oh no! I cannot do it! but see, her uncle comes this way. He look'd so kindly at her, I could not help loving him; he must be a good man; I'll make up to him, and he perhaps will join the ladies afterwards. [*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A lodging-house. Enter ROYSTON and HUMPHRY, followed by JONATHAN carrying a portmanteau.

Roy. What a world of business I have got upon my hands! I must set about it immediately. Come here, Jonathan; I shall send you out in the first place.

Jon. Well, sir.

Roy. Take the black trunk, that is left in the hall, upon your shoulder, Jonathan, and be sure you don't run against any body with it, for that might bring us into trouble. And perhaps as you go along, you may chance to meet with some of the Duke of Begall's servants, or with somebody who can tell you where his Grace lodges in this town, and you may inquire of them, without saying I desired you: you understand me, Jonathan?

Jon. O yes, your honour!

Roy. But first of all, however, if you see any decent hair-dresser's shop in your way, desire them to send somebody here for my wig; and like enough they may tell you, at the same time, where there is an honest town-crier to be had; I'll have Phoebe's black whelp cried directly: and hark ye, Jonathan, you may say as though the dog were your own, you understand, they will expect such a devil of a reward else; and prithee, man! step into the corn-market, if thou canst find out the way, and inquire the price of oats.

Jon. Yes, please your honour; but am I to go trudging about to all these places with that great heavy trunk upon my shoulder?

Roy. No, numskull! did I not bid you carry it to the inn where the London stage puts up? By the bye, you had better take it to the waggon—but first ask the coachman what he charges for the carriage: you can take it to the waggon afterwards. I will suffer no man to impose upon me. You will remember all this distinctly now, as I have told it you, Jonathan?

Jon. (*counting to himself upon his fingers*). O yes, your honour! I'll manage it all, I warrant!

[*Exit.*]

Roy. What a world of business I have upon my hands, Humphry; I am as busy as a minister of state.

Re-enter JONATHAN, scratching his head.

Jon. La your honour! I have forgot all about his Grace, and the black whelp.

Roy. Provoking muddle pate! did not I bid you inquire where his Grace lives, and if you happen to see—

Jon. Ods bodikins! I remember it every word now! and the whelp is to be called by the town-crier, just as one would call any thing that is lost.

Roy. Yes, yes, go about it speedily. (*Exit JON.*)

Now in the first place, my good Humphry, I must see after the heiress I told you of; and it is a business which requires a great deal of management too; for—

Re-enter JONATHAN, scratching his head.

Confound that dunder-headed fool! here he is again.

Jon. Your honour won't be angry now, but hang me if I can tell whether I am to take that there trunk to the coach, or the waggon.

Roy. Take it to the coach—no, no, to the waggon—yes, yes, I should have said—pest take it! carry it where thou wilt, fool, and plague me no more about it. (*Exit JON.*) One might as well give directions to a horse-block. Now as I was saying, Humphry, this requires a great deal of management; for if the lady don't like me, she may happen to like my son: so I must feel my way a little, before I speak directly to the purpose.

Humph. Ay, your honour is always feeling your way.

Roy. And as for the duke, I will ply him as close as I can with solicitations in the mean time, without altogether stating my request: for if I get the lady, George shall have the office, and if he gets the lady, I shall have the office. So we shall have two chances in our favour both ways, my good Humphry.

Humph. Belike, sir, if we were to take but one business in hand at a time, we might come better off at the long run.

Roy. O! thou hast no head for business, Humphry: thou hast no genius for business, my good Humphry. (*Smiling conceitedly.*)

Humph. Why, for certain, your honour has a marvellous deal of wit; but I don't know how it is, nothing that we take in hand ever comes to any good; and what provokes me more than all the rest is, that the more pains we take about it the worse it always succeeds.

Roy. Humph! we can't guard against every cross accident.

Humph. To be sure, sir, cross accidents will happen to every body, but certes! we have more than our own share of them.

Roy. Well, don't trouble yourself about it: I have head enough to manage my own affairs, and more than my own too. Why, my Lord Slumber can't even grant a new lease, nor imprison a vagabond for poaching, without my advice and direction: did I not manage all Mr. Harebrain's election for him? and, but for one of these cursed accidents or two, had brought him in for his borough, as neatly as my glove. Nay, if his Grace and I get into good understanding together, there is no knowing but I may have affairs of the nation upon my hands. Ha, ha, ha! poor Humphry, thou hast no comprehension of all this: thou thinkst me a very wonderful man, dost thou not?

Humph. I must own I do sometimes marvel at your honour.

Enter MR. WITHRINGTON.

Roy. Ha! how do you do, my dear cousin? I hope I have the happiness of seeing you in good health: I am heartily rejoiced to see you, my very good sir. (*Shaking him heartily by the hand.*)

With. I thank you, sir, you are welcome to Bath; I did not expect the pleasure of seeing you here.

Roy. Why, my dear worthy sir, I am a man of so much business, so tossed about, so harassed with a multiplicity of affairs, that, I protest, I can't tell myself one day what part of the world I shall be in the next.

With. You give yourself a great deal of trouble, Mr. Royston.

Roy. O! hang it! I never spare myself: I must work to make others work, Cousin Withrington. I have got a world of new alterations going on at Royston-hall; if you would take a trip down to see them —

With. I am no great traveller, sir.

Roy. I have ploughed up the bowling-green and cut down the elm trees; I have built new stables, and filled up the horse-pond; I have dug up the orchard, and pulled down the old fruit-wall, where that odd little temple used to stand.

With. And is the little temple pulled down too? Pray, what has become of your vicar's sister, Mrs. Mary? we drank tea with her there, I remember; is she married yet? she was a very modest-looking gentlewoman.

Roy. So you remember her too? Well, I have pulled down every foot of it, and built a new cart-house with the bricks. — Good commodious stalls for thirty horses, cousin Withrington; they beat Sir John Houndly's all to nothing: it is as clever a well-constructed building as any in the country.

With. Has Sir John built a new house in the country?

Roy. No, no, the stables I say.

With. O! you are talking of the stables again.

Roy. But when I get the new addition to the mansion-house finished, that will be the grand improvement: the best carpenters' work in the country, my dear sir, all well-seasoned timber from Norway.

Humph. It is a part of a disputed wreck, sir, and if the law-suit about the right to it turns out in my master's favour, as it should do, it will be the cheapest built house in the country. O! let his honour alone for making a bargain.

With. So you have got a law-suit on your hands, Mr. Royston? I hope you are not much addicted to this kind of amusement; you will find it a very expensive one.

Roy. Bless you, my good sir, I am the most peaceable creature in the world, but I will suffer no man to impose upon me.

With. (smiling.) But you suffer the women sometimes to do so, do you not?

Humph. No, nor the women neither, sir; for it was but th' other day that he prosecuted Widow Gibson for letting her chickens feed amongst his corn, and it was given in his honour's favour, as in right it should have been.

With. (archly.) And who was adjudged to pay the expenses of court, Mr. Humphry?

Humph. Ay, to be sure, his honour was obliged to pay that.

With. (archly.) But the widow paid swingingly for it, I suppose?

Humph. Nay 'faith, after all, they but fined her in a sixpence; yet that always showed, you know, that she was in the wrong.

With. To be sure, Mr. Humphry; and the sixpence would indemnify your master for the costs of suit.

Humph. Nay, as a body may say, he might as well have let her alone, for any great matter he made of it that way; but it was very wrong in her, you know, sir, to let her hens go amongst his honour's corn, when she knew very well she was too poor to make up the loss to his honour.

With. Say no more about it, my good Humphry; you have vindicated your master most ably, and I have no doubts at all in regard to the propriety of his conduct.

Humph. (very well pleased.) Ay, thank heav'n! I do sometimes make shift, in my poor way, to edge in a word for his honour.

Roy. (not so well pleased.) Thou art strangely given to prating this morning. (*To HUMPHRY.*) By the bye, cousin Withrington, I must consult you about my application to his Grace.

Humph. (aside to ROYSTON, pulling him by the sleeve.) You forget to ask for the lady, sir.

With. (turning round.) What did you say of his Grace?

Roy. No, no, I should — I meant — did I not say the gracious young lady your niece? I hope she is well.

With. (smiling.) She is very well; you shall go home with me, and visit her.

Roy. I am infinitely obliged to you, my worthy good sir; I shall attend you with the greatest pleasure. Some ladies have no dislike to a good-looking gentleman-like man, although he may be past the bloom of his youth, cousin; however, young men do oftener carry the day, I believe: my son George is a good likely fellow; I expect him in Bath every hour. I shall have the honour of following you, my dear sir. Remember my orders, Humphry. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter HARWOOD hastily, looking round as if he sought some one, and were disappointed.

Har. (alone.) He is gone, I have missed the good

uncle of Agnes — what is the matter with me now, that the sound of an old man's voice should agitate me thus? did I not feel it was the sound of something which belonged to her? in faith I believe, if her kitten was to mew, I should hasten to hold some intercourse with it. I can stay in this cursed house no longer, and when I do go out, there is but one way these legs of mine will carry me — the alley which leads to her dwelling — Well, well, I have been but six times there to-day already; I may have a chance of seeing her at last — I'll run after the old gentleman now — what a delightful witch it is!

[Exit hastily.]

SCENE II.

WITHRINGTON'S house. AGNES and MARIANE discovered; MARIANE reading a letter, and AGNES looking earnestly and gladly in her face.

Ag. My friend Edward is well, I see; pray what does the traveller say for himself?

Mar. (putting up the letter). You shall read it all by and bye — every thing that is pleasant and kind.

Ag. Heaven prosper you both! you are happier than I am with all my fortune, Mariane; you have a sincere lover.

Mar. And so have you, Agnes: Harwood will bear the trial: I have watch'd him closely, and I will venture my word upon him.

Ag. (taking her in her arms). Now if thou art not deceived, thou art the dearest sweetest cousin on earth! (Pausing and looking seriously.) Ah no! it cannot be! I am but an ordinary-looking girl, as my uncle says. (With vivacity.) I would it were so!

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir Loftus Prettyman and Mr. Opal.

Mar. I am at home. (Exit servant.) I can't attend to these fools till I have put up my letter: do you receive them; I will soon return. [Exit.]

Enter SIR LOFTUS and OPAL, dressed pretty much alike. SIR LOFTUS makes a haughty distant bow to AGNES, and OPAL makes another very like it.

Ag. Have the goodness to be seated, sir, (to SIR LOFTUS.) Pray, Sir, (to OPAL, making a courteous motion as if she wish'd them to sit down.) Miss Withrington will be here immediately. (SIR LOFTUS makes a slight bow without speaking; OPAL does the same, and both saunter about with their hats in their hands.)

Ag. I hope you had a pleasant walk after we left you, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. (looking affectedly as if he did not understand her). I beg pardon — O! you were along with Miss Withrington. (Mumbling something which is not heard.)

Ag. (to Op.) You are fond of that walk, Mr. Opal: I think I have seen you there frequently.

Op. Ma'am, you are very.—(mumbling something which is not heard, in the same manner with SIR LOFTUS, but still more absurd.) I do sometimes walk — (mumbling again.)

Ag. (to SIR LOFT.) The country is delightful round Bath.

Sir Loft. Ma'am!

Ag. Don't you think so, Mr. Opal.

Op. 'Pon honour I never attended to it. (A long pause; SIR LOFTUS and OPAL strut about conceitedly. Enter MARIANE, and both of them run up to her at once, with great pleasure and alacrity.)

Sir Loft. I hope I see Miss Withrington entirely recovered from the fatigues of the morning?

Mar. Pretty well, after the fatigue of dressing too, which is a great deal worse, Sir Loftus. (Carelessly.)

Op. For the ball, I presume?

Sir Loft. I am delighted —

Mar. (addressing herself to AGNES, without attending to him). Do you know what a provoking mistake my milliner has made?

Ag. I don't know.

Sir Loft. I hope, madam —

Mar. (to Ag.) She has made up my dress with the colour of all others I dislike.

Op. This is very provoking indeed, I would —

Mar. (still speaking to AG. without attending to them). And she has sent home my petticoat all patched over with scraps of foil, like a Mayday dress for a chimney-sweeper.

Sir Loft. (thrusting in his face near MARIANE, and endeavouring to be attended to). A very good comparison, ha, ha!

Op. (thrusting in his face at the other side of her). Very good indeed, ha, ha, ha!

Mar. (still speaking to AGNES, who winks significantly without attending to them). I'll say nothing about it, but never employ her again.

Sir Loft. (going round to her other ear, and making another attempt). I am delighted, Miss Withrington —

Mar. (carelessly). Are you, Sir Loftus? (To AGNES.) I have broken my fan, pray put it by with your own, my dear Agnes! (Exit AGNES into the adjoining room, and SIR LOFTUS gives OPAL a significant look, upon which he retires to the bottom of the stage, and, after sauntering a little there, Exit.)

Sir Loft. (seeming a little piqued). If you would have done me the honour to hear me, ma'am, I should have said, I am delighted to see you dressed, as I hope I may presume from it you intend going to the ball to-night.

Mar. Indeed I am too capricious to know whether I do or not; do you think it will be pleasant?

Sir Loft. Very pleasant, if the devotions of a thousand admirers can make it so.

Mar. O! the devotions of a thousand admirers are like the good will of every body; one steady friendship is worth it all.

Sir Loft. From which may I infer, that one faithful adorer, in your eyes, outvalues all the thousand? (*affecting to be tender.*) Ah! so would I have Miss Withrington to believe! and if that can be any inducement, she will find such an one there, most happy to attend her.

Mar. Will she? I wonder who this may be: what kind of man is he, pray?

Sir Loft. (*with a conceited simper, at the same time in a pompous manner.*) Perhaps it will not be boasting too much to say, he is a man of fashion, and not altogether insignificant in the world.

Mar. Handsome and accomplished too, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. I must not presume, ma'am, to boast of my accomplishments.

Mar. (*affecting a look of disappointment.*) O! dear! so it is yourself after all! I have not so much penetration as I thought. (*Yawning twice very wide.*) Bless me! what makes me yawn so? I forgot to visit my old woman, who sells the cakes, this morning; that must be it. (*Yawning again.*) Do you love gingerbread, Sir Loftus? (*SIR LOFTUS bites his lips, and struts proudly away to the other side of the stage, whilst AGNES peeps from the closet, and makes signs of encouragement to MARIANE.*)

Mar. Well, after all, I believe it will be pleasant enough to go to the ball, with such an accomplished attendant.

Sir Loft. (*taking encouragement, and smothering his pride.*) Are you so obliging, Miss Withrington? will you permit me to have the happiness of attending you?

Mar. If you'll promise to make it very agreeable to me: you are fond of dancing, I suppose?

Sir Loft. I'll do any thing you desire me; but why throw away time so precious in the rough familiar exercise of dancing? is there not something more distinguished, more refined, in enjoying the conversation of those we love?

Mar. In the middle of a crowd, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. What is that crowd to us? we have nothing to do but to despise it: while they stare upon us with vulgar admiration, we shall talk together, smile together, attend only to each other, like beings of a different order.

Mar. O! that will be delightful! but don't you think we may just peep slyly over our shoulder now and then to see them admiring us? (*SIR LOFTUS bites his lips again, and struts to the bottom of the stage, whilst AGNES peeps out from the closet and makes signs to MARIANE.*)

Mar. (*carelessly pulling a small case from her pocket.*) Are not these handsome brilliants, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. (*very much struck with the sparkling of the diamonds, but pretending not to look at them.*) Upon my word, ma'am, I am no judge of trinkets.

Mar. They are clumsily set; I shall give them to my cousin.

Sir Loft. (*forgetting himself.*) Why, ma'am, do you seriously mean—They are of a most incomparable water!

Mar. (*archly.*) I thought you had not attended to them.

Sir Loft. (*tenderly.*) It is impossible, in the presence of Miss Withrington, to think of any thing but the cruelty with which she imposes silence on a heart that adores her.

Mar. Nay, you entirely mistake me, Sir Loftus; I am ready to hear you with the greatest good-nature imaginable.

Sir Loft. It is a theme, perhaps, on which my tongue would too long dwell.

Mar. O! not at all: I have leisure, and a great deal of patience too, at present; I beg you would by no means hurry yourself.

Sir Loft. (*after a pause, looking foolish and embarrassed.*) Few words, perhaps, will better suit the energy of passion.

Mar. Just as you please, Sir Loftus; if you choose to say it in a few words I am very well satisfied. (*Another pause.* *SIR LOFTUS very much embarrassed.*)

Enter WITHRINGTON and HARWOOD: SIR LOFTUS seems much relieved.

Sir Loft. (*aside.*) Heaven be praised, they are come!

Mar. (*to WITH.*) I thought you were to have brought Mr. Royston with you.

With. He left us at a shop by the way, to inquire the price of turnip-seed; but he will be here by and bye, if a hundred other things do not prevent him. (*Bows to SIR LOFTUS; then turns to HARWOOD, and speaks as if he resumed a conversation which had just been broken off, whilst SIR LOFTUS and MARIANE retire to the bottom of the stage.*) I perfectly agree with you, Mr. Harwood, that the study and preparation requisite for your profession is not altogether a dry treasuring up of facts in the memory, as many of your young students conceive: he who pleads the cause of man before fellow-men, must know what is in the heart of man as well as in the book of records; and what study is there in nature so noble, so interesting as this?

Har. But the most pleasing part of our task, my good sir, is not the least difficult. Where application only is wanting I shall not be left behind; for I am not without ambition, though the younger son of a family by no means affluent; and I have a widowed mother, whose hopes of seeing me respectable must not be disappointed. I assure you there is nothing — [Listening.]

With. Go on, Mr. Harwood, I have great pleasure in hearing you.

Har. I thought I heard a door move.

With. It is Agnes in the next room, I dare say ; she is always making a noise.

Har. In the next room !

With. But you were going to assure me—Have the goodness to proceed.

Har. I was going to say—I rather think I said—I am sure—

[*Listening again.*]

With. Poo! there is nobody there.

Har. Well, I said—I think I told you—In faith, my good sir, I will tell you honestly, I have forgotten what I meant to say.

With. No matter, you will remember it again. Ha, ha, ha ! it puts me in mind of a little accident which happened to myself when I was in Lincoln's-Inn. Two or three of us met one evening to be cheerful together, and—(*whilst WITHRINGTON begins his story, AGNES enters softly from the adjoining closet unperceived; but HARWOOD, on seeing her, runs eagerly up to her, leaving WITHRINGTON, astonished, in the middle of his discourse.*)

Har. (to AG.) Ha ! after so many false alarms, you steal upon us at last like a little thief.

Ag. And I steal something very good from you too, if you lose my uncle's story by this interruption ; for I know by his face he was telling one.

With. Railery is not always well-timed, Miss Agnes Withrington.

Ag. Nay, do not be cross with us, sir. Mr. Harwood knew it was too good to be spent upon one pair of ears, so he calls in another to partake.

With. Get along, baggage.

Ag. So I will, uncle ; for I know that only means with you, that I should place myself close to your elbow.

With. Well, two or three of us young fellows were met—did I not say—

Ag. At Lincoln's-Inn. [*WITHRINGTON hesitates.*]

Har. She has named it,

With. I know well enough it was there. And if I remember well, George Buckner was one of us.

[*AGNES gives a gentle hem to suppress a cough.*]

Har. (eagerly). You were going to speak, Miss Withrington ?

Ag. No, indeed, I was not.

With. Well, George Buckner and two or three more of us—We were in a very pleasant humour that night—(*AGNES, making a slight motion of her hand to fasten some pin in her dress.*)

Har. (eagerly). Do you not want something ? (To AGNES.)

Ag. No, I thank you, I want nothing.

With. (*half-amused, half-peevisk*). Nay, say what you please to one another, for my story is ended.

Har. My dear sir, we are perfectly attentive.

Ag. Now, pray, uncle !

With. (to AG.) Now pray hold thy tongue. I forgot, I must consult the Court Calendar on Royston's account. (*Goes to a table, and takes up a red book, which he turns over.*)

Ag. (to HAR.) How could you do so to my uncle ? I would not have interrupted him for the world.

Har. Ay, chide me well ; I dearly love to be chidden.

Ag. Do not invite me to it. I am said to have a very good gift that way, and you will soon have too much of it, I believe.

Har. O no ! I would come every hour to be chidden !

Ag. And take it meekly too ?

Har. Nay, I would have my revenge : I should call you scolding Agnes, and little Agnes, and my little Agnes.

Ag. You forget my dignity, Mr. Harwood.

Har. Oh ! you put all dignity out of countenance ! The great Mogul himself would forget his own in your presence.

Ag. But they are going to the garden : I am resolved to be one of the party. (*As she goes to join SIR LOFTUS and MARIANE, who open a glass door leading to the garden, HARWOOD goes before, walking backwards, and his face turned to her.*) You will break your pate presently, if you walk with that retrograde step, like a dancing-master giving me a lesson. Do you think I shall follow you as if you had the fiddle in your hand ?

Har. Ah, Miss Withrington ! it is you who have the fiddle, and I who must follow.

[*Exeunt into the garden.*]

Re-enter SIR LOFTUS from the garden, looking about for his hat.

Sir Loft. O ! here it is.

Enter OPAL.

Op. What, here alone ?

Sir Loft. She is in the garden, I shall join her immediately.

Op. All goes on well, I suppose ?

Sir Loft. Why, I don't know how it is—nobody hears us ? (*Looking round.*) I don't know how it is, but she does not seem to comprehend perfectly in what light I am regarded by the world : that is to say, by that part of it which deserves to be called so.

Op. No ! that is strange enough.

Sir Loft. Upon my honour, she treats me with as much careless familiarity as if I were some plain neighbour's son in the country.

Op. 'Pon honour, this is very strange.

Sir Loft. I am not without hopes of succeeding ; but I will confess to you, I wish she would change her manner of behaving to me. On the word of a gentleman, it is shocking ! Suppose you were to give her a hint, that she may just have an idea of the respect which is paid by every well-bred person—You understand me, Opal ?

Op. O ! perfectly. I shall give her to know that men like us, my dear friend—

Sir Loft. (*not quite satisfied*). I don't know—

Suppose you were to leave out all mention of yourself—your own merit could not fail to be inferred.

Op. Well, I shall do so.

Sir Loft. Let us go to the garden. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Miss ESTON, speaking as she enters.

I have been all over the town, and here I am at last, quite tired to death. How do you—(*Looking round.*) O la! there is nobody here. Mr. Opal is gone too. I'll wait till they return. (*Takes up a book, then looks at herself in the glass, then takes up the book again. Yawning.*) 'Tis all about the imagination and the understanding, and I don't know what—I dare say it is good enough to read of a Sunday. (*Yawns, and lays it down.*) O la! I wish they would come!

Enter ROYSTON, and takes Miss ESTON for Miss WITHRINGTON.

Roy. Madam, I have the honour to be your very humble servant. I hoped to have been here sooner, but I have been so overwhelmed with a multiplicity of affairs; and you know, madam, when that is the case—

Est. (*taking the word out of his mouth.*) One is never master of one's time for a moment. I'm sure I have been all over the town this morning, looking after a hundred things, till my head has been put into such a confusion! "La, ma'am!" said my milliner, do take some lavender drops, you look so pale.—"Why," says I, "I don't much like to take them, Mrs. Trollop, they an't always good."

Roy. No more they are, ma'am, you are very right! and if a silly fellow, I know, had taken my advice last year, and bought up the crops of lavender, he would have made—

Est. (*taking the word from him again.*) A very good fortune, I dare say. But people never will take advice, which is very foolish in them, to be sure. Now I always take—

Roy. Be so good as to hear me, ma'am.

Est. Certainly, sir; for I always say, if they give me advice it is for my good, and why should not I take it?

Roy. (*edging in his word as fast as he can.*) And that very foolish fellow too! I once saved him from being cheated in a horse; and—

Est. La! there are such cheats; a friend of mine bought a little lap-dog the other day—

Roy. But the horse, ma'am, was—

Est. Not worth a guinea, I dare say. Why, they had the impudence to palm it on my friend—

(*Both speaking together.*)

Est. As a pretty little dog which had been bred

Roy. It was a good mettled horse, and might

E. up for a lady of quality, and when she had

R. have passed as a good purchase at the money,

E. just made a cushion for it at the foot of her

R. but on looking, his fore feet—(*Stops short, and lets her go on.*)

E. own bed, she found it was all over mangy. I'm sure I would rather have a plain wholesome cat than the prettiest mangy dog in the kingdom.

Roy. Certainly, ma'am. And I assure you the horse—for says I to the groom—

(*Both speaking together.*)

Est. O! I dare say it was—and who would *Roy.* What is the matter with this pastern, *E.* have suspected that a dog bred up on pur-
R. Thomas? it looks as if it were rubbed—
(*Stops short again, and looks at her with astonishment as she goes on talking.*)

E. pose for a lady of quality, should be all over so! Nasty creature! It had spots upon its back as large as my watch. (*Taking up her watch.*) O la! I am half an hour after my time. My man-tua-maker is waiting for me. Good morning, sir!

[*Exit, hastily.*]

Roy. (*looking after her.*) Clack, clack, clack, clack! What a devil of a tongue she has got! 'Faith! George shall have her, and I'll e'en ask the place for myself. (*Looking out.*) But there is company in the garden: I'll go and join them.

[*Exit to the garden.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Mr. WITHRINGTON's house. A loud laughing within. *Enter ROYSTON, in a great rage.*

Roy. Ay, ay, laugh away, laugh away, madam! you'll weep by and bye, mayhap. (*Pauses and listens; laughing still heard.*) What an infernal noise the jade makes! I wish she had a peck of chaff in her mouth! I am sure it is wide enough to hold it.

Enter HUMPHRY.

Humph. I have been seeking your honour every where—Now, sir! I have something to tell you.

Roy. Confound your tales; don't trouble me with a parcel of nonsense.

Humph. (*staring at him, and hearing the laughing without.*) For certain, your honour, there's somebody in this house merrier than you or I.

Roy. Damn it, sir! how do you know I am not merry? Go home, and do what I ordered you directly. If that fellow Jonathan is not in the way, I'll horse-whip him within an inch of his life. Begone, I say; why do you stand staring at me like a madman? [*Exeunt.*]

Enter MARIANE and AGNES, by opposite sides.

Mar. (*holding her sides.*) I shan't be able to laugh again for a month.

Ag. You have freed yourself from one lover, who will scarcely attempt you a second time. I have met him hurrying through the hall, and muttering to himself like a madman. It is not your refusal of his son that has so roused him.

Mar. No, no; he began his courtship in a doubtful way, as if he would recommend a gay young husband to my choice; but a sly compliment to agreeable men of a middle age, brought him soon to speak plainly for himself.

Ag. But how did you provoke him so?

Mar. I will tell you another time. It is later than I thought. (*Looking at her watch.*)

Ag. Don't go yet. How stands it with you and a certain gentleman I recommended to your notice?

Mar. O! he does not know whether I am tall or short, brown or fair, foolish or sensible, after all the pains I have taken with him; he has eyes, ears, and understanding, for nobody but you, Agnes, and I will attempt him no more. He spoke to me once with animation in his countenance, and I turned round to listen to him eagerly, but it was only to repeat to me something you had just said, which, to deal plainly with you, had not much wit in it neither. I don't know how it is, he seemed to me at first a pleasanter man than he proves to be.

Ag. Say not so, Mariane; he proves to be most admirable.

Mar. Well, be it so; he cannot prove better than I wish him to do, and I can make up my list without him. I have a love-letter from an Irish baronet in my pocket, and Opal will declare himself presently.—I thought once he meant only to plead for his friend; but I would not let him off so, for I know he is a mercenary creature. I have flattered him a little at the expense of Sir Loftus, and I hope, ere long, to see him set up for a great man upon his own account.

Ag. So it was only to repeat to you something that I had been saying?

Mar. Ha! you are thinking of this still. I believe, indeed, he sets down every turn of your eye in his memory, and acts it all over in secret.

Ag. Do you think so? give me your hand, my dear Mariane; you are a very good cousin to me—Marks every turn of my eye! I am not quite such an ordinary girl as my uncle says—My complexion is as good as your own, Mariane, if it were not a little sunburnt. (*MARIANE smiles.*) Yes, smile at my vanity as you please; for what makes me vain, makes me so good-humoured too, that I will forgive you. But here comes uncle. (*Skipping as she goes to meet him.*) I am light as an air-ball! (*Enter MR. WITHRINGTON.*) My dear sir, how long you have been away from us this morning! I am delighted to see you so pleased and so happy.

With. (*with a very sour face.*) You are mis-

taken, young lady, I am not so pleased as you think.

Ag. O no, sir! you are very good-humoured. Isn't he, Mariane?

With. But I say I am in a very bad humour. Get along with your foolery!

Ag. Is it really so? Let me look in your face, uncle. To be sure your brows are a little knit, and your eyes a little gloomy, but that is nothing to be called bad humour; if I could not contrive to look more crabbed than all this comes to, I would never pretend to be ill-humoured in my life. (*MARIANE and AGNES take him by the hands, and begin to play with him.*)

With. No, no, young ladies, I am not in a mood to be played with. I can't approve of every farce you please to play off in my family; nor to have my relations affronted, and driven from my house for your entertainment.

Mar. Indeed, sir, I treated Royston better than he deserved; for he would not let me have time to give a civil denial, but ran on planning settlements and jointures, and a hundred things besides: I could just get in my word to stop his career with a flat refusal, as he was about to provide for our descendants of the third generation. O! if you had seen his face then, uncle.

With. I know very well how you have treated him.

Ag. Don't be angry, sir. What does a man like Royston care for a refusal? he is only angry that he can't take the law of her for laughing at him.

With. Let this be as it may, I don't choose to have my house in a perpetual bustle from morning till night, with your plots and your pastimes. There is no more order nor distinction kept up in my house, than if it were a cabin in Kamschatka, and common to a whole tribe. In every corner of it I find some visitor, or showman, or milliner's apprentice, loitering about: my best books are cast upon footstools and window-seats, and my library is littered over with work-bags; dogs, cats, and kittens, take possession of every chair, and refuse to be disturbed: and the very beggar children go hopping before my door with their half-eaten scraps in their hands, as if it were the entry to a workhouse.

Ag. (*clapping his shoulder gently.*) Now don't be impatient, my dear sir, and every thing shall be put into such excellent order as shall delight you to behold. And as for the beggar children, if any of them dare but to set their noses near the house I'll—What shall I do with them, sir? (*Pauses, and looks in his face, which begins to relent.*) I believe we must not be very severe with them after all. (*Both take his hands and coax him.*)

With. Come, come, off hands, and let me sit down. I am tired of this.

Ag. Yes, uncle, and here is one seat, you see, with no cat upon it. (*WITHRINGTON sits down, and AGNES takes a little stool and sits down at his feet, curling her nose as she looks up to him, and making a good-humoured face.*)

With. Well, it may be pleasant enough, girls; but allow me to say, all this playing, and laughing, and hoydening about, is not gentlewomanlike; nay, I might say, is not maidenly. A high-bred elegant woman is a creature which man approaches with awe and respect; but nobody would think of accosting you with such impressions, any more than if you were a couple of young female tinkers.

Ag. Don't distress yourself about this, sir; we shall get the men to bow to us, and tremble before us too, as well as e'er a hoop petticoat or long ruffles of them all.

With. Tremble before you! ha, ha, ha! (*To AGNES.*) Who would tremble before thee, dost thou think?

Ag. No despicable man, perhaps: what think you of your favourite, Harwood?

With. Pooh, pooh, pooh! he is pleased with thee as an amusing and good-natured creature, and thou thinkest he is in love with thee, forsooth.

Ag. A good-natured creature! he shall think me a vixen and be pleased with me.

With. No, no, not quite so far gone, I believe.

Ag. I'll bet you two hundred pounds that it is so. If I win, you shall pay it to Mariane for wedding-trinkets; and if you win, you may build a couple of alms-houses.

With. Well, be it so. We shall see, we shall see.

Mar. Indeed we shall see you lose your bet, uncle.

With. (*to MAR.*) Yes, baggage, I shall have your prayers against me, I know.

Enter Servant, and announces MR. OPAL. Enter OPAL.

Op. (*to MAR.*) I hope I have the pleasure of seeing Miss Withrington well this morning. (*Bows distantly to WITHRINGTON, and still more so to AGNES, after the manner of SIR LOFTUS.*)

With. Your servant, sir.

Mar. (*to OP.*) How did you like the ball last night? There was a gay, genteel-looking company.

Op. (*with affected superiority.*) Excepting Lord Saunter, and Lord Poorly, and Sir Loftus, and one or two more of us, I did not know a soul in the room.

With. There were some pretty girls there, Mr. Opal.

Op. I am very glad to hear it, 'pon honour. I did not—(*Mumbling.*)

With. (*aside.*) Affected puppy! I can't bear to look at him. [*Exit.*

Mar. (*assuming a gayer air as WITHRINGTON goes out.*) You will soon have a new beau to enrich your circle, Mr. Opal, the handsome and accomplished Colonel Beaumont. He is just returned from abroad, and is now quite the fashion. (*To AGNES.*) Don't you think Mr. Opal resembles him?

Ag. O! very much indeed.

Op. (*bowing very graciously.*) Does he not resemble Sir Loftus too? I mean in his air and his manner.

Mar. O not at all! That haughty coldness of his is quite old-fashioned now; so unlike the affable frankness so much admired in the colonel: you have seen him, I presume?

Op. I have never had that honour.

Mar. Then you will not be displeased at the likeness we have traced when you do.

Op. (*relaxing from his dignity, and highly pleased.*) The greatest pleasure of my life, ma'am, will be to resemble what pleases you. (*MARIANE gives AGNES a sign, and she retires to the bottom of the stage.*)

Mar. You flatter me infinitely.

Op. Ah! call it not flattery, charming Miss Withrington! for now I will have the boldness to own to you frankly, I have been, since the first moment I beheld you, your most sincere, your most passionate admirer. Upon hon—(*correcting himself*) 'faith I have!

Mar. Nothing but my own want of merit can make me doubt of any thing Mr. Opal asserts upon his honour or his faith. (*Turning and walking towards the bottom of the stage, whilst OPAL follows her talking in dumb show; then AGNES joins them, and they all come forward to the front.*)

Ag. (*to MAR.*) How much that turn of his head puts me in mind of the colonel!

Mar. So it does, my Agnes. (*To OPAL.*) Pray have the goodness to hold it so for a moment! There now, it is just the very thing. (*OPAL holds his head in a constrained ridiculous posture, and then makes a conceited bow.*) His very manner of bowing too! one would swear it was he!

Ag. Yes, only the colonel is more familiar, more easy in his carriage.

Op. O! ma'am! I assure you I have formerly—It is my natural manner to be remarkably easy,—But I—(*pauses.*)

Mar. Have never condescended to assume any other than your natural manner, I hope.

Op. O! not at all, I detest affectation; there is nothing I detest so much—But upon my soul! I can't tell how it is, I have been graver of late. I am, indeed, sometimes thoughtful.

Mar. O fy upon it! don't be so any more. It is quite old-fashioned and ridiculous now. (*To AGNES, winking significantly.*) Did you see my gloves any where about the room, cousin?

Op. I'll find them. (*Goes to look for them with great briskness. — Servant announces Miss ESTON.*)

Op. Pest take her! I stared at her once in a mistake, and she has ogled and followed me ever since.

Enter Miss ESTON, running up to MARIANE and AGNES, and pretending not to see OPAL, though she cannot help looking askance at him while she speaks.

Est. O, my dear creatures! you can't think how I have longed to see you. Mrs. Thomson kept me so long this morning, and you know she is an intolerable talker. (*Pretending to discover OPAL.*) O! how do you do, Mr. Opal? I declare I did not observe you!

Op. (*with a distant haughty bow.*) I am obliged to you, ma'am.

Est. I did see your figure, indeed, but I mistook it for Sir Loftus.

Op. (*correcting himself, and assuming a cheerful frank manner.*) O ma'am! you are very obliging to observe me at all. I believe Prettyman and I may be nearly of the same height. (*Looking at his watch.*) I am beyond my appointment, I see. Excuse me; I must hurry away. [*Exit hastily.*]

Est. (*looking after him with marks of disappointment.*) I am very glad he is gone. He does so haunt me, and stare at me, I am quite tired of it. The first time I ever saw him, you remember how he looked me out of countenance. I was resolved before I came not to take notice of him.

Mar. So you knew you should find him here, then?

Est. O la! one don't know of a morning whom one may meet; as likely him as any body else, you know. I really wonder now what crotchet he has taken into his head about me. Do you know, last night, before twilight, I peeped over the blind, and saw him walking with slow pensive steps, under my window.

Mar. Well, what happened then?

Est. I drew in my head, you may be sure; but a little while after, I peeped out again, and, do you know, I saw him come out of the perfumer's shop, just opposite to my dressing-room, where he had been all the while.

Mar. Very well, and what happened next?

Est. La! nothing more. But was it not very odd? What should he be doing all that time in that little paltry shop? The great shop near the Circus is the place where every body buys perfumery.

Ag. No, there is nothing very odd in Mr. Opal's buying perfumes at a very paltry shop, where he might see and be seen by a very pretty lady.

Est. (*with her face brightening up.*) Do you think so? O no! you don't think so?

Ag. To be sure I do. But I know what is very strange.

Est. O la, dear creature! What is it?

Ag. He bought his perfumes there before you came, when there was no such inducement. Is not that very odd? [*ESTON pauses, and looks silly.*]

Enter MR. WITHRINGTON, but, upon perceiving ESTON, bows, and retreats again.

Est. (*recovering herself.*) Ah! how do you do, Mr. Withrington? I have just seen your friend, Lady Fade. Poor dear soul! she says—

With. I am sorry, ma'am, it is not in my power at present—I am in a hurry, I have an appointment. Your servant, ma'am. [*Exit.*]

Est. Well, now, this is very odd! Wherever I go, I find all the men just going out to some appointment. O, I forgot to tell you, Mrs. Thomson has put a new border to her drawing-room, just like the one up-stairs. Has it not a dark blue ground? (*To MARIANE.*)

Mar. I'm sure I cannot tell; let us go up-stairs and see. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Before MR. WITHRINGTON'S house. Enter HARWOOD.

Har. Well, here I am again, yet devil take me if I can muster up resolution enough to touch the knocker! what a fool was I to call twice this morning! for with what face can I now visit her again? The old gentleman will look strangely at me; the fine heiress her cousin will stare at me; nay, the very servants begin already to smile with impertinent significance, as I inquire with conscious foolishness, if the ladies are at home. Then Agnes herself will look so drolly at me—Ah! but she will look so pleasantly too!—'Faith! I'll e'en go. (*Goes to the door, puts his hand up to the knocker, stops short, and turns from it again. Pauses.*) What a fool am I, to stand thinking about it here. If I were but fairly in the room with her, and the first salutation over, I should not care if the devil himself made faces at me. Oh no! every body is good-humoured, every thing is happy that is near her! the kitten who plays by her side takes hold of her gown unhidden. How pleasant it is to love what is so blessed! I should hate the fairest woman on earth if she were not of a sweet temper. Come, come; every thing favours me here, but my own foolish fancies. (*As he goes to the door again, it opens, and enters from the house, BETTY, crying, with a bundle in her hand.*)

Bet. O dear me! O dear me!

Har. What is the matter with you, my good girl?

Bet. I'm sure it was not my fault, and she has abused me worse than a heathen.

Har. That is hard indeed.

Bet. Indeed it is, sir; and all for a little nasty essencc-bottle, which was little better than a genteel

kind of a stink at the best ; and I am sure I did but take out the stopper to smell to it, when it came to pieces in my hand like an egg-shell. If bottles will break, how can I help it ? But la ! sir, there is no speaking reason to my mistress ; she is as furious and as ill-tempered as a dragon.

Har. Don't distress yourself ; Miss Agnes Withrington will make amends to you for the severity of your mistress.

Bet. She truly ! it is she herself who is my mistress, and she has abused me—O dear me !—If it had been Miss Withrington, she would not have said a word to me ; but Miss Agnes is so cross, and so ill-natured, there is no living in the house with her.

Har. Girl, you are beside yourself !

Bet. No, sir, not I ! but she is beside herself, I believe. Does she think I am going to live in her service to be called names so, and compared to a blackamoor too ? If I had been waiting-maid to the queen, she would not have compared me to a blackamoor, and will I take such usage from her ?—what do I care for her cast gowns ?

Har. Well, but she is liberal to you ?

Bet. She liberal ! she'll keep every thing that is worth keeping to herself, I warrant ; and heaven pity those who are bound to live with her ! I'll seek out a new place for myself, and let the devil, if he will, wait upon her next, in the shape of a blackamoor : they will be fit company for one another ; and if he gets the better of her at scolding, he is a better devil than I take him for. And I am sure, sir, if you were to see her—

Har. Get along ! get along ! you are too passionate yourself to be credited.

Bet. I know what I know ; I don't care what nobody says, no more I do ; I know who to complain to. [*Exit, grumbling.*]

Har. (alone). What a malicious toad it is ! I dare say, now, she has done something very provoking. I cannot bear these pert chambermaids ; the very sight of them is offensive to me.

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. Good evening to your honour ; can you tell me if Mr. Withrington be at home ? for as how, my master has sent me with a message to him.

Har. (impatiently). Go to the house and inquire ; I know nothing about it.

[*JONATHAN goes to the house.*]

Har. (alone, after musing some time). That girl has put me out of all heart, though, with her cursed stories.—No, no, it cannot be—it is impossible !

Re-enter JONATHAN from the house, scratching his head, and looking behind him.

Jon. 'Faith there is hot work going on amongst them ! thank heaven I am out again !

Har. What do you mean ?

Jon. 'Faith ! that little lady, in that there house, is the best hand at a scold, saving Mary Macmurrock, my wife's mother, that ever my two blessed eyes looked upon. Oh, sir, (*going nearer him*) her tongue goes ting, ting, ting, as shrill as the bell of any pieman ; and then, sir, (*going nearer him*) her two eyes look out of her head, as though they were a couple of glow-worms ! and then, sir, he, he, he ! (*Laughing and going close up to him.*) She claps her little hands so, as if—

Har. Shut your fool's mouth and be damn'd to you ! (*Kicks JONATHAN off the stage in a violent passion ; then leans his back to a tree, and seems thoughtful for some time and very much troubled.*)

Enter AGNES from the house, with a stormy look on her face.

Ag. So you are still loitering here, Harwood ? you have been very much amused, I suppose, with the conversation of those good folks you have talked with.

Har. No, not much amused, madam, though somewhat astonished, I own ; too much astonished, indeed, to give it any credit.

Ag. O ! it is true though ; I have been very cross with the girl, and very cross with every body ; and if you don't clear up that dismal face of yours, I shall be cross with you too : what could possess you to stay so long under the chestnut-tree, a little while ago, always appearing as if you were coming to the house, and always turning back again ?

Har. (eagerly). And is it possible, you were then looking at me, and observing my motions ?

Ag. Indeed I was just going to open my window and beckon to you, when that creature broke my phial of sweet essence, and put me quite out of temper.

Har. Hang the stupid jade ! I could—

Ag. So you are angry too ? O ! well done ! we are fit company for one another. Come along with me, come, come ! (*impatiently.* As she turns to go, something catches hold of her gown.) What is this ? confounded thing ! (*Pulls away her gown in a passion and tears it.*)

Har. (aside). Witch that she is ! she should be beaten for her humours. I will not go with her.

Ag. (looking behind). So you won't go in with me ? good evening to you then : we did want a fourth person to make up a party with us ; but since you don't like it, we shall send to Sir Loftus, or Opal, or Sir Ulick O'Grady, or some other good creature ; I dare say Sir Loftus will come.

Har. (half aside). Odious coxcomb ! If he sets his nose within the door, I'll pistol him.

Ag. (overhearing him). Ha ! well said ! you will make the best company in the world. Come along, come along ! (*He follows her half unwillingly.*) Why don't you offer your arm here ? don't you see

how rough it is? (*He offers his arm.*) Pooh, not that arm! (*Offers her the other.*) Pooh, not so neither, on t'other side of me.

Har. What a humoursome creature you are! I have offer'd you two arms, and neither of them will do; do you think I have a third to offer you?

Ag. You are a simpleton, or you would have half a dozen at my service.

[*Exeunt into the house.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

HARWOOD'S lodgings. He is discovered walking about with an irregular disturbed step, his hair and dress all neglected and in disorder; he comes forward to the front of the stage.

Har. I have neither had peace nor sleep since I beheld her; O! that I had never known her! or known her only such as my first fond fancy conceived her!—I would my friend were come; I will open my heart to him: he perhaps will speak comfort to me; for surely that temper must be violent indeed, which generous affection cannot subdue; and she must be extravagant beyond all bounds of nature, who would ruin the fond husband who toils for her. No, no, nature makes not such, but when she sets her scowling mark upon their forehead to warn us from our ruin. (*Pauses, walks up and down, then comes forward again.*) Insipid constitutional good nature is a tiresome thing: passion subdued by reason is worth a score of it—and passion subdued by love!—O! that were better still!—Yesterday, as I entered her door, I heard her name me to her cousin with so much gentle softness in her voice, I blest her as she spoke!—Ah! if this were so, all might still be well. Who would not struggle with the world for such a creature as this?—Ay, and I must struggle—O! that this head of mine would give over thinking but for one half hour! (*Rings the bell.*)

Enter THOMAS.

What brings you here, Thomas?

Thom. Your bell rung, sir.

Har. Well, well, I did want something, but I have forgotten it. Bring me a glass of water. (*Exit THOMAS. HARWOOD sits down by a small writing-table and rests his head upon his hand. Re-enter THOMAS with the water.*) You have made good haste, Thomas.

Thom. I did make good haste, sir, lest you should be impatient with me.

Har. I am sometimes impatient with you, then? I fear indeed I have been too often so of late; but

you must not mind it, Thomas; I mean you no unkindness.

Thom. Lord love you, sir, I know that very well! a young gentleman who takes an old man into his service, because other gentlemen do not think him quick enough, nor smart enough for them, as your honour has taken me, can never mean to show him any unkindness: I know it well enough; I am only uneasy because I fear you are not so well of late.

Har. I thank you, Thomas, I am not very well—I am not ill neither; I shall be better. (*Pauses.*) I think I have heard you say you were a soldier in your youth?

Thom. Yes, sir.

Har. And you had a wife too, a woman of fiery mettle, to bear about your knapsack?

Thom. Yes, sir, my little stout spiry Jane; she had a devil of a temper, to be sure.

Har. Yet you loved her notwithstanding?

Thom. Yes, to be sure I did, as it were, bear her some kindness.

Har. I'll be sworn you did!—and you would have been very sorry to have parted with her.

Thom. Why death parts the best of friends, sir; we lived but four years together.

Har. And so your little spiry Jane was taken so soon away from you? Give me thy hand, my good Thomas. (*Takes his hand and presses it.*)

Thom. (*perceiving tears in his eyes.*) Nay, sir! don't be so distressed about it: she did die, to be sure; but truly, between you and me, although I did make a kind of whimpering at the first, I was not ill pleased afterwards to be rid of her; for, truly sir, a man who has got an ill-tempered wife, has but a dog's life of it at the best.—Will you have your glass of water, sir?

Har. (*looking at him with dissatisfaction.*) No, no, take it away: I have told you a hundred times not to bring me that chalky water from the court-yard.

[*Turns away from him.*]

Enter COLONEL HARDY.—HARWOOD makes signs to THOMAS, and he goes out.

Har. My dear colonel, this is kind: I am very glad to see you.

Col. It is so seldom that a young fellow has any inclination for the company of an old man, that I should feel myself vain of the summons you have sent me, were I not afraid, from this deshable, my dear Harwood, that you are indisposed.

Har. You are very good; I am not indisposed. I have indeed been anxious—I rested indifferently last night—I hope I see you well.

Col. Very well, as you may guess from the speed I have made in coming to you. These legs do not always carry me so fast. But you have something particular to say to me.

Har. I am very sensible of your friendship—Pray,

colonel, be seated.—*(They sit down—a long pause—COLONEL HARDY, like one expecting to hear something; HARWOOD, like one who knows not how to begin.)*—There are moments in a man's life, Colonel Hardy, when the advice of a friend is of the greatest value; particularly one who has also been his father's friend.

Col. My heart very warmly claims both those relations to you, Harwood: and I shall be happy to advise you as well as I am able.

Har. (after another pause). I am about to commence a laborious profession—the mind is naturally anxious—*(Pauses.)*

Col. But you are too capable of exercising well that profession, to suffer much uneasiness.

Har. Many a man with talents superior to mine has sunk beneath the burden.

Col. And many a man, with talents vastly inferior to yours, has borne it up with credit.

Har. Ah! what avails the head with an estranged heart?

Col. You are disgusted then with your profession, and have, perhaps, conceived more favourably of mine? I am sorry for it; I hoped to see you make a figure at the bar; and your mother has long set her heart upon it.

Har. (with energy). O no! she must not—she shall not be disappointed!—Pardon me, my expressions have gone somewhat wide of my meaning—I meant to have consulted you in regard to other difficulties—

Col. And pardon me likewise for interrupting you; but it appears to me that an unlearned soldier is not a person to be consulted in these matters.

Har. It was not altogether of these matters I meant to speak—But, perhaps, we had better put it off for the present.

Col. No, no.

Har. Perhaps we had better walk out a little way: we may talk with less restraint as we go.

Col. No, no, there are a thousand impertinent people about. Sit down again, and let me hear every thing you wish to say.

Har. (pausing, hesitating, and much embarrassed). There are certain attachments in which a man's heart may be so deeply interested—I would say so very—or rather I should say so strangely engaged, that—*(hesitates and pauses.)*

Col. O, here it is! I understand it now. But pray don't be so foolish about it, Harwood! you are in love.

Har. (appearing relieved). I thank your quickness, my dear colonel; I fear it is somewhat so with me.

Col. And whence your fear? Not from the lady's cruelty?

Har. No, there is another bar in my way, which does, perhaps, too much depress my hopes of happiness.

Col. You have not been prudent enough to fall in love with an heiress?

Har. No, my dear sir, I have not.

Col. That is a great mistake, to be sure, Harwood; yet many a man has not advanced the less rapidly in his profession, for having had a portionless wife to begin the world with. It is a spur to industry.

Har. (looking pleased at him). Such sentiments are what I expected from Colonel Hardy; and, were it not for female failings, there would be little risk in following them.—I don't know how to express it—I am perhaps too delicate in these matters—We ought not to expect a faultless woman.

Col. No, surely; and if such a woman were to be found, she would be no fit companion for us.

Har. (getting up, and pressing the Colonel's hand between his). My dearest friend! your liberality and candour delight me!—I do indeed believe that many a man has lived very happily with a woman far from being faultless: and, after all, where is the great injury he sustains, if she should be a little violent and unreasonable?

Col. (starting up from his seat). Nay, heaven defend us from a violent woman; for that is the devil himself! *(Seeing HARWOOD'S countenance change.)*—What is the matter with you, Harwood? She is not ill-tempered, I hope?

Har. (hesitating). Not—not absolutely so—She is of a very quick and lively disposition, and is apt to be too hasty and unguarded in her emotions.—I do not, perhaps, make myself completely understood.

Col. O, I understand you perfectly.—I have known ladies of this lively disposition, very hasty and unguarded too in their demands upon a man's pocket as well as his patience; but she may be of a prudent and economical turn. Is it so, Harwood?

Har. (throwing himself into a chair very much distressed). I do not say it is, colonel.

Col. (putting his hand kindly upon his shoulder). I am sorry to distress you so much, my dear friend, yet it must be so. I see how it is with you: pardon the freedom of friendship, but indeed an expensive and violent-tempered woman is not to be thought of: he who marries such an one forfeits all peace and happiness. Pluck up some noble courage, and renounce this unfortunate connexion.

Har. (starting up). Renounce it, Colonel Hardy? Is it from you I receive so hard, so unfeeling a request, who have suffered so much yourself from the remembrance of an early attachment? I thought to have been pitted by you.

Col. I was early chagrined with the want of promotion, and disappointed in my schemes of ambition, which gave my countenance something of a melancholy cast, I believe and the ladies have been kind enough to attribute it to the effects of hopeless love;

but how could you be such a ninny, my dear Harwood ?

Har. I am sorry, sir, we have understood one another so imperfectly.

Col. Nay, nay, my young friend, do not carry yourself so distantly with me. You have sought a love-lorn companion, and you have found a plain-spoken friend. I am sorry to give you pain : deal more openly with me ; when I know who this bewitching creature is, I shall, perhaps, judge more favourably of your passion.

Har. It is Miss Agnes Withrington.

Col. Cousin to Miss Withrington the heiress ?

Har. Yes, it is she. What have I said to amaze you ?

Col. You amaze me indeed !—That little—forgive me if I were almost to say,—plain-looking girl ! Friendship would sympathize in your feelings ; but, pardon me, Harwood, you have lost your wits.

Har. I believe I have, colonel, which must plead my pardon, likewise, for expecting this friendship from you.

Col. You distress me.

Har. I distress myself still more, by suffering so long the pain of this conversation.

Col. Let us end it then as soon as you please. When you are in a humour to listen to reason, I shall be happy to have the honour of seeing you.

Har. When I am in that humour, sir, I will not balk it so much as to intrude upon your time.

Col. Let me see you then, when you are not in that humour, and I shall more frequently have the pleasure of your company. (*Both bow coldly.*)

[*Exit COLONEL HARDY.*]

Har. (alone). What a fool was I to send for this man !—A little plain-looking girl ! What do the people mean ? They will drive me mad amongst them. Why does not the little witch wear high heels to her shoes, and stick a plume of feathers in her cap ? Oh ! they will drive me distracted !

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

MR. WITHRINGTON'S house. AGNES discovered embroidering at a small table, HARWOOD standing by her, and hanging fondly over her as she works.

Har. How pretty it is ! Now you put a little purple on the side of the flower.

Ag. Yes, a very little shade.

Har. And now a little brown upon that.

Ag. Even so.

Har. And thus you work up and down, with that tiny needle of yours, till the whole flower is completed. (*Pauses, still looking at her working.*) Why, Agnes, you little witch ! you're doing that leaf wrong.

Ag. You may pick it out then, and do it better for me. I'm sure you have been idle enough all the

morning ; it is time you were employed about something.

Har. And so I will. (*Sitting down by her, and taking hold of the work.*)

Ag. (covering the flower with her hand). O no ! no !

Har. Take away that little perverse hand, and let me begin. (*Putting his hand upon hers.*)

Ag. What a good for nothing creature you are ! you can do nothing yourself, and you will suffer nobody else to do any thing. I should have had the whole pattern finished before now, if you had not loitered over my chair so long.

Har. So you can't work when I look over you ! Then I have some influence upon you ? O you sly girl ! you are caught in your own words at last.

Ag. Indeed, Harwood, I wish you would go home again to your law-books and your precedent-hunting ; you have mis-spent a great deal of time here already.

Har. Is it not better to be with you in reality than only in imagination ? Ah, Agnes ! you little know what my home studies are.—Law, said you ! how can I think of law, when your countenance looks upon me from every black lettered page that I turn ? when your figure fills the empty seat by my side, and your voice speaks to me in the very mid-day stillness of my chamber ? Ah ! my sweet Agnes ! you will not believe what a foolish fellow I have been since I first saw you.

Ag. Nay, Harwood, I am not at all incredulous of the fact ; it is only the cause of it which I doubt.

Har. Saucy girl ! I must surely be revenged upon you for all this.

Ag. I am tired of this work. (*Getting up.*)

Har. O ! do not give over.—Let me do something for you—Let me thread your needle for you—I can thread one most nobly.

Ag. There then. (*Gives him a needle and silk.*)

Har. (pretending to scratch her hand with it). So ought you to be punished. (*Threads it awkwardly.*)

Ag. Ay, nobly done, indeed ! but I shall work no more to-day.

Har. You must work up my needleful.

Ag. I am to work a fool's cap in the corner by and bye ; I shall keep your needleful for that. I am going to walk in the garden.

Har. And so am I

Ag. You are ?

Har. Yes, I am. Go where you will, Agnes, to the garden or the field, the city or the desert, by sea or by land, I must e'en go too. I will never be where you are not, but when to be where you are is impossible.

Ag. There will be no getting rid of you at this rate, unless some witch will have pity upon me, and carry me up in the air upon her broom-stick.

Har. There I will not pretend to follow you ; but as long as you remain upon the earth, Agnes, I

cannot find in my heart to move an inch from your side.

Ag. You are a madman!

Har. You are a sorceress!

Ag. You are an idler!

Har. You are a little mouse!

Ag. Come, come, get your hat then, and let us go. (*Aside while he goes to the bottom of the stage for his hat.*) Bless me! I have forgot to be ill-humour'd all this time. [*Exit, hastily.*]

Har. (*coming forward.*) Gone for her cloak, I suppose. How delightful she is! how pleasant every change of her countenance! How happy must his life be, spent even in cares and toil, whose leisure hours are cheered with such a creature as this.

Ag. (*without, in an angry voice.*) Don't tell me so; I know very well how it is, and you shall smart for it too, you lazy, careless, impudent fellow! And, besides all this, how dare you use my kitten so?

Har. (*who listened with a rueful face.*) Well, now, but this is humanity: she will not have a creature ill-used.—I wish she would speak more gently though.

Ag. (*entering.*) Troublesome, provoking, careless fellow!

Har. It is very provoking in him to use the poor kitten ill.

Ag. So it is; but it is more provoking still to mislay my clogs, as he does.

Enter Servant with clogs.

Ser. Here they are, madam.

Ag. Bring them here, I say. (*Looks at them.*) These are Miss Withrington's clogs, you blockhead! (*Throws them to the other side of the stage in a passion.*) I must go without them, I find. (*To Harwood.*) What are you musing about? If you don't choose to go with me, good morning.

Har. (*sighing deeply.*) Ah, Agnes! you know too well that I cannot stay behind you. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

MISS WITHRINGTON'S dressing-room. *Enter MARIANE, who turns back again towards the door, and calls to AGNES without.*

Mar. Agnes, cousin Agnes! where are you going?

Ag. (*without.*) I am returning to Miss Eston, whom I have left in the parlour, talking to the dog.

Mar. Well, let her talk to the dog a little longer, and let me talk to you.

Enter AGNES.

I have set Betty to watch at the higher windows to give notice of Sir Loftus's approach, that we may

put ourselves in order to receive him; for I am resolved to have one bout more with him, and discharge him for good: I am quite tired of him now.

Ag. Do you expect him?

Mar. I am pretty sure he will come about this time, and I must be prepared for him. I have a good mind to tell him at once, I despise him, and that will be a plain, easy way of finishing the business.

Ag. No, no, my sweet Mariane! we must send him off with éclat. You have played your part very well hitherto; keep it up but for the last time, and let Miss Eston and me go into the closet and enjoy it.

Mar. Well then, do so: I shall please you for this once.

Enter BETTY, in haste.

Bet. (*to MAR.*) Sir Loftus is just coming up the side path, madam, and he'll be at the door immediately.

Ag. I'll run and bring Eston directly. [*Exit.*]

Mar. (*looking at the door of the closet.*) Yes, it is very thin: they will hear well, and see through the key-hole.

Re-enter AGNES with MISS ESTON, in a great hurry.

Est. La! I have torn my gown in my haste.

Ag. Come along, come along!

Est. It is not so bad a tear though as Mrs. Thomson got the—

Ag. Come, come, we must not stay here. (*Pushes ESTON into the closet and follows.*) MARIANE and BETTY place a table with books and a chair near the front of the stage.)

Est. (*looking from the closet.*) La! Mariane, how I long to hear you and him begin. I shall be so delighted!

Mar. For heaven's sake shut the door! he will be here immediately. (*Shuts the door upon her, and continues to set the room in order.*)

Est. (*looking out again.*) La! Mariane, do you know how many yards of point Lady Squat has got round her new—(*AGNES from behind, claps her hand on ESTON'S mouth, and draws her into the closet.*)—MARIANE sets herself by the table, pretending to read. *Exit BETTY, and enter SIR LOFTUS, a servant announcing him.*)

Sir Loft. You are very studious this morning, Miss Withrington.

Mar. (*carelessly.*) Ha! how do you do?

Sir Loft. You have been well amused, I hope?

Mar. So, so. I must put in a mark here, and not lose my place. (*Looking on the table.*) There is no paper—O, there is some on the other table: pray do fetch it me! (*Pointing to a table at the bottom of the stage.*) I am very lazy. (*Sits down again indolently.*)

Sir Loft. (*fetching the paper, and presenting it with a condescending yet self-important air*). I have the honour to obey you, ma'am.

Mar. I thank you; you are a very serviceable creature, I am sure.

Sir Loft. (*drawing himself up proudly, but immediately correcting himself*). I am always happy to serve Miss Withrington.

Mar. O! I know very well the obliging turn of your disposition. (*Tosses her arm upon the table and throws down a book.*) I am very stupid this morning. (*SIR LOFTUS picks up the book, and gives it to her rather sulkily; and she in receiving it drops an ivory ball under the table.*) Bless me! what is the matter with all these things? pray lift it for me, good Sir Loftus! I believe you must creep under the table for it though. (*He stoops under the table with a very bad grace, and she slyly gives it a touch with her foot, which makes it run to the other side of the stage.*) Nay, you must go farther off for it now. I am very troublesome.

Sir Loft. (*goes after it rather unwillingly, and presenting it to her with a still worse grace*). Madam, this is more honour than I—(*mumbling.*)

Mar. O, no! Sir Loftus, it is only you that are too good. (*Lolling carelessly in her chair.*) It is so comfortable to have such a good creature by one! your fine fashionable men are admired to be sure, but I don't know how, I feel always restrained in their company. With a good obliging creature like you now, I can be quite at my ease; I can just desire you to do any thing.

Sir Loft. Upon my honour, madam, you flatter me very much indeed. Upon my honour, I must say, I am rather at a loss to conceive how I have merited these commendations.

Mar. O! Sir Loftus, you are too humble, too diffident of yourself. I know very well the obliging turn of your disposition to every body.

Sir Loft. (*aside*). Is she an idiot? (*Aloud.*) Your good opinion, madam, does me a great deal of honour, but I assure you, ma'am, it is more than I deserve. I have great pleasure in serving Miss Withrington;—to be at the service of every body is an extent of benevolence I by no means pretend to.

Mar. Now why are you so diffident, Sir Loftus? Did not old Mrs. Mumblecake tell me the other day, how you ran nine times to the apothecary's to fetch green salve to rub her monkey's tail?

Sir Loft. She told you an abominable lie then! (*Biting his lip, and walking up and down with hasty strides.*) This is indeed beyond all bearing. I run nine times to the apothecary's to fetch green salve for her monkey's tail! If the vile hag says so again, I'll bury her alive!

Mar. Nay, don't be angry about it. I'm sure I thought it very good in you, and I said so to every body.

Sir Loft. You have been obliging enough to tell it to all the world too?

Mar. And why should I not have the pleasure of praising you?

Sir Loft. Intolerable! (*Turning on his heel, and striding up and down, and muttering as he goes, whilst she sits carelessly with her arms crossed.*)

Mar. My good Sir Loftus, you will tire yourself. Had you not better be seated?

Sir Loft. (*endeavouring to compose himself*). The influence you have over me, ma'am, gets the better of every thing. I would not have you mistake my character, however; if love engages me in your service, you ought so to receive it. I have been less profuse of these attentions to women of the very first rank and fashion; I might therefore have hoped that you would lend a more favourable ear to my passion.

Mar. Indeed you wrong me. You don't know how favourably my ear may be disposed: sit down here and tell me all about it. (*SIR LOFTUS revolts again at her familiarity, but stifles his pride, and sits down by her.*)

Sir Loft. Permit me to say, madam, that it is time we should come to an explanation of each other's sentiments.

Mar. Whenever you please, sir.

Sir Loft. (*bowing*). I hope, then, I may be allowed to presume, that my particular attentions to you, pardon me, ma'am, have not been altogether disagreeable to you.

Mar. O! not at all, Sir Loftus.

Sir Loft. (*bowing again*). I will presume then still farther, ma'am, and declare to you, that from the very day which gave birth to my passion, I have not ceased to think of you with the most ardent tenderness.

Mar. La, Sir Loftus, was it not of a Wednesday?

Sir Loft. (*fretted*). Upon my word I am not so very accurate: it might be Wednesday, or Friday, or any day.

Mar. Of a Friday, do you think? it runs strangely in my head that we saw one another first of a Wednesday.

Sir Loft. (*very much fretted*). I say, ma'am, the day which gave birth to my love—

Mar. O very true! you might see me first of a Wednesday, and yet not fall in love with me till the Friday. (*SIR LOFTUS starts up in a passion, and strides up and down.*—*MARIANE rising from her seat carelessly.*) I wonder where William has put the nuts I bought for Miss Eston's squirrel. I think I hear a mouse in the wainscot. (*Goes to the bottom of the room, and opens a small cabinet, whilst SIR LOFTUS comes forward to the front.*)

Sir Loft. (*aside*). Confound her freaks! I wish the devil had the woeing of her. (*Pauses.*) I must not lose her for a trifle though; but when she is once secured, I'll be revenged! I'll vex her! I'll

drive the spirit out of her! (*Aloud, as she comes forward.*) My passion for you, Miss Withrington, is too generous and disinterested to merit this indifference.

Mar. I'm glad they have not eaten the nuts though.

Sir Loft. (*aside.*) Pest seize her and her nuts! I'll tame her! (*Aloud.*) My sentiments for you, ma'am, are of so delicate and tender a nature, they do indeed deserve your indulgence. Tell me, then, can the most disinterested, the most fervent love, make any impression on your heart? I can no longer exist in this state of anxiety! at your feet let me implore you—(*Seems about to kneel, but rather unwillingly, as if he wished to be prevented.*)

Mar. Pray, Sir Loftus, don't kneel there! my maid has spilt oil on the floor.

Sir Loft. Since you will not permit me to have the pleasure of kneeling at—

Mar. Nay, I will not deprive you of the pleasure—There is no oil spilt here. (*Pointing to a part of the floor very near the closet door.*)

Sir Loft. I see it would be disagreeable to you.

Mar. I see very well you are not inclined to condescend so far.

Sir Loft. (*kneeling directly.*) Believe me, madam, the pride, the pleasure of my life, is to be devoted to the most adorable—(*MARIANE gives a significant cough, and AGNES and ESTON burst from the closet: the door opening on the outside, comes against SIR LOFTUS as he kneels, and lays him sprawling on the floor.*)

Ag. Est. and Mar. (*speaking together.*) O Sir Loftus! poor Sir Loftus! (*All coming about him, pretending to assist him to get up.*)

Sir Loft. Curse their bawling! they will bring the whole family here.

Enter MR. WITHRINGTON and OPAL: SIR LOFTUS, mad with rage, makes a desperate effort, and gets upon his legs. OPAL stands laughing at him without any ceremony, whilst he bites his lips, and draws himself up haughtily.

Mar. (*to SIR LOFTUS.*) I'm afraid you have hurt yourself?

Sir Loft. (*shortly.*) No, ma'am.

Ag. Haven't you rubbed the skin off your shins, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. No, ma'am.

Ag. I am sure he has hurt his nose, but he is ashamed to own it.

Sir Loft. Neither shin nor nose! Devil take it!

With. Get along, girls, and don't torment this poor man any longer. I am afraid, Sir Loftus, the young gipsies have been making a fool of you.

Sir Loft. Sir, it is neither in your power nor theirs to make a fool of me.

Op. Ha, ha, ha, ha! 'Faith, Prettyman, you must forgive me! ha, ha, ha, ha! I never thought in my

life to have caught you at such low prostrations. But don't be so angry, though you do make a confounded silly figure, it must be confest. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Loft. (*to Op.*) Sir, your impertinence and yourself are equally contemptible: and I desire you will no longer take the trouble of intruding yourself into my company, or of affronting me, as you have hitherto done, with your awkward imitation of my figure and address.

Op. What do you mean? I imitate your figure and address! I scorn to—I will not deny that I may have insensibly acquired a little of them both, for—for—(*hesitating.*)

Ag. For he has observed people laughing at him of late.

Sir Loft. (*turning on his heel.*) He is beneath my resentment.

Mar. Be not so angry, good Sir Loftus! let us end this business for the present; and when I am at leisure to hear the remainder of your declarations, which have been so unfortunately interrupted, I'll send and let you know.

Sir Loft. No, 'faith, madam! you have heard the last words I shall ever say to you upon the subject. A large fortune may make amends for an ordinary person, madam, but not for vulgarity and impertinence. Good morning! (*Breaks from them, and Exit, leaving them laughing provokingly behind him.*)

With. (*shaking his head.*) This is too bad, this is too bad, young ladies! I am ashamed to have all this rioting and absurdity going on in my house.

Ag. Come away, uncle, and see him go down the back walk, from the parlour windows. I'll warrant you he'll stride it away most nobly. (*WITHRINGTON follows, shrugging up his shoulders.*)

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

MR. WITHRINGTON'S library. MR. WITHRINGTON
discovered seated by a table.

With. Who waits there? (*Enter servant.*) Tell Miss Agnes Withrington I wish to see her. (*Exit Servant.*) What an absurd fellow this Harwood is, to be so completely bewitched with such a girl as Agnes! If she were like the women I remember, there would indeed be some—(*AGNES entering softly behind him, gives him a tap on the shoulder.*)

Ag. Well, uncle, what are you grumbling about? Have you lost your wager? Harwood has just left you, I hear.

With. I believe you may buy those trinkum trankum ornaments for Mariane whenever you please.

Ag. Pray look not so ungraciously upon the matter! But you can't forgive him, I suppose, for being such a ninny as to fall in love with a little ordinary girl, eh?

With. And so he is a ninny, and a fool, and a very silly fellow.

Ag. Do tell me what he has been saying to you.

With. Why, he confesses thou art ill-tempered, that thou art freakish, that thou art extravagant; and that of all the friends he has spoken with upon the subject, there is not one who will allow thee beauty enough to make a good-looking dairy-maid.

Ag. Did he say so?

With. Why something nearly equivalent to it, Agnes. Yet notwithstanding all this there is something about thee so unaccountably delightful to him, that, poor as thou art, he will give up the fair hopes of opulence, and the pleasures of freedom, to watch for thee, bear with thee, drudge for thee, if thou wilt have the condescension, in return, to plague and torment him for life.

Ag. Foolish enough indeed! yet heaven bless him for it! What a fortunate woman am I! I sought a disinterested lover, and I have found a most wonderful one.

With. I dare say you think yourself very fortunate.

Ag. And don't you, likewise, my good sir? but you seem displeas'd at it.

With. You guess rightly enough: I must speak without disguise, Agnes; I am not pleas'd.

Ag. Ah! his want of fortune—

With. Pooh! you know very well I despise all mercenary balancing of property. It is not that which disturbs me. To be the disinterested choice of a worthy man is what every woman, who means to marry at all, would be ambitious of; and a point in regard to her marriage, which a woman of fortune would be unwilling to leave doubtful. But there are men whose passions are of such a violent overbearing nature, that love in them may be considered as a disease of the mind; and the object of it claims no more perfection or pre-eminence among women, than chalk, lime, or oatmeal do among dainties, because some diseas'd stomachs do prefer them to all things. Such men as these we sometimes see attach themselves even to ugliness and infamy, in defiance of honour and decency. With such men as these, women of sense and refinement can never be happy; nay, to be willingly the object of their love is not respectable. (*Pauses.*) But you don't care for all this, I suppose? It does well enough for an old uncle to perplex himself with these niceties: it is you yourself the dear man happens to love, and none of those naughty women I have been talking of, so all is very right. (*Pauses, and she seems thoughtful.*)

Ag. (*assuming a grave and more dignified air.*) No, sir, you injure me: prove that his love for me is stronger than his love of virtue, and I will—

With. What will you do, Agnes?

Ag. I will give him up for ever.

With. Ay, there spoke a brave girl! you deserve the best husband in Christendom for this.

Ag. Nay, if Harwood endures not the test, I will indeed renounce him; but no other man shall ever fill his place.

With. Well, well, we shall see, we shall see. (*Walks up and down. She is thoughtful.*) You are very thoughtful, Agnes! I fear I have distress'd you.

Ag. You have distress'd me, yet I thank you for it. I have been too presumptuous, I have ventured farther than I ought. Since it is so, I will not shrink from the trial. (*Pauses.*) Don't you think he will go through it honourably?

With. (*shaking his head.*) Indeed I know not—I I hope he will.

Ag. You hope! I thank you for that word, my dear sir! I hope he will too. (*She remains thoughtful: he takes a turn or two across the stage.*)

With. (*clapping her shoulder affectionately.*) What are you thinking of, niece?

Ag. How to set about this business.

With. And how will you do it?

Ag. I will write a letter to Lady Fade, asking pardon for having told some malicious falsehoods of her, to a relation on whom she is dependant; begging she will make up the matter, and forgive me, promising at the same time, most humbly, if she will not expose me for this time, never to offend so any more. Next time he comes I will make him direct the letter himself, that when it falls into his hands again, he may have no doubt of its authenticity. Will this do?

With. Yes, very well. If he loves you after this, his love is not worth the having.

Ag. Ah, uncle! You are very hard-hearted! But you are very right: I know you are very right. Pray does not Royston lodge in the same house with Harwood?

With. He does.

Ag. I wish, by his means, we could conceal ourselves somewhere in his apartments, where we might see Harwood have the letter put into his hands, and observe his behaviour. I don't know any body else who can do this for us: do you think you could put him into good humour again?

With. I rather think I can, for he hath still a favour to ask of me.

Ag. We must give him a part to act; do you think he can do it?

With. He is a very blundering fellow, but he will be so flattered with being let into the secret, that I know he will do his best.

Enter MARIANE.

Mar. What have you been about so long together?

With. Hatching a new plot; and we set about it directly too.

Mar. I am very sure the plot is of your own hatching then; for I never saw Agnes with any thing of this kind in her head, wear such a grave spiritless face upon it before.

With. You are mistaken, ma'am; it is of her own contrivance; but you shall know nothing about it. And I give you warning that this shall be the last of them: if you have any more poor wretches on your hands to torment, do it quickly; for I will have an end put to all this foolery.

Mar. Very well, uncle; I have just been following your advice. I have discarded Sir Ulick O'Grady, and I have only now poor Opal to reward for his services. I have got a promise of marriage from him, in which he forfeits ten thousand pounds if he draws back. I shall torment him with this a little. It was an extraordinary thing to be sure for an heiress to demand: but I told him it was the fashion; and now that he has bound himself so securely, he is quite at heart's ease, and thinks every thing snug and well settled.

Enter ROYSTON, a Servant announcing him.

With. Your servant, Mr. Royston, I am very glad to see you. Don't start at seeing the ladies with me; I know my niece, Mariane, and you have had a little misunderstanding, but when I have explained the matter to you, you will be friends with her again, and laugh at it yourself.

Roy. (coldly). I have the honour to wish the ladies good morning.

With. Nay, cousin, you don't understand how it is: these girls have been playing tricks upon every man they have met with since they came here; and when that wild creature (*pointing to MARIANE*) was only laughing at the cheat she had passed upon them all, which I shall explain to you presently, you thought she was laughing at you. Shake hands, and be friends with her, cousin; nobody mind's what a foolish girl does.

Roy. (his face brightening up). O! for that matter, I mind these things as little as any body, cousin Withrington. I have too many affairs of importance on my hands, to attend to such little matters as these. I am glad the young lady had a hearty laugh, with all my soul; and I shall be happy to see her as merry again whenever she has a mind to it. I mind it! No, no, no!

Mar. I thank you, sir; and I hope we shall be merry again, when you shall have your own share of the joke.

Roy. Yes, yes, we shall be very merry. By the bye, Withrington, I came here to tell you, that I

have got my business with the duke put into so good a train, that it can hardly miscarry.

With. I am happy to hear it.

Roy. You must know I have set very artfully about it, cousin; but I dare say you would guess as much, he, he, he! You knew me of old, eh! I have got Mr. Cullyfool to ask it for me on his own account; I have bribed an old housekeeper, who is to interest a great lady in my favour; I have called eleven times on his Grace's half-cousin, till she has fairly promised to write to the duchess upon the business: I have written to the steward, and promised his son all my interest at next election, if he has any mind to stand for our borough, you know; and I have applied by a friend—no, no, he has applied through the medium of another friend, or rather, I believe, by that friend's wife, or aunt, or some way or other, I don't exactly remember, but it is a very good channel, I know.

With. O! I make no doubt of it.

Roy. Nay, my landlady has engaged her apothecary's wife to speak to his Grace's physician about it; and a medical man, you know, sometimes asks a favour with great advantage, when a patient believes that his life is in his hands. The duke has got a most furious fit of the gout, and it has been in his stomach too, ha, ha, ha, ha!—If we can't succeed without it, I have a friend who will offer a round sum for me, at last; but I hope this will not be necessary. Pray, do you know of any other good channel to solicit by?

With. 'Faith, Royston! you have found out too many roads to one place already: I fear you'll lose your way among them all.

Roy. Nay, nay, cousin, I won't be put off so. I have been told this morning you are acquainted with Suckop, the duke's greatest friend and adviser. Come, come! you must use your interest for me.

With. Well, then, come into the other room, and we shall speak about it. I have a favour to ask of you too.

Roy. My dear sir, any favour in my power you may absolutely command at all times. I'll follow you, cousin. (*Goes to the door with WITHRINGTON with great alacrity, but recollecting that he has forgotten to pay his compliments to the ladies, hurries back again, and, after making several very profound bows to them, follows WITHRINGTON into another room.*)

Mar. (imitating him). Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Ag. Softly, Mariane; let us leave this room, if you must laugh, for he will overhear you. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

ROYSTON'S lodgings: *enter ROYSTON, conducting in AGNES, MARIANE, and WITHRINGTON.*

Roy. Now, pray compose yourselves, young

ladies, and sit down a little. I'll manage every thing: don't give yourselves any trouble: I'll set the whole plot a-going.

With. We depend entirely upon you, Royston.

Roy. I know you do: many a one depends upon me, cousin Withrington. I'll show you how I'll manage it. Jonathan, come here, Jonathan! (*Enter JONATHAN.*) Bring me that screen from the other room. (*Exit JONATHAN.*) We'll place it here if you please, cousin, and then you and the ladies can stand as snugly behind it, as kings and queens in a puppet-show, till your time comes to appear. (*Enter JONATHAN with screen.*) Come hither with it, Jonathan: place it here (*Pointing.*) No, no, jolter-head, nearer the wall with it. (*Going behind it, and coming out again.*) It will do better a little more to this side, for then it will be farther from the window.

Ag. O! it will do very well, sir; you take too much trouble.

Roy. Trouble, my dear ma'am! If it were a hundred times more trouble, I should be happy to serve you. I don't mind trouble, if I can get the thing done cleverly and completely. That's my way of doing things. No, it don't stand to please me yet; it is too near the door now, and the ladies may catch cold, perhaps.

Ag. (very uneasy). Indeed, it stands very well! Harwood will be here before we are ready.

Roy. (to JON.) Blockhead that thou art! canst thou not set it up even? Now that will do, (*Getting behind it.*) This will do. (*Coming out again.*) Yes, this will do to a nicety.

Mar. (aside). Heaven be praised, this grand matter is settled at last!

Roy. Now, he'll think it odd, perhaps, that I have a screen in my room; but I have a trick for that, ladies; I'll tell him I mean to purchase lands in Canada, and have been looking over the map of America. (*AGNES looks to WITHRINGTON very uneasily.*)

With. Don't do that, Royston, for then he will examine the screen.

Roy. Or I may say, there is a chink in the wall, and I placed it to keep out the air.

Ag. No, no, that won't do. For heaven's sake, sir!

Roy. Then I shall just say, I like to have a screen in my room, for I am used to it at home.

Mar. Bless me, Mr. Royston! can't you just leave it alone, and he'll take no notice of it.

Roy. O! if he takes no notice of it, that is a different thing, Miss Withrington: but don't be uneasy, I'll manage it all; I'll conduct the whole business.

Ag. (aside to WITHRINGTON). O! my good sir! this fool will ruin every thing.

With. Be quiet, Agnes; we are in for it now.

Roy. Let me remember my lesson too. Here

is the letter for him, with the seal as naturally broken, as if the lady had done it herself. Harwood will wonder, now, how I came to know about all this. 'Faith! I believe he thinks me a strange, diving, penetrating kind of a genius, already, and he is not far wrong, perhaps. You know me, cousin Withrington: ha, ha, ha, ha! You know me.

Ag. O! I wish it were over, and we were out of this house again!

Roy. Don't be uneasy, ma'am, I'll manage every thing.—Jonathan! (*Enter JONATHAN.*) Don't you go and tell Mr. Harwood that I have got company here.

Jon. No, no, your honour; I knows better than that; for the ladies are to be behind the screen, sir, and he must know nothing of the matter, to be sure. Tficken! it will be rare sport!

Ag. (starting). I hear a knock at the door.

Roy. It is he, I dare say; run, Jonathan. [*Exit JONATHAN.*]

Ag. Come, come, let us hide ourselves.

[*All get behind the screen but ROYSTON.*]

Roy. Ay, ay, it will do very well. (*Looking at the screen.*)

Ag. (behind). Mariane, don't breathe so loud.

Mar. (behind). I don't breathe loud.

Ag. (behind). Do, uncle, draw in the edge of your coat.

With. (behind). Pooh, silly girl! they can't see a bit of it.

Enter COLONEL HARDY and HARWOOD.

Roy. Ha! your servant, my dear colonel. How goes it, Harwood? I bade my man tell you I was alone, and very much disposed for your good company; but I am doubly fortunate. (*Bowing to the Colonel.*)

Col. Indeed, Royston, I have been pretty much with him these two days past, and I don't believe he gives me great thanks for my company. I am like an old horse running after a colt; the young rogue never fails to turn now and then, and give him a kick for his pains.

Har. Nay, my good friend, I must be an ass's colt, then. I am sure I mean it not; but I am not happy, and fear I have been peevish with you.

Roy. (attempting to look archly). Peevish, and all that! perhaps the young man is in love, colonel?

Col. No more, if you please, Royston: we are to speak of this no more.

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. Did your honour call?

Roy. No, sirrah. (*JONATHAN goes, as if he were looking for something, and takes a sly peep behind the screen, to see if they are all there.*) What are you peeping there for? get along, you hound! Does

he want to make people believe I keep raree-shows behind the wainscot? (*Exit JONATHAN.*) But as I was a-saying, colonel, perhaps the young man is in love. He, he, he!

Col. No, no, let us have no more of it.

Roy. But 'faith, I know that he is so! and I know the lady too. She is a cousin of my own, and I am as well acquainted with her as I am with my own dog—But you don't ask me what kind of a girl she is. (*To the colonel.*)

Col. Give over now, Royston; she is a very good girl, I dare say.

Roy. Well, you may think so, but—(*making significant faces.*) But—I should not say all I know of my own cousin, to be sure, but—

Har. What are all those grimaces for? Her faults are plain and open as her perfections; these she disdains to conceal, and the others it is impossible.

Roy. Softly, Harwood; don't be in a passion, unless you would imitate your mistress; for she has not the gentlest temper in the world.

Har. Well, well, I love her the better for it. I can't bear your insipid passionless women: I would as soon live upon sweet curd all my life as attach myself to one of them.

Roy. She is very extravagant.

Har. Heaven bless the good folks! would they have a man give up the woman of his heart, because she likes a bit of lace upon her petticoat?

Roy. Well, but she is—

Col. Cease, Royston! can't you hold your tongue about her? you see he can't bear it.

Roy. (*making signs to the colonel.*) Let me alone; I know when to speak, and when to hold my tongue, as well as another. Indeed, Harwood, I am your friend; and though the lady is my relation, I must say I wish you had made a better choice: I have discovered something in regard to her this morning, which shows her to be a very improper one. I cannot say, however, that I have discovered any thing which surprised me; I know her too well.

Har. (*vehemently.*) You are imposed upon by some odious falsehood.

Roy. But I have proof of what I say; the lady who is injured by her gave me this letter to show to Mr. Withrington. (*Taking out the letter.*)

Har. It is some fiend who wants to undermine her, and has forged that scrawl to serve her spiteful purpose.

Roy. I should be glad it were so, my dear friend; but Lady Fade is a woman whose veracity has never been suspected.

Har. Is it from Lady Fade? Give it me! (*Snatching the letter.*)

Roy. It is Agnes's hand, is it not?

Har. It is, at least, a good imitation of it.

Roy. Read the contents, pray!

Har. "Madam, what I have said to the prejudice

of your ladyship's character to your relation, Mr. Worthy, I am heartily sorry for; and I am ready to beg pardon on my knees, if you desire it; to acknowledge before Mr. Worthy himself, that it is a falsehood, or make any other reparation, in a private way, that you may desire. Let me, then, conjure your ladyship not to expose me, and I shall ever remain your most penitent and grateful A. Withrington."

Roy. The lady would not be so easily pacified, though; for she blackened her character, in order to make her best friend upon earth quarrel with her; so she gave me the letter to show to her uncle. Is it forged, think you?

Har. It is possible—I will venture to say—Nay, I am sure it is!

Roy. If it be, there is one circumstance which may help to discover the author; it is directed by a different hand on the back. Look at it.

Har. (*in great perturbation.*) Is it? (*Turns hastily the folds of the letter, but his hand trembles so much, he can't find the back.*)

Col. My dear Harwood! this is the back of the letter, and methinks the writing is somewhat like your own. (*HARWOOD looks at it; then staggering back, throws himself into a chair, which happens to be behind him, and covers the upper part of his face with his hand.*)

Col. My dear Harwood!

Roy. See how his lips quiver, and his bosom heaves! Let us unbutton him; I fear he is going into a fit. (*AGNES comes from behind the screen in a fright, and WITHRINGTON pulls her in again.*)

Col. (*with great tenderness.*) My dear Harwood!

Har. (*with a broken voice.*) I'll go to my own chamber. (*Gets up hastily from his chair, and then falls back again in a fainting fit.*)

Col. He has fainted.

Roy. Help, help, here! (*Running about.*) Who has got hartshorn, or lavender, or water? help here! (*They all come from behind the screen. AGNES runs to HARWOOD, and sprinkles him over with lavender, rubbing his temples, &c., whilst COLONEL HARDY stares at them all in amazement.*)

Ag. Alas! we have carried this too far! Harwood! my dear Harwood!

Col. (*to ROY.*) What is all this?

Roy. I thought we should amaze you. I knew I should manage it.

Col. You have managed finely indeed, to put Harwood into such a state with your mummery.

Ag. Will he not come to himself again? Get some water, Mariane—See how pale he is! (*He recovers.*) O! he recovers! Harwood! do you know me, Harwood?

Har. (*looking upon AGNES, and shrinking back from her.*) Ha! what has brought you here? leave me! leave me! I am wretched enough already.

Ag. I come to bring you relief, my dear Harwood.

Har. No, madam, it is misery you bring. We must part for ever.

Ag. O! uncle! do you hear that? He says we must part for ever.

With. (*taking hold of AGNES*). Don't be in such a hurry about it.

Har. (*rising up*). How came you here? (*To WITHINGTON*), and these ladies?

Roy. O! it was all my contrivance.

With. Pray now, Royston, be quiet a little.—Mr. Harwood, I will speak to you seriously. I see you are attached to my niece, and I confess she has many faults; but you are a man of sense, and with you she will make a more respectable figure in the world than with any other; I am anxious for her welfare, and if you will marry her, I will give her such a fortune as will make it no longer an imprudent step to follow your inclinations.

Har. No, sir, you shall keep your fortune and your too bewitching niece together. For her sake I would have renounced all ambition; I would have shared with her poverty and neglect; I would have borne with all her faults and weaknesses of nature; I would have toiled, I would have bled for her; but I can never yoke myself with unworthiness.

Ag. (*wiping her eyes, and giving two skips upon the floor*). O! admirable! admirable! speak to him, uncle! tell him all, my dear uncle! for I can't say a word.

Col. (*aside to ROYSTON*). Is not she a little wrong in the head, Royston?

With. Give me your hand, Harwood? you are a noble fellow, and you shall marry this little girl of mine after all. This story of the letter and Lady Fade, was only a concerted one among us, to prove what mettle you are made of. Agnes, to try your love, affected to be shrewish and extravagant; and afterwards, at my suggestion, to try your principles, contrived this little plot, which has just now been unravelled; but I do assure you, on the word of an honest man, there is not a better girl in the kingdom. I must own, however, she is a fanciful little toad. (*HARWOOD runs to AGNES, catches her in his arms, and runs two or three times round with her, then takes her hand and kisses it, and then puts his knee to the ground.*)

Har. My charming, my delightful Agnes! Oh! what a fool have I been! how could I suppose it?

Ag. We took some pains with you, and it would have been hard, if we could not have deceived you amongst us all.

Har. And so thou art a good girl, a very good girl. I know thou art. I'll be hanged if thou hast one fault in the world.

With. No, no, Harwood, not quite so perfect. I can prove her still to be an arrant cheat; for she pretended to be careless of you when she thought of you all the day long; and she pretended to be poor with a hundred thousand pounds, independent of

any one, in her possession. She is Miss Withington the heiress; and this lady (*pointing to MARIANE*) has only been her representative for a time, for reasons which I shall explain to you by and bye. (*HARWOOD lets go AGNES's hand, and steps back some paces with a certain gravity and distance in his air.*)

With. What is the matter now, Harwood? does this cast a damp upon you?

Roy. It is a weighty distress truly. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Col. This is good, 't faith.

Ag. (*going up to HARWOOD, and holding out her hand*). Do not look so distantly upon me, Harwood: you were willing to marry me as a poor woman; if there be any thing in my fortune which offends you, I scatter it to the winds.

Har. My admirable girl! it is astonishment, it is something I cannot express, which overcomes, I had almost said distresses me, at present. (*Presenting her to the colonel.*) Colonel Hardy, this is the woman I have raved about! this is the woman I boasted of! this is my Agnes! and this, Miss Withington, is Colonel Hardy, my own, and my father's friend.

Ag. (*holding out her hand to the colonel*). He shall be mine too. Every friend of yours shall be my friend, Harwood; but the friend of your father my most respected one.

Har. Do you hear that, colonel?

Col. I hear it; my heart hears it, and blesses you both.

Har. (*to WITH.*) My dear sir, what shall I say to you for all this goodness?

Ag. Tell him he is the dearest best uncle on earth, and we will love him all our lives for it. Yes, indeed, we will, uncle, (*taking his hand*), very, very dearly!

Roy. Now, good folks, have not I managed it cleverly?

Mar. Pray let me come from the back ground a little; and since I must quit all the splendour of heiressship, I desire, at least, that I may have some respect paid me for having filled the situation so well, as the old mayor receives the thanks of the corporation, when the new mayor—Bless me! here comes Opal! I have not quite done with it yet.

Enter OPAL.

With. Your servant, Mr. Opal.

Mar. (*to Op.*) Are you not surprised to find us all here?

Op. Harwood I know is a very lucky fellow, but I knew you were here. It is impossible, you see, to escape me. But (*half aside to MARIANE*) I wanted to tell you Colonel Beaumont is come to Bath. Now I should like to be introduced to him on his arrival. He will be very much the fashion, I dare say, and I should like to have a friendship for him. You understand me? You can procure this for me, I know.

With. Come, Mr. Opal, you must join in our good humour here, for we have just been making up a match. My niece, Agnes, with a large fortune, bestows herself on a worthy man, who would have married her without one; and Mariane, who for certain reasons has assumed her character of heiress since we came to Bath, leaves all her borrowed state, in hopes that the man who would have married her with a fortune, will not now forsake her.

Op. (stammering). Wh—Wh—What is all this?

Roy. (half aside to OPAL). You seem disturbed, Mr. Opal; you have not been paying your addresses to her, I hope.

Op. (aside to ROYSTON). No, not paying my addresses; that is to say, not absolutely. I have paid her some attention, to be sure.

Roy. (nodding significantly). It is well for you it is no worse.

Mar. (turning to OPAL, who looks very much frightened). What is it you say? Don't you think I overheard it? Not paid your addresses to me! O! you false man! can you deny the declarations you have made? the oaths you have sworn? O! you false man!

Op. Upon honour, madam, we men of the world don't expect to be called to an account for every foolish thing we say.

Mar. What you have written then shall witness against you. Will you deny this promise of marriage in your own handwriting? (*Taking out a paper.*)

Roy. (aside to OP.) What! a promise of marriage, Mr. Opal! The devil himself could not have put it into your head to do a worse thing than this.

Op. (very frightened, but making a great exertion). Don't think, ma'am, to bully me into the match. I can prove that promise to be given to you under the false character of an heiress, therefore your deceit loosens the obligation.

With. Take care what you say, sir; (*to OP.*) I will not see my niece wronged. The law shall do her justice, whatever expense it may cost me.

Mar. Being an heiress, or not, has nothing to do in the matter, Mr. Opal; for you expressly say, in this promise, that my beauty and perfections alone have induced you to engage yourself; and I will take all the men in court to witness, whether I am not as handsome to-day as I was yesterday.

Op. I protest there is not such a word in the paper.

Mar. (holding out the paper). O base man! will you deny your own writing? (*OP. snatches the paper from her, tears it to pieces.*)

Mar. (gathering up the scattered pieces). O! I can put them together again. (*OP. snatching up one of the pieces, crams it into his mouth and chews it.*)

Roy. Chew fast, Opal! she will snatch it out of your mouth else. There is another bit for you. (*Offering him another piece.*)

Mar. (bursting into a loud laugh, in which all the company join). Is it very nice, Mr. Opal? You munch it up as expeditiously as a bit of plum-cake.

Op. What does all this mean?

With. This naughty girl, Mr. Opal, has only been amusing herself with your promise, which she never meant to make any other use of; she is already engaged to a very worthy young man, who will receive with her a fortune by no means contemptible.

Op. Well, well, much good may it do him: what do I care about—(*mumbling to himself.*)

Roy. Ha, ha, ha! how some people do get themselves into scrapes! They have no more notion of managing their affairs than so many sheep. Ha, ha, ha!

Enter HUMPHRY.

Humph. (to ROY.) I would speak a word with your honour. (*Whispers to ROYSTON.*)

Roy. (in a rage). What! given away the place! It is impossible! It is some wicked machination! It is some vile trick!

With. Be moderate, Royston; what has good Mr. Humphry been telling you?

Roy. O! a perfect bite! his Grace has given away the place to a poor simpleton, who had never a soul to speak for him!

With. Who told you this, Mr. Humphry?

Humph. Truly, sir, I called upon his Grace's gentleman, just to make up a kind of acquaintance with him, as his honour desired me, and he told me it was given away this morning.

Roy. What cursed luck!

Humph. "Why," says I, "I thought my master was to have had 't, Mr. Smoothly." "And so he would," says he, "but one person came to the Duke after another, teasing him about Mr. Royston, till he grew quite impatient; for there was but one of all those friends," says he, winking with his eye so, "who did speak at last to the purpose; but then, upon Mr. Sucksop's taking up your master's interest, he shrunk back from his word, which offended his Grace very much."

Roy. Blundering blockhead!

Humph. And so he gave away the place directly to poor Mr. Drudgewell, who had no recommendation at all, but fifteen years' hard service in the office.

Roy. Well, now! well, now! you see how the world goes; simpletons and idiots carry every thing before them.

With. Nay, Royston, blame yourself too. Did not I tell you, you had found out too many roads to one place, and would lose your way amongst them?

Roy. No, no, it is all that perverse fate of mine! Half the trouble I have taken for this paltry office,

would have procured some people an archbishopric ! There is Harwood, now ; fortune presses herself upon him, and makes him, at one stroke, an idle gentleman for life.

Har. No, sir, an idle gentleman I will never be : my Agnes shall never be the wife of any thing so contemptible.

Ag. I thank you, Harwood ; I do, indeed, look for honourable distinction in being your wife. You shall still exert your powers in the profession you have chosen : you shall be the weak one's stay, the

poor man's advocate ; you shall gain fair fame in recompense, and that will be our nobility.

With. Well said, my children ! you have more sense than I thought you had amongst all these whimsies. Now, let us take our leave of plots and story-telling, if you please, and all go to my house to supper. Royston shall drown his disappointment in a can of warm negus, and Mr. Opal shall have something more palatable than his last spare morsel. [*Exeunt.*]

DE MONFORT :

A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

DE MONFORT.

REZENVELT.

COUNT FREBERG, *friend to DE MONFORT and REZENVELT.*

MANUEL, *servant to DE MONFORT.*

JEROME, *DE MONFORT's old landlord.*

CONRAD, *an artful knave.*

BERNARD, *a monk.*

Monks, gentlemen, officers, page, &c. &c.

WOMEN.

JANE DE MONFORT, *sister to DE MONFORT.*

COUNTESS FREBERG, *wife to FREBERG.*

THERESA, *servant to the COUNTESS.*

Abbess, nuns, and a lay sister, ladies, &c.

Scene, a town in Germany.

ACT I

SCENE I.

JEROME's house. A large old-fashioned chamber.

Jer. (speaking without). This way, good masters.

Enter JEROME, bearing a light, and followed by MANUEL, and servants carrying luggage.

Rest your burthens here.

This spacious room will please the marqu's best.

He takes me unawares ; but ill prepar'd :

If he had sent, e'en though a hasty notice, ✓
I had been glad.

Man. Be not disturb'd, good Jerome ; ✓
Thy house is in most admirable order ; ✓
And they who travel o' cold winter nights
Think homeliest quarters good.

Jer. He is not far behind ?

Man. A little way.
(*To the servants.*) Go you and wait below till he arrive.

Jer. (shaking MANUEL by the hand). Indeed, my friend, I'm glad to see you here ;

Yet marvel wherefore. ✓

Man. I marvel wherefore too, my honest Jerome :
But here we are ; pri'thee be kind to us.

Jer. Most heartily I will. I love your master :
He is a quiet and a lib'ral man :
A better inmate never cross'd my door.

Man. Ah ! but he is not now the man he was.
Lib'ral he'll be. God grant he may be quiet.

Jer. What has befallen him ?

Man. I cannot tell thee ;
But, faith, there is no living with him now.

Jer. And yet, methinks, if I remember well
You were about to quit his service, Manuel,
When last he left this house. You grumbled then.

Man. I've been upon the eve of leaving him
These ten long years ; for many times he is
So difficult, capricious, and distrustful, ✓
He galls my nature — yet, I know not how,
A secret kindness binds me to him still.

Jer. Some who offend from a suspicious nature,
Will afterwards such fair confession make
As turns e'en the offence into a favour.

Man. Yes, some indeed do so ; so will not he :
He'd rather die than such confession make.

Jer. Ay, thou art right ; for now I call to mind That once he wrong'd me with unjust suspicion, ✓ When first he came to lodge beneath my roof ; And when it so fell out that I was prov'd Most guiltless of the fault, I truly thought He would have made profession of regret. But silent, haughty, and ungraciously He bore himself as one offended still. Yet shortly after, when unwittingly I did him some slight service, o' the sudden ✓ He overpower'd me with his grateful thanks ; And would not be restrain'd from pressing on me A noble recompense. I understood His o'erstrain'd gratitude and bounty well, And took it as he meant.

Man. 'Tis often thus. I would have left him many years ago, But that with all his faults there sometimes come Such bursts of natural goodness from his heart. As might engage a harder churl than I To serve him still. — And then his sister too ; A noble dame, who should have been a queen. The meanest of her hinds, at her command, Had fought like lions for her, and the poor, ✓ E'en o'er her bread of poverty, had bless'd her — She would have griev'd if I had left my lord.

Jer. Comes she along with him ?

Man. No, he departed all unknown to her, Meaning to keep conceal'd his secret route ; But well I knew it would afflict her much, And therefore left a little nameless billet, Which after our departure, as I guess, Would fall into her hands, and tell her all. What could I do ! O 'tis a noble lady ! [mind —

Jer. All this is strange — something disturbs his Belike he is in love.

Man. No, Jerome, no. Once on a time I serv'd a noble master, Whose youth was blasted with untoward love, And he, with hope and fear and jealousy For ever toss'd, led an unquiet life : Yet, when unruffled by the passing fit, His pale wan face such gentle sadness wore As mov'd a kindly heart to pity him. But Monfort, even in his calmest hour, Still bears that gloomy sternness in his eye Which powerfully repels all sympathy. O no ! good Jerome, no, it is not love.

Jer. Hear I not horses trampling at the gate ?

[*Listening.*

He is arriv'd — stay thou — I had forgot — A plague upon't ! my head is so confus'd — I will return i' the instant to receive him.

[*Exit hastily.*

[*A great bustle without. Exit MANUEL with lights, and returns again, lighting in DE MONFORT, as if just alighted from his journey.*

Man. Your ancient host, my lord, receives you And your apartment will be soon prepar'd. [gladly,

De Mon. 'Tis well.

Man. Where shall I place the chest you gave in charge ?

So please you, say, my lord.

De Mon. [*throwing himself into a chair.*] Where-e'er thou wilt.

Man. I would not move that luggage till you came. [*Pointing to certain things.*

De Mon. Move what thou wilt, and trouble me no more.

[*MANUEL, with the assistance of other servants, sets about putting the things in order, and DE MONFORT remains sitting in a thoughtful posture.*]

Enter JEROME, bearing wine, &c. on a salver. As he approaches DE MONFORT, MANUEL pulls him by the sleeve.

Man. [*aside to JEROME.*] No, do not now ; he will not be disturb'd.

Jer. What ! not to bid him welcome to my house, And offer some refreshment ?

Man. No, good Jerome. Softly a little while : I pri'thee do.

[*JEROME walks softly on tiptoe, till he gets behind DE MONFORT, then peeping on one side to see his face.*

Jer. [*aside to MANUEL.*] Ah, Manuel, what an alter'd man is here !

His eyes are hollow, and his cheeks are pale — He left this house a comely gentleman.

De Mon. Who whispers there ?

Man. 'Tis your old landlord, sir.

Jer. I joy to see you here — I crave your pardon —

I fear I do intrude —

De Mon. No, my kind host, I am obliged to thee.

Jer. How fares it with your honour ?

De Mon. Well enough.

Jer. Here is a little of the fav'rite wine That you were wont to praise. Pray honour me. [*Fills a glass.*

De Mon. [*after drinking.*] I thank you, Jerome, 'tis delicious.

Jer. Ay, my dear wife did ever make it so.

De Mon. And how does she ?

Jer. Alas, my lord ! she's dead.

De Mon. Well, then she is at rest.

Jer. How well, my lord ?

De Mon. Is she not with the dead, the quiet dead, Where all is peace ? Not e'en the impious wretch, Who tears the coffin from its earthy vault, And strews the mould'ring ashes to the wind, Can break their rest.

Jer. Woe's me ! I thought you would have griev'd for her.

She was a kindly soul ! Before she died, When pining sickness bent her cheerless head,

She set my house in order—
And but the morning ere she breath'd her last,
Bade me preserve some flasks of this wine,
That should the Lord de Monfort come again
His cup might sparkle still.

[DE MONFORT walks across the stage, and wipes
his eyes.

I indeed I fear I have distress'd you, sir;
I surely thought you would be griev'd for her.

De Mon. (taking JEROME'S hand). I am, my
friend. How long has she been dead?

Jer. Two sad long years.

De Mon. Would she were living still!
I was too troublesome, too heedless of her.

Jer. O no! she lov'd to serve you.

[Loud knocking without.

De Mon. What fool comes here, at such untimely
hours,

To make this cursed noise? (To MANUEL.) Go to
the gate. [Exit MANUEL.

All sober citizens are gone to bed;
It is some drunkards on their nightly rounds,
Who mean it but in sport.

Jer. I hear unusual voices—here they come.

*Re-enter MANUEL, showing in COUNT FREBERG and
his lady, with a mask in her hand.*

Freb. (running to embrace DE MON.) My dearest
Monfort! most unlook'd for pleasure!

Do I indeed embrace thee here again?
I saw thy servant standing by the gate,
His face recall'd, and learnt the joyful tidings!
Welcome, thrice welcome here!

De Mon. I thank thee, Freberg, for this friendly
visit,

And this fair lady too. [Bowing to the lady.
Lady. I fear, my lord,

We do intrude at an untimely hour:
But now, returning from a midnight mask,
My husband did insist that we should enter.

Freb. No, say not so; no hour untimely call,
Which doth together bring long absent friends.
Dear Monfort, why hast thou so sily play'd,
Coming upon us thus so suddenly?

De Mon. O! many varied thoughts do cross our
brain,

Which touch the will, but leave the memory track-
less;

And yet a strange compounded motive make,
Wherefore a man should bend his evening walk
To th' east or west, the forest or the field.
Is it not often so?

Freb. I ask no more, happy to see you here
From any motive. There is one behind,
Whose presence would have been a double bliss:
Ah! how is she? The noble Jane De Monfort.

De Mon. (confused). She is—I have—I left my
sister well.

Lady. (to FREBERG). My Freberg, you are heed-
less of respect.

You surely mean to say the Lady Jane.

Freb. Respect! No, madam; Princess, Empress,
Queen,

Could not denote a creature so exalted
As this plain appellation doth,
The noble Jane De Monfort.

Lady. (turning from him displeas'd to MON.)
You are fatigued, my lord; you want repose;
Say, should we not retire?

Freb. Ha! is it so?

My friend, your face is pale; have you been ill?

De Mon. No, Freberg, no; I think I have been
well.

Freb. (shaking his head). I fear thou hast not,
Monfort—Let it pass.

We'll re-establish thee: we'll banish pain.
I will collect some rare, some cheerful friends,
And we shall spend together glorious hours,
That gods might envy. Little time so spent
Doth far outvalue all our life beside.
This is indeed our life, our waking life,
The rest dull breathing sleep.

De Mon. Thus, it is true, from the sad years of
life

We sometimes do short hours, yea minutes strike,
Keen, blissful, bright, never to be forgotten,
Which, through the dreary gloom of time o'erpass,
Shine like fair sunny spots on a wild waste.
But few they are, as few the heaven-fir'd souls
Whose magic power creates them. Bless'd art
thou,

If, in the ample circle of thy friends,
Thou canst but boast a few.

Freb. Judge for thyself: in truth I do not boast.
There is amongst my friends, my later friends,
A most accomplish'd stranger: new to Amberg;
But just arriv'd, and will ere long depart:
I met him in Franconia two years since.

He is so full of pleasant anecdote,
So rich, so gay, so poignant is his wit,
Time vanishes before him as he speaks,
And ruddy morning through the lattice peeps
Ere night seems well begun.

De Mon. How is he call'd?

Freb. I will surprise thee with a welcome face:
I will not tell thee now.

Lady. (to MON.) I have, my lord, a small request
to make,

And must not be denied. I too may boast
Of some good friends, and beauteous country-women:
To-morrow night I open wide my doors
To all the fair and gay: beneath my roof
Music, and dance, and revelry shall reign:
I pray you come and grace it with your presence.

De Mon. You honour me too much to be denied.

Lady. I thank you, sir; and in return for this,
We shall withdraw, and leave you to repose.

Freb. Must it be so? Good night—sweet sleep to thee! (to DE MONFORT.)

De Mon. (to FREB.) Good night. (To lady.) Good night, fair lady.

Lady. Farewell!

[*Exeunt FREBERG and lady.*]

De Mon. (to JER.) I thought Count Freberg had been now in France.

Jer. He meant to go, as I have been inform'd.

De Mon. Well, well, prepare my bed; I will to rest.

[*Exit JEROME.*]

De Mon. (aside.) I know not how it is, my heart stands back,

And meets not this man's lov'd.—Friends! rarest friends!

Rather than share his undiscerning praise
With every table-wit, and book-form'd sage,
And paltry poet puling to the moon,
I'd court from him proscription, yea abuse,
And think it proud distinction. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

A small apartment in JEROME'S house: a table and breakfast set out. Enter DE MONFORT, followed by MANUEL, and sits down by the table, with a cheerful face.

De Mon. Manuel, this morning's sun shines pleasantly:

These old apartments too are light and cheerful.
Our landlord's kindness has reviv'd me much:
He serves as though he lov'd me. This pure air
Braces the listless nerves, and warms the blood:
I feel in freedom here.

[*Filling a cup of coffee, and drinking.*]

Man. Ah! sure, my lord,

No air is purer than the air at home.

De Mon. Here can I wander with assured steps,
Nor dread, at every winding of the path,
Lest an abhorred serpent cross my way,
To move—(stopping short.)

Man. What says your honour?

There are no serpents in our pleasant fields.

De Mon. Thinkst thou there are no serpents in the world,

But those who slide along the grassy sod,
And sting the luckless foot that presses them?
There are who in the path of social life
Do bask their spotted skins in Fortune's sun,
And sting the soul—Ay, till its healthful frame
Is chang'd to secret, fest'ring, sore disease,
So deadly is the wound.

Man. Heav'n guard your honour from such horrid scath!

They are but rare, I hope!

De Mon. (shaking his head.) We mark the hollow eye, the wasted frame,

The gait disturb'd of wealthy honour'd men,
But do not know the cause.

Man. 'Tis very true. God keep you well, my lord!

De Mon. I thank thee, Manuel, I am very well. I shall be gay too, by the setting sun. I go to revel it with sprightly dames,
And drive the night away.

[*Filling another cup, and drinking.*]

Man. I should be glad to see your honour gay.

De Mon. And thou too shalt be gay. There, honest Manuel,

Put these broad pieces in thy leathern purse,
And take at night a cheerful jovial glass.
Here is one too, for Bremer; he loves wine:
And one for Jaques: be joyful altogether.

Enter Servant.

Ser. My lord, I met e'en now, a short way off,
Your countryman the Marquis Rezenvelt.

De Mon. (starting from his seat, and letting the cup fall from his hand.) Whom sayst thou?

Ser. Marquis Rezenvelt, an' please you.

De Mon. Thou liest—it is not so—it is impossible!

Ser. I saw him with these eyes, plain as yourself.

De Mon. Fool! 'tis some passing stranger thou hast seen,

And with a hideous likeness been deceiv'd.

Ser. No other stranger could deceive my sight.

De Mon. (dashing his clenched hand violently upon the table, and overturning every thing.)

Heaven blast thy sight! it lights on nothing good.

Ser. I surely thought no harm to look upon him.

De Mon. What, dost thou still insist? He must it be?

Does it so please thee well? (*Servant endeavours to speak.*) Hold thy damn'd tongue!

By heaven I'll kill thee! (*Going furiously up to him.*)

Man. (in a soothing voice.) Nay, harm him not, my lord; he speaks the truth;

I've met his groom, who told me certainly

His lord is here. I should have told you so,

But thought, perhaps, it might displease your honour.

De Mon. (becoming all at once calm, and turning sternly to MANUEL.) And how dar'st thou

To think it would displease me?

What is't to me who leaves or enters Amberg?

But it displeases me, yea e'en to frenzy,

That every idle fool must hither come,

To break my leisure with the paltry tidings

Of all the cursed things he stares upon.

[*Servant attempts to speak—DE MONFORT stamps with his foot.*]

Take thine ill-favour'd visage from my sight,

And speak of it no more. [*Exit Servant.*]

And go thou too; I choose to be alone.

[*Exit MANUEL.*]

[*DE MONFORT goes to the door by which they went out; opens it, and looks.*]

But is he gone indeed? Yes, he is gone.

[*Goes to the opposite door, opens it, and looks: then gives loose to all the fury of gesture, and walks up and down in great agitation.*]

It is too much: by heaven it is too much!

He haunts me — stings me — like a devil haunts —

He'll make a raving maniac of me — Villain!

The air wherein thou drawst thy falseome breath

Is poison to me — Oceans shall divide us! (*Pauses.*)

But no; thou thinkst I fear thee, cursed reptile;

And hast a pleasure in the damned thought.

Though my heart's blood should curdle at thy sight,
I'll stay and face thee still.

[*Knocking at the chamber door.*]

Ha! who knocks there?

Freberg. (*without.*) It is thy friend, De Monfort.

De Mon. (*opening the door.*) Enter, then.

Enter *FREBERG.*

Freb. (*taking his hand kindly.*) How art thou now? How hast thou pass'd the night?

Has kindly sleep refresh'd thee?

De Mon. Yes, I have lost an hour or two in sleep,
And so should be refresh'd.

Freb. And art thou not?

Thy looks speak not of rest. Thou art disturb'd.

De Mon. No, somewhat ruffled from a foolish cause,

Which soon will pass away.

Freb. (*shaking his head.*) Ah no, De Monfort! something in thy face

Tells me another tale. Then wrong me not:

If any secret grief distract thy soul,

Here am I all devoted to thy love:

Open thy heart to me. What troubles thee?

De Mon. I have no grief: distress me not, my friend.

Freb. Nay, do not call me so. Wert thou my friend,

Wouldst thou not open all thine inmost soul,

And bid me share its every consciousness?

De Mon. *Freberg,* thou knowst not man; not nature's man,

But only him who, in smooth studied works

Of polish'd sages, shines deceitfully

In all the splendid foppery of virtue.

That man was never born whose secret soul,

With all its motley treasure of dark thoughts,

Foul fantasies, vain musings, and wild dreams,

Was ever open'd to another's scan.

Away, away! it is delusion all. [*wrong.*]

Freb. Well, be reserved then; perhaps I'm

De Mon. How goes the hour?

Freb. 'Tis early still; a long day lies before us;

Let us enjoy it. Come along with me;

I'll introduce you to my pleasant friend.

De Mon. Your pleasant friend?

Freb. Yes, him of whom I spake.

[*Taking his hand.*]

There is no good I would not share with thee;

And this man's company, to minds like thine,

Is the best banquet feast I could bestow.

But I will speak in mystery no more;

It is thy townsman, noble Rezenvelt.

[*DE MON. pulls his hand hastily from FREBERG, and shrinks back.*]

Ha! what is this?

Art thou pain-stricken, Monfort?

Nay, on my life, thou rather seemst offended:

Does it displease thee that I call him friend?

De Mon. No, all men are thy friends.

Freb. No, say not all men. But thou art offended.

I see it well. I thought to do thee pleasure.

But if his presence be not welcome here,

He shall not join our company to-day.

De Mon. What dost thou mean to say? What is't to me

Whether I meet with such a thing as Rezenvelt

To-day, to-morrow, every day, or never?

Freb. In truth, I thought you had been well with him;

He prais'd you much.

De Mon. I thank him for his praise — Come, let us move:

This chamber is confin'd and airless grown.

[*Starting.*]

I hear a stranger's voice!

Freb. 'Tis Rezenvelt.

Let him be told that we are gone abroad.

De Mon. (*proudly.*) No! let him enter. Who waits there? Ho! Manuel!

Enter *MANUEL.*

What stranger speaks below?

Man. The Marquis Rezenvelt.

I have not told him that you are within.

De Mon. (*angrily.*) And wherefore didst thou not? Let him ascend.

[*A long pause. DE MONFORT walking up and down with a quick pace.*]

Enter *REZENVELT, who runs freely up to DE MONFORT.*

Rez. (*to DE MON.*) My noble marquis, welcome!

De Mon. Sir, I thank you.

Rez. (*to FREB.*) My gentle friend, well met. Abroad so early?

Freb. It is indeed an early hour for me.

How sits thy last night's revel on thy spirits?

Rez. O, light as ever. On my way to you,

E'en now, I learnt De Montfort was arriv'd,

And turn'd my steps aside; so here I am.

[*Bowing gaily to DE MONFORT.*]

De Mon. I thank you, sir; you do me too much honour.

[*Proudly.*]

Rez. Nay, say not so; not too much honour surely, Unless, indeed, 'tis more than pleases you.

De Mon. (confused). Having no previous notice of your coming,

I look'd not for it. [next,
Rez. Ay, true indeed; when I approach you I'll send a herald to proclaim my coming, And bow to you by sound of trumpet, marquis.

De Mon. (to FREQ., turning haughtily from REZENVELT with affected indifference).

How does your cheerful friend, that good old man?
Freb. My cheerful friend? I know not whom you mean.

De Mon. Count Waterlan.

Freb. I know not one so nam'd.

De Mon. (very confused). O pardon me—it was at Basle I knew him.

Freb. You have not yet inquir'd for honest Reisdale.

I met him as I came, and mention'd you. He seem'd amaz'd; and fain he would have learnt What cause procur'd us so much happiness.

He question'd hard, and hardly would believe; I could not satisfy his strong desire. [fort here?

Rez. And know you not what brings *De Mon.*
Freb. Truly I do not.

Rez. O! 'tis love of me.

I have but two short days in Amberg been, And here with postman's speed he follows me, Finding his home so dull and tiresome grown.

Freb. (to DE MON.) Is Rezenvelt so sadly miss'd with you?

Your town so chang'd?

De Mon. Not altogether so;

Some wulings and jest-mongers still remain For fools to laugh at.

Rez. But he laughs not, and therefore he is wise. He ever frowns on them with sullen brow Contemptuous; therefore he is very wise; Nay, daily frets his most refined soul With their poor folly to its inmost core; Therefore he is most eminently wise.

Freb. Fy, Rezenvelt! you are too early gay.

Such spirits rise but with the ev'ning glass: They suit not placid morn.

[*To DE MONFORT, who, after walking impatiently up and down, comes close to his ear and lays hold of his arm.*

What would, you Monfort?

De Mon. Nothing—what is't o'clock?

No, no—I had forgot—'tis early still. [Turns away again.

Freb. (to REZ.) Waltser informs me that you have agreed

To read his verses o'er, and tell the truth. It is a dangerous task.

Rez. Yet I'll be honest:

I can but lose his favour and a feast.

[*Whilst they speak, DE MONFORT walks up and down impatiently and irresolute: at last pulls the bell violently.*

Enter Servant.

De Mon. (to ser.) What dost thou want?
Ser. I thought your honour rung.

De Mon. I have forgot—stay. Are my horses saddled?

Ser. I thought, my lord, you would not ride to-day,

After so long a journey.
De Mon. (impatiently). Well—'tis good.

Begone!—I want thee not. [*Exit servant.*

Rez. (smiling significantly). I humbly crave your pardon, gentle marquis.

It grieves me that I cannot stay with you, And make my visit of a friendly length.

I trust your goodness will excuse me now; Another time I shall be less unkind.
(*To FREQ.*) Will you not go with me?

Freb. Excuse me, Monfort, I'll return again.
[*Exeunt REZENVELT and FREQ.*

De Mon. (alone, tossing his arms distractedly).

Hell hath no greater torment for th' accurs'd Than this man's presence gives—

Abhorred fiend! he hath a pleasure too, A damned pleasure in the pain he gives!

Oh! the side glance of that detested eye! That conscious smile! that full insulting lip!

It touches every nerve: it makes me mad. What, does it please thee? Dost thou woo my hate?

Hate shalt thou have! determin'd, deadly hate, Which shall awake no smile. Malignant villain!

The venom of thy mind is rank and devilish, And thin the film that hides it.

Thy hateful visage ever spoke thy worth: I loath'd thee when a boy.

That men should be besotted with him thus! And *Freb.* likewise so bewitched is,

That like a hireling flatt'rer at his heels He meanly paces, off'ring brutish praise.

O! I could curse him too! [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A very splendid apartment in COUNT FREQBERG'S house, fancifully decorated. A wide folding-door opened, shows another magnificent room lighted up to receive company. Enter through the folding doors the Count and Countess, richly dressed.

Freb. (looking round). In truth, I like those decorations well:

They suit those lofty walls. And here, my love, The gay profusion of a woman's fancy Is well display'd. Noble simplicity

Becomes us less, on such a night as this,
Than gaudy show.

Lady. Is it not noble then? (*He shakes his head.*)

I thought it so;

And as I know you love simplicity,
I did intend it should be simple too.

Freb. Be satisfied, I pray; we want to-night
A cheerful banquet-house, and not a temple.
How runs the hour?

Lady. It is not late, but soon we shall be rous'd
With the loud entry of our frolic guests.

Enter a Page, richly dressed.

Page. Madam, there is a lady in your hall,
Who begs to be admitted to your presence.

Lady. Is it not one of our invited friends?

Page. No, far unlike to them; it is a stranger.

Lady. How looks her countenance?

Page. So queenly, so commanding, and so noble,
I shrunk at first in awe; but when she smil'd,
For so she did to see me thus abash'd,
Methought I could have compass'd sea and land
To do her bidding.

Lady. Is she young or old?

Page. Neither, if right I guess; but she is fair:
For Time hath laid his hand so gently on her,
As he too had been aw'd.

Lady. The foolish stripling!
She has bewitch'd thee. Is she large in stature?

Page. So stately and so graceful is her form,
I thought at first her stature was gigantic;
But on a near approach I found, in truth,
She scarcely does surpass the middle size.

Lady. What is her garb?

Page. I cannot well describe the fashion of it.
She is not deck'd in any gallant trim,
But seems to me clad in the usual weeds
Of high habitual state; for as she moves
Wide flows her robe in many a waving fold,
As I have seen unfurled banners play
With a soft breeze.

Lady. Thine eyes deceive thee, boy;
It is an apparition thou hast seen.

Freb. (*starting from his seat, where he has been
sitting during the conversation between the lady
and the page.*) It is an apparition he has seen,
Or it is Jane De Monfort. [*Exit, hastily.*]

Lady (*displeas'd*). No; such description surely
suits not her.

Did she inquire for me?

Page. She ask'd to see the lady of Count Freberg.

Lady. Perhaps it is not she—I fear it is—
Ha! here they come. He has but guess'd too well.

Enter FREBERG, leading in JANE DE MONFORT.

Freb. (*presenting her to lady*). Here, madam,
welcome a most worthy guest.

Lady. Madam, a thousand welcomes! Pardon
me;

I could not guess who honour'd me so far;
I should not else have waited coldly here.

Jane. I thank you for this welcome, gentle
countess.

But take those kind excuses back again;
I am a bold intruder on this hour,
And am entitled to no ceremony.

I came in quest of a dear truant friend,
But Freberg has inform'd me—

(*To FREBERG.*) And he is well, you say?

Freb. Yes, well, but joyless.

Jane. It is the usual temper of his mind;
It opens not, but with the thrilling touch
Of some strong heart-string o' the sudden press'd.

Freb. It may be so, I've known him otherwise:
He is suspicious grown.

Jane. Not so, Count Freberg; Monfort is too
noble.

Say rather, that he is a man in grief,
Wearing at times a strange and scowling eye;
And thou, less generous than becoms a friend,
Hast thought too hardly of him.

Freb. (*bowing with great respect*). So will I say;
I'll own nor word nor will, that can offend you.

Lady. De Monfort is engag'd to grace our
feast:

Ere long you'll see him here.

Jane. I thank you truly, but this homely dress
Suits not the splendour of such scenes as these.

Freb. (*pointing to her dress*). Such artless and
majestic elegance,

So exquisitely just, so nobly simple,
Will make the gorgeous blush.

Jane (*smiling*). Nay, nay, be more consistent,
courteous knight,

And do not praise a plain and simple guise
With such profusion of unsimple words.

I cannot join your company to-night.

Lady. Not stay to see your brother?

Jane. Therefore it is I would not, gentle hostess.

Here will he find all that can woo the heart
To joy and sweet forgetfulness of pain;
The sight of me would wake his feeling mind
To other thoughts. I am no doating mistress;
No fond distracted wife, who must forthwith
Rush to his arms and weep. I am his sister:
The eldest daughter of his father's house;
Calm and unweari'd is my love for him;
And having found him, patiently I'll wait,
Nor greet him in the hour of social joy,
To dash his mirth with tears.—

The night wears on; permit me to withdraw.

Freb. Nay, do not, do not injure us so far!
Disguise thyself, and join our friendly train.

Jane. You wear not masks to-night. [*ceal'd*]

Lady. We wear not masks, but you may be con-
Behind the double foldings of a veil.

Jane (after pausing to consider). In truth, I feel a little so inclin'd.

Methinks unknown, I e'en might speak to him,
And gently prove the temper of his mind ;
But for the means I must become your debtor.

[*To lady.*]

Lady. Who waits ? (*Enter her woman*). Attend this lady to my wardrobe,
And do what she commands you.

[*Exeunt JANE and waiting-woman.*]

Freb. (looking after JANE, as she goes out, with admiration). Oh ! what a soul she bears !
See how she steps !

Nought but the native dignity of worth
E'er taught the moving form such noble grace.

Lady. Such lofty mien, and high assumed gait,
I've seen ere now, and men have call'd it pride.

Freb. No, 'faith ! thou never didst, but oft indeed

The paltry imitation thou hast seen.

(*Looking at her.*) How hang those trappings on thy motley gown ?

They seem like garlands on a May-day queen,
Which indeed have dress'd in sport.

[*Lady turns away displeas'd.*]

Freb. Nay, do not frown ; I spoke it but in haste ;
For thou art lovely still in every garb.
But see, the guests assemble.

Enter groups of well-dressed people, who pay their compliments to FREBERG and his lady ; and, followed by her, pass into the inner apartment, where more company appear assembling, as if by ano. her entry.

Freb. (who remains on the front of the stage with a friend or two). How loud the hum of this gay-meeting crowd !

'Tis like a bee-swarm in the noonday sun.

Music will quell the sound. Who waits without ?
Music strike up.

[*Music, and when it ceases, enter from the inner apartment REZENVELT, with several gentlemen, all richly dressed.*]

Freb. (to those just entered). What, lively gallants,
quit the field so soon ?

Are there no beauties in that moving crowd
To fix your fancy ?

Rez. Ay, marry are there ! men of ev'ry fancy
May in that moving crowd some fair one find
To suit their taste, though whimsical and strange,
As ever fancy own'd.

Beauty of every cast and shade is there,
From the perfection of a faultless form,
Down to the common, brown, unnoted maid,
Who looks but pretty in her Sunday gown.

1st gent. There is, indeed, a gay variety.

Rez. And if the liberality of nature
Suffices not, there's store of grafted charms,
Blending in one the sweets of many plants,

So obstinately, strangely opposite,
As would have well defied all other art
But female cultivation. Aged youth,
With borrowed locks, in rosy chaplets bound,
Clothes her dim eye, parch'd lips, and skinny cheek
In most unlovely softness :

And youthful age, with fat round trackless face,
The downcast look of contemplation deep
Most pensively assumes.

Is it not even so ? The native prude,
With forced laugh, and merriment uncouth,
Fixes off the wild coquette's successful charms
With most unskilful pains ; and the coquette,
In temporary crust of cold reserve,
Fixes her studied looks upon the ground,
Forbiddingly demure.

Freb. Fy ! thou art too severe.

Rez. Say, rather, gentle. I 'faith ! the very dwarfs attempt to charm
With lofty airs of puny majesty ;
While potent damsels, of a portly make,
Totter like nurslings, and demand the aid
Of gentle sympathy.

From all those diverse modes of dire assault,
He owns a heart of hardest adamant,
Who shall escape to-night.

Freb. (to DE MON., who has entered during REZENVELT's speech, and heard the greatest part of it). Ha, ha, ha, ha !

How pleasantly he gives his wit the rein,
Yet guides its wild career ! [*DE MON. is silent.*]

Rez. (smiling archly). What, think you, Freberg,
the same powerful spell

Of transformation reigns o'er all to-night ?

Or that De Monfort is a woman turn'd, —

So wicdly from his native self to swerve,
As grace my folly with a smile of his ?

De Mon. Nay, think not, Rezenvelt, there is no smile

I can bestow on thee. There is a smile,
A smile of nature too, which I can spare,
And yet, perhaps, thou wilt not thank me for it.

[*Smiles contemptuously.*]

Rez. Not thank thee ! It were surely most ungrateful

No thanks to pay for nobly giving me
What, well we see, has cost thee so much pain.
For nature hath her smiles of birth more painful
Than bit't' rest execrations.

Freb. These idle words will lead us to disquiet :
Forbear, forbear, my friends ! Go, Rezenvelt,
Accept the challenge of those lovely dames,
Who through the portal come with bolder steps
To claim your notice.

Enter a group of ladies from the other apartment, who walk slowly across the bottom of the stage, and return to it again. Rez. shrugs up his shoulders, as if unwilling to go.

1st gent. (to REZ.) Behold in sable veil a lady comes,
Whose noble air doth challenge fancy's skill
To suit it with a countenance as goodly.

[*Pointing to JANE DE MON., who now enters in a thick black veil.*

REZ. Yes, this way lies attraction. (To FRED.)

With permission— [Going up to JANE.]

Fair lady, though within that envious shroud
Your beauty deigns not to enlighten us,
We bid you welcome, and our beauties here
Will welcome you the more for such concealment.

With the permission of our noble host—

[*Taking her hand, and leading her to the front of the stage.*

JANE. (to FRED.) Pardon me this presumption,
courteous sir :

I thus appear (*pointing to her veil*), not careless of respect

Unto the generous lady of the feast.
Beneath this veil no beauty shrouded is,
That, now, or pain, or pleasure can bestow.
Within the friendly cover of its shade
I only wish, unknown, again to see
One who, alas ! is heedless of my pain.

DE MON. Yes, it is ever thus. Undo that veil,
And give thy count'nance to the cheerful light.
Men now all soft and female beauty scorn,
And mock the gentle cares which aim to please.
It is most damnable ! undo thy veil,
And think of him no more.

JANE. I know it well : e'en to a proverb grown,
Is lovers' faith, and I had borne such slight :
But he, who has, alas ! forsaken me,
Was the companion of my early days,
My cradle's mate, mine infant play-fellow.
Within our op'ning minds, with ripper years,
The love of praise and gen'rous virtue sprung :
Through varied life our pride, our joys were one ;
At the same tale we wept : he is my brother.

DE MON. And he forsook thee ?—No, I dare
not curse him :

My heart upbraids me with a crime like his.

JANE. Ah ! do not thus distress a feeling heart.

All sisters are not to the soul entwined
With equal bands ; thine has not watch'd for thee,

Wept for thee, cheer'd thee, shar'd thy weal and woe,

As I have done for him.

DE MON. (*eagerly*). Ah ! has she not ?

By heav'n the sum of all thy kindly deeds
Were but as chaff pois'd against massy gold,
Compar'd to that which I do owe her love.
Oh, pardon me ! I mean not to offend—
I am too warm—but she of whom I speak
Is the dear sister of my earliest love ;
In noble, virtuous worth to none a second :

And though behind those sable folds were hid
As fair a face as ever woman own'd,
Still would I say she is as fair as thou.
How oft amidst the beauty-blazing throng,
I've proudly to th' inquiring stranger told
Her name and lineage ! yet within her house,
The virgin mother of an orphan race
Her dying parents left, this noble woman
Did, like a Roman matron, proudly sit,
Despising all the blandishments of love ;
While many a youth his hopeless love conceal'd,
Or, humbly distant, woo'd her like a queen.
Forgive, I pray you ! O forgive this boasting !
In faith ! I mean you no discourtesy.

JANE (*off her guard, in a soft natural tone of voice*). Oh, no ! nor do me any.

DE MON. What voice speaks now ? Withdraw,
withdraw this shade !

For if thy face bear semblance to thy voice,
I'll fall and worship thee. Pray ! pray undo !

[*Puts forth his hand eagerly to snatch away the veil, whilst she shrinks back, and REZENVELT steps between to prevent him.*

REZ. Stand off : no hand shall lift this sacred veil.

DE MON. What, dost thou think De Monfort
fall'n so low,

That there may live a man beneath heav'n's roof,
Who dares to say, he shall not ?

REZ. He lives who dares to say—

JANE (*throwing back her veil, much alarmed, and rushing between them*). Forbear, forbear !

[REZENVELT, very much struck, steps back respectfully, and makes her a low bow. DE MONFORT stands for a while motionless, gazing upon her, till she, looking expressively to him, extends her arms, and he, rushing into them, bursts into tears. FREDERICK seems very much pleased. The company then advancing from the inner apartment, gather about them, and the scene closes.]

SCENE II.

DE MONFORT'S apartments. Enter DE MONFORT, with a disordered air, and his hand pressed upon his forehead, followed by JANE.

DE MON. No more, my sister, urge me not again :

My secret troubles cannot be reveal'd.
From all participation of its thoughts
My heart recoils : I pray thee be contented.

JANE. What, must I, like a distant humble friend,
Observe thy restless eye, and gait disturb'd,
In timid silence, whilst with yearning heart
I turn aside to weep ? O no ! De Monfort !
A nobler task thy nobler mind will give ;
Thy true entrusted friend I still shall be.

De Mon. Ah, Jane, forbear! I cannot e'en to thee.

Jane. Then, fy upon it! fy upon it, Monfort! There was a time when e'en with murder stain'd, Had it been possible that such dire deed Could e'er have been the crime of one so piteous, Thou wouldst have told it me. [more.]

De Mon. So would I now—but ask of this no All other trouble but the one I feel I had disclos'd to thee. I pray thee spare me. It is the secret weakness of my nature.

Jane. Then secret let it be; I urge no farther. The eldest of our valiant father's hopes, So sadly orphan'd, side by side we stood, Like two young trees, whose boughs in early strength

Screen the weak saplings of the rising grove, And brave the storm together— I have so long, as if by nature's right, Thy bosom's inmate and adviser been, I thought through life I should have so remain'd, Nor ever known a change. Forgive me, Monfort, A humbler station will I take by thee: The close attendant of thy wand'ring steps; The cheerer of this home, with strangers sought; The soother of those griefs I must not know: This is mine office now: I ask no more.

De Mon. Oh, Jane! thou dost constrain me with thy love!

Would I could tell it thee!

Jane. Thou shalt not tell me. Nay I'll stop mine ears,

Nor from the yearnings of affection wring What shrinks from utterance. Let it pass, my brother.

I'll stay by thee; I'll cheer thee, comfort thee: Pursue with thee the study of some art, Or nobler science, that compels the mind To steady thought progressive, driving forth All floating, wild, unhappy fantasies; Till thou, with brow unclouded, smil'st again; Like one who, from dark visions of the night, When th' active soul within its lifeless cell Holds it own world, with dreadful fancy press'd Of some dire, terrible, or murd'rous deed, Wakes to the dawning morn, and blesses heaven.

De Mon. It will not pass away; 'twill haunt me still.

Jane. Ah! say not so, for I will haunt thee too; And be to it so close an adversary, That, though I wrestle darkling with the fiend, I shall overcome it.

De Mon. Thou most gen'rous woman! Why do I treat thee thus? It should not be— And yet I cannot—O that curs'd villain! He will not let me be the man I would.

Jane. What sayst thou, brother? Oh! what words are these?

They have awak'd my soul to dreadful thoughts.

I do beseech thee, speak!

[*He shakes his head, and turns from her; she following him.*]

By the affection thou didst ever bear me; By the dear mem'ry of our infant days; By kindred living ties, ay, and by those Who sleep i' the tomb, and cannot call to thee, I do conjure thee, speak!

[*He waves her off with his hand and covers his face with the other, still turning from her.*]

Ah! wilt thou not?

(Assuming dignity.) Then, if affection, most unwearied love,

Tried early, long, and never wanting found, O'er gen'rous man hath more authority, More rightful power than crown or sceptre give, I do command thee.

[*He throws himself into a chair, greatly agitated.*]

De Monfort, do not thus resist my love.

Here I entreat thee on my bended knees.

[*Kneeling.*]

Alas! my brother!

[*DE MONFORT starts up, and catching her in his arms, raises her up, then placing her in the chair, kneels at her feet.*]

De Mon. Thus let him kneel who should the abased be,

And at thine honour'd feet confession make! I'll tell thee all—but, oh! thou wilt despise me. For in my breast a raging passion burns, To which thy soul no sympathy will own— A passion which hath made my nightly couch A place of torment; and the light of day, With the gay intercourse of social man, Feel like th' oppressive airless pestilence. O Jane! thou wilt despise me.

Jane. Say not so: I never can despise thee, gentle brother. A lover's jealousy and hopeless pangs No kindly heart contemns.

De Mon. A lover, sayst thou? No, it is hate! black, lasting, deadly hate! Which thus hath driven me forth from kindred peace, From social pleasure, from my native home, To be a sullen wand'rer on the earth, Avoiding all men, cursing and accurs'd.

Jane. De Monfort, this is fiend-like, frightful, terrible!

What being, by th' Almighty Father form'd, Of flesh and blood, created even as thou, Could in thy breast such horrid tempest wake, Who art thyself his fellow? Unkint thy brows, and spread those wrath-clench'd hands,

Some sprite accurs'd within thy bosom mates To work thy ruin. Strive with it, my brother! Strive bravely with it; drive it from thy breast;

'Tis the degrader of a noble heart :
Curse it, and bid it part.

De Mon. It will not part. (*His hand on his breast.*) I've lodg'd it here too long :

With my first carcs I felt its rankling touch ;
I loath'd him when a boy.

Jane. Whom didst thou say ?

De Mon. Oh ! that detested Rezenvelt !

E'en in our early sports, like two young whelps
Of hostile breed, instinctively reverse,

Each 'gainst the other pitch'd his ready pledge,
And frown'd defiance. As we onward pass'd

From youth to man's estate, his narrow art

And envious gibing malice, poorly veil'd

In the affected carelessness of mirth,

Still more detestable and odious grew.

There is no living being on this earth

Who can conceive the malice of his soul,

With all his gay and damned merriment,

To those, by fortune or by merit plac'd

Above his paltry self. When, low in fortune,

He look'd upon the state of prosp'rous men,

As nightly birds, rous'd from their murky holes,

Do scowl and chatter at the light of day,

I could endure it ; even as we bear

Th' impotent bite of some half-trodden worm,

I could endure it. But when honours came,

And wealth and new-got titles fed his pride ;

Whilst flat'ring knaves did trumpet forth his
praise,

And grow'ling idiots grin'd applauses on him ;

Oh ! then I could no longer suffer it !

It drove me frantic. — What ! what would I give !

What would I give to crush the bloated toad,

So rankly do I loathe him !

Jane. And would thy hatred crush the very man

Who gave to thee that life he might have ta'en ;

That life which thou so rashly didst expose

To aim at his ? Oh ! this is horrible !

De Mon. Ha ! thou hast heard it, then ? From
all the world,

But most of all from thee, I thought it hid.

Jane. I heard a secret whisper, and resolv'd

Upon the instant to return to thee.

Didst thou receive my letter ?

De Mon. I did ! I did ! 'twas that which drove
me hither.

I could not bear to meet thine eye again.

Jane. Alas ! that, tempted by a sister's tears,

I ever left thy house ! These few past months,

These absent months, have brought us all this
woe.

Had I remain'd with thee it had not been.

And yet, methinks, it should not move you thus.

You dar'd him to the field ; both bravely fought ;

He more adroit disarm'd you ; courteously

Return'd the forfeit sword, which, so return'd,

You did refuse to use against him more ;

And then, as says report, you parted friends.

De Mon. When he disarm'd this curs'd, this
worthless hand

Of its most worthless weapon, he but spar'd
From dev'lish pride, which now derives a bliss

In seeing me thus fetter'd, sham'd, subjected

With the vile favour of his poor forbearance ;

While he securely sits with gibing brow,

And basely bates me like a muzzled cur

Who cannot turn again. —

Until that day, till that accursed day,

I knew not half the torment of this hell,

Which burns within my breast. Heaven's light-
nings blast him !

Jane. O this is horrible ! Forbear, forbear !

Lest heaven's vengeance light upon thy head,

For this most impious wish.

De Mon.

Then let it light.

Torments more fell than I have felt already

It cannot send. To be annihilated,

What all men shrink from ; to be dust, be nothing,

Were bliss to me, compar'd to what I am !

Jane. Oh ! wouldst thou kill me with these dread-
ful words ?

De Mon. (*raising his hands to heaven.*) Let me
but once upon his ruin look,

Then close mine eyes for ever !

[*JANE, in great distress, staggers back, and supports herself upon the side scene. DE MON., alarmed, runs up to her with a softened voice.*

Ha ! how is this ? thou'rt ill ; thou'rt very pale.

What have I done to thee ? Alas, alas !

I meant not to distress thee. — O my sister !

Jane (*shaking her head.*) I cannot speak to thee.

De Mon. I have kill'd thee.

Turn, turn thee not away ! look on me still !

Oh ! droop not thus, my life, my pride, my sister ;

Look on me yet again.

Jane. Thou too, De Monfort,

In better days, wert wont to be my pride.

De Mon. I am a wretch, most wretched in myself,

And still more wretched in the pain I give.

O curse that villain ! that detested villain !

He has spread mis'ry o'er my fated life :

He will undo us all. [world,

Jane. I've held my warfare through a troubled

And borne with steady mind my share of ill ;

For thou wert then the helpmate of my toil.

But now the wane of life comes darkly on,

And hideous passion tears me from thy heart,

Blasting thy worth. — I cannot strive with this.

De Mon. (*affectionately.*) What shall I do ?

Jane. Call up thy noble spirit ;

Rouse all the gen'rous energy of virtue ;

And with the strength of heaven-endued man,

Repel the hideous foe. Be great ; be valiant.

O, if thou couldst ! e'en shrouded as thou art

In all the sad infirmities of nature,

What a most noble creature wouldst thou be !

De Mon. Ay, if I could ; alas ! alas ! I cannot.

Jane. Thou canst, thou mayst, thou wilt.
We shall not part till I have turn'd thy soul.

Enter MANUEL.

De Mon. Ha! some one enters. Wherefore com'st thou here?

Man. Count Freberg waits your leisure.

De Mon. (angrily). Begone, begone!—I cannot see him now. [*Exit MANUEL.*]

Jane. Come to my closet; free from all intrusion, I'll school thee there; and thou again shalt be My willing pupil, and my gen'rous friend, The noble Monfort I have lov'd so long, And must not, will not lose.

De Mon. Do as thou wilt; I will not grieve thee more. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.*

COUNTESS FREBERG'S dressing-room. *Enter the Countess dispirited and out of humour, and throws herself into a chair: enter, by the opposite side, THERESA.*

Ther. Madam, I am afraid you are unwell: What is the matter? does your head ache?

Lady (peevishly). No, 'Tis not my head: concern thyself no more With what concerns not thee.

Ther. Go you abroad to-night?

Lady. Yes, thinkst thou I'll stay and fret at home?

Ther. Then please to say what you would choose to wear:—

One of your newest robes?

Lady. I hate them all.

Ther. Surely that purple scarf became you well, With all those wreaths of richly-hanging flowers. Did I not overhear them say, last night, As from the crowded ball-room ladies pass'd, How gay and handsome, in her costly dress, The Countess Freberg look'd?

Lady. Didst thou o'erhear it?

Ther. I did, and more than this.

Lady. Well, all are not so greatly prejudic'd; All do not think me like a May-day queen, Which peasants deck in sport.

Ther. And who said this?

Lady (putting her handkerchief to her eyes). E'en my good lord, Theresa.

Ther. He said it but in jest. He loves you well.

Lady. I know as well as thou he loves me well. But what of that! he takes in me no pride:

Elsewhere his praise and admiration go,
And Jane De Monfort is not mortal woman.

Ther. The wondrous character this lady bears For worth and excellence: from early youth The friend and mother of her younger sisters, Now greatly married, as I have been told, From her most prudent care, may well excuse The admiration of so good a man As my good master is. And then, dear madam, I must confess, when I myself did hear How she was come through the rough winter's storm, To seek and comfort an unhappy brother, My heart beat kindly to her.

Lady. Ay, ay, there is a charm in this I find: But wherefore may she not have come as well Through wintry storms to seek a lover too?

Ther. No, madam, no, I could not think of this.

Lady. That would reduce her in your eyes, mayhap,

To woman's level.—Now I see my vengeance!

I'll tell it round that she is hither come, Under pretence of finding out De Monfort, To meet with Rezenvelt. When Freberg hears it, 'Twill help, I ween, to break this magic charm.

Ther. And say what is not, madam?

Lady. How canst thou know that I shall say what is not?

'Tis like enough I shall but speak the truth.

Ther. Ah, no! there is—

Lady. Well, hold thy foolish tongue. [*FREBERG'S voice is heard without. After hesitating.* I will not see him now. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter FREBERG by the opposite side, passing on hastily.*]

Ther. Pardon, my lord; I fear you are in haste. Yet must I crave that you will give to me The books my lady mention'd to you: she Has charg'd me to remind you.

Freb. I'm in haste. [*Passing on.*]

Ther. Pray you, my lord: your countess wants them much:

The Lady Jane De Monfort ask'd them of her.

Freb. (returning instantly). Are they for her? I knew not this before.

I will, then, search them out immediately.

There is nought good or precious in my keeping, That is not dearly honour'd by her use.

Ther. My lord, what would your gentle countess say,

If she o'erheard her own request neglected, Until supported by a name more potent?

Freb. Thinkst thou she is a fool, my good Theresa,

Vainly to please herself with childish thoughts

Of matching what is matchless—Jane De Monfort? Thinkst thou she is a fool, and cannot see,

* This scene has been very much altered from what it was in the former editions of this play, and scene fifth of the last act will be found to be almost entirely changed. These

alterations, though of no great importance, are, I hope, upon the whole, improvements.

That love and admiration often thrive
Though far apart ?

[*Re-enter lady with great violence.*

Lady. I am a fool, not to have seen full well,
That thy best pleasure in o'er-rating so
This lofty stranger, is to humble me,
And cast a dark'ning shadow o'er my head.
Ay, wherefore dost thou stare upon me thus ?
Art thou ashamed that I have thus surpris'd thee ?
Well mayst thou be so !

Freb. True ; thou rightly sayst.
Well may I be ashamed : not for the praise
Which I have ever openly bestow'd
On Monfort's noble sister ; but that thus,
Like a poor mean and jealous listener.
She should be found, who is Count Freberg's wife.

Lady. Oh, I am lost and ruin'd ! hated, scorn'd !
[*Pretending to faint.*

Freb. Alas, I have been too rough !

[*Taking her hand and kissing it tenderly.*
My gentle love ! my own, my only love !
See, she revives again. How art thou, love ?
Support her to her chamber, good Theresa.
I'll sit and watch by her. I've been too rough.

[*Exeunt ; lady supported by FREB. and THER.*

SCENE II.

DE MONFORT *discovered sitting by a table reading.*
After a little time he lays down his book, and continues in a thoughtful posture Enter to him JANE
DE MONFORT.

Jane. Thanks, gentle brother. —

[*Pointing to the book.*

Thy willing mind has rightly been employ'd :
Did not thy heart warm at the fair display
Of peace and concord and forgiving love ? [turn'd,

De Mon. I know resentment may to love be
Though keen and lasting, into love as strong :
And fiercest rivals in th' ensanguin'd field
Have cast their brandish'd weapons to the ground,
Joining their mailed breasts in close embrace,
With gen'rous impulse fir'd. / I know right well
The darkest, fellest wrongs have been forgiven
Seventy times o'er from blessed heav'nly love :
I've heard of things like these ; I've heard and
wept.

But what is this to me ?

Jane. All, all, my brother !

It bids thee too that noble precept learn,
To love thine enemy.

De Mon. Th' uplifted stroke that would a
wretch destroy,
Gorg'd with my richest spoil, stain'd with my blood,
I would arrest, and cry, "Hold ! hold ! have mercy."
But when the man most adverse to my nature,
Who e'en from childhood hath, with rude male-
volence,

Withheld the fair respect all paid beside,

Turning my very praise into derision,
Who galls and presses me where'er I go,
Would claim the gen'rous feelings of my heart,
Nature herself doth lift her voice aloud,
And cry, "It is impossible !"

Jane. (*shaking her head.*) Ah, Monfort, Monfort !

De Mon. I can forgive th' envenom'd reptile's
sting,
But hate his loathsome self. [heaven ?

Jane. And canst thou do no more for love of

De Mon. Alas ! I cannot now so school my mind
As holy men have taught, nor search it truly :
But this, my Jane, I'll do for love of thee ;
And more it is than crowns could win me to,
Or any power but thine. I'll see the man.
Th' indignant risings of abhorrent nature ;
The stern contraction of my scowling brows,
That like the plant whose closing leaves do shrink
At hostile touch, still knit at his approach ;
The crooked curving lip, by instinct taught,
In imitation of disgustful things,
To pout and swell, I strictly will repress ;
And meet him with a tamed countenance,
E'en as a townsman, who would live at peace,
And pay him the respect his station claims.
I'll crave his pardon too for all offence
My dark and wayward temper may have done.
Nay more, I will confess myself his debtor
For the forbearance I have curs'd so oft :
Life spar'd by him, more horrid than the grave
With all its dark corruption ! This I'll do.
Will it suffice thee ? More than this I cannot.

Jane. No more than this do I require of thee
In outward act, though in thy heart, my friend,
I hop'd a better change, and yet will hope.
I told thee Freberg had propos'd a meeting.

De Mon. I know it well.

Jane. And Rezenvelt consents.
He meets you here ; so far he shows respect.

De Mon. Well, let it be ; the sooner past the
better.

Jane. I'm glad to hear you say so, for, in truth,
He has propos'd for it an early hour.
'Tis almost near his time ; I came to tell you.

De Mon. What, comes he here so soon ? shame
on his speed !

It is not decent thus to rush upon me.
He loves the secret pleasure he will feel
To see me thus subdued.

Jane. O say not so ! he comes with heart sincere.

De Mon. Could we not meet elsewhere ? from
home — i' the fields,
Where other men — must I alone receive him ?
Where is your agent, Freberg, and his friends,
That I must meet him here ?

[*Walks up and down, very much disturbed.*
Now ! didst thou say ? — how goes the hour ? — e'en
now !

I would some other friend were first arriv'd.

Jane. See, to thy wish come Freberg and his dame.

De Mon. His lady too! why comes he not alone? Must all the world upon our meeting stare?

Enter COUNT FREBERG and his Countess.

Freb. A happy morrow to my noble marquis, And his most noble sister!

Jane. Gen'rous Freberg, Your face, methinks, forebodes a happy morn, Open and cheerful. What of Rezenvelt?

Freb. I left him at his home, prepar'd to follow: He'll soon appear. (*To DE MONFORT.*) And now, my worthy friend,

Give me your hand; this happy change delights me.

[*DE MONFORT gives him his hand coldly, and they walk to the bottom of the stage together, in earnest discourse, whilst JANE and the Countess remain in the front.*]

Lady. My dearest madam, will you pardon me?

I know Count Freberg's bus'ness with De Monfort, And had a strong desire to visit you, So much I wish the honour of your friendship; For he retains no secret from mine ear.

Jane (archly). Knowing your prudence—you are welcome, madam; So shall Count Freberg's lady ever be.

[*DE MONFORT and FREBERG returning towards the front of the stage, still engaged in discourse.*]

Freb. He is indeed a man, within whose breast Firm rectitude and honour hold their seat, Though unadorned with that dignity Which were their fittest garb. Now, on my life! I know no truer heart than Rezenvelt.

De Mon. Well, Freberg, well, there needs not all this pains

To garnish out his worth: let it suffice; I am resolv'd I will respect the man, As his fair station and repute demand. Methinks I see not at your jolly feasts The youthful knight, who sang so pleasantly.

Freb. A pleasant circumstance detains him hence; Pleasant to those who love high gen'rous deeds Above the middle pitch of common minds; And, though I have been sworn to secrecy, Yet must I tell it thee.

This knight is near akin to Rezenvelt, To whom an old relation, short while dead, A good estate bequeathed, some leagues distant. But Rezenvelt, now rich in fortune's store, Disdain'd the sordid love of further gain, And gen'rously the rich bequest resign'd To this young man, blood of the same degree To the decess'd, and low in fortune's gifts, Who is from hence to take possession of it: Was it not nobly done?

De Mon. 'Twas right and honourable. This morning is oppressive, warm, and heavy: There hangs a foggy closeness in the air; Dost thou not feel it?

Freb. O no! to think upon a gen'rous deed Expands my soul, and makes me lightly breathe.

De Mon. Who gives the feast to-night? His name escapes me.

You say I am invited.

Freb. Old Count Waterlan. In honour of your townsman's gen'rous gift, He spreads the board.

De Mon. He is too old to revel with the gay.

Freb. But not too old is he to honour virtue.

I shall partake of it with open soul; For, on my honest faith, of living men I know not one, for talents, honour, worth, That I should rank superior to Rezenvelt.

De Mon. How virtuous he hath been in three short days!

Freb. Nay, longer, marquis; but my friendship rests

Upon the good report of other men, And that has told me much.

[*DE MONFORT aside, going some steps hastily from FREBERG, and rending his cloak with agitation as he goes.*]

Would he were come! by heav'n I would he were! This fool besets me so.

[*Suddenly correcting himself, and joining the ladies, who have retired to the bottom of the stage, he speaks to COUNTESS FREBERG with affected cheerfulness.*]

The sprightly dames of Amberg rise by times, Untarnish'd with the vigils of the night.

Lady. Praise us not rashly, 'tis not always so.

De Mon. He does not rashly praise who praises you;

For he were dull indeed—

[*Stopping short, as if he heard something.*]
Lady. How dull indeed?

De Mon. I should have said—It has escap'd me now—

[*Listening again, as if he heard something.*]

Jane (to DE MON.) What, hear you aught?

De Mon. (hastily). 'Tis nothing.

Lady (to DE MON.) Nay, do not let me lose it so, my lord.

Some fair one has bewitch'd your memory, And robs me of the half-form'd compliment.

Jane. Half-utter'd praise is to the curious mind As to the eye half-veiled beauty is, More precious than the whole. Pray pardon him. Some one approaches. [*Listening.*]

Freb. No, no, it is a servant who ascends; He will not come so soon.

De Mon. (off his guard). 'Tis Rezenvelt: I heard his well-known foot, From the first staircase, mounting step by step.

Freb. How quick an ear thou hast for distant sound!

I heard him not.

[*DE MONFORT looks embarrassed, and is silent.*

Enter REZENVELT.

[*DE MONFORT, recovering himself, goes up to receive REZENVELT, who meets him with a cheerful countenance.*

De Mon. (to REZ.) I am, my lord, beholden to you greatly.

This ready visit makes me much your debtor.

Rez. Then may such debts between us, noble marquis,

Be oft incurr'd, and often paid again!

(*To JANE.*) Madam, I am devoted to your service, And ev'ry wish of yours commands my will.

(*To Countess.*) Lady, good morning. (*To FREQ.*)

Well, my gentle friend,

You see I have not linger'd long behind.

Freb. No, thou art sooner than I look'd for thee.

Rez. A willing heart adds feather to the heel, And makes the clown a winged Mercury.

De Mon. Then let me say, that, with a grateful mind,

I do receive these tokens of good will; And must regret, that, in my wayward moods, I have too oft forgot the due regard Your rank and talents claim.

Rez. No, no, De Monfort,

You have but rightly curb'd a wanton spirit, Which makes me too neglectful of respect.

Let us be friends, and think of this no more.

Freb. Ay, let it rest with the departed shades Of things which are no more; whilst lovely concord, Follow'd by friendship sweet, and firm esteem, Your future days enrich. O heavenly friendship! Thou dost exalt the sluggish souls of men, By thee conjoin'd, to great and glorious deeds; As two dark clouds, when mix'd in middle air, With vivid lightnings flash, and roar sublime. Talk not of what is past, but future love.

De Mon. (with dignity.) No, Freberg, no, it must not. (*To REZENVELT.*) No, my lord,

I will not offer you an hand of concord, And poorly hide the motives which constrain me.

I would that, not alone, these present friends,

But ev'ry soul in Amberg were assembled,

That I, before them all, might here declare

I owe my spared life to your forbearance.

(*Holding out his hand.*) Take this from one who boasts no feeling warmth,

But never will deceive.

[*JANE smiles upon DE MONFORT with great approbation, and REZENVELT runs up to him with open arms.*

Rez. Away with hands! I'll have thee to my breast.

Thou art, upon my faith, a noble spirit!

De Mon. (shrinking back from him.) Nay, if you please, I am not so prepar'd—

My nature is of temperature too cold—

I pray you pardon me (*JANE's countenance changes*).

But take this hand, the token of respect;

The token of a will inclin'd to concord;

The token of a mind, that bears within

A sense impressive of the debt it owes you:

And curs'd be its power, unnerv'd its strength,

If e'er again it shall be lifted up

To do you any harm!

Rez. Well, be it so, De Monfort, I'm contented; I'll take thy hand, since I can have no more.

(*Carelessly.*) I take of worthy men what'er they give.

Their heart I gladly take, if not their hand;

If that too is withheld, a courteous word,

Or the civility of placid looks:

And, if e'en these are too great favours deem'd,

'Faith, I can set me down contentedly

With plain and homely greeting, or "God save ye!"

De Mon. (aside, starting away from him some paces.)

By the good light, he makes a jest of it!

[*JANE seems greatly distressed, and FREBERG endeavours to cheer her.*

Freb. (to JANE.) Cheer up, my noble friend; all will go well;

For friendship is no plant of hasty growth,

Though rooted in esteem's deep soil, the slow

And gradual culture of kind intercourse

Must bring it to perfection.

(*To the Countess.*) My love, the morning, now, is far advanc'd;

Our friends elsewhere expect us; take your leave.

Lady (to JANE.) Farewell, dear madam, till the evening hour.

Freb. (to DE MON.) Good day, De Monfort. (*To JANE.*) Most devoutly yours.

Rez. (to FREQ.) Go not too fast, for I will follow you. [*Exeunt FREBERG and his lady.*

(*To JANE.*) The Lady Jane is yet a stranger here: She might, perhaps, in this your ancient city Find somewhat worth her notice.

Jane. I thank you, marquis, I am much engag'd; I go not out to-day.

Rez. Then fare ye well! I see I cannot now

Be the proud man who shall escort you forth,

And show to all the world my proudest boast,

The notice and respect of Jane de Monfort.

De Mon. (aside impatiently.) He says farewell, and goes not!

Jane (to REZ.) You do me honour.

Rez. Madam, adieu! (*To JANE.*) Good morning, noble marquis.

[*JANE and DE MONFORT look expressively to one another, without speaking, and then exeunt severally.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A hall or antechamber, with the folding doors of an inner apartment open, which discovers the guests rising from a banquet. They enter and pass over the stage, and exeunt; and after them enter REZENVELT and FREBERG.

Freb. Alas, my Rezenvelt!

I vainly hop'd the hand of gentle peace,
From this day's reconciliation sprung,
These rude unseemly jarrings had subdu'd;
But I have mark'd, e'en at the social board,
Such looks, such words, such tones, such untold things,

Too plainly told, 'twixt you and Monfort pass,
That I must now despair.

Yet who could think, two minds so much refin'd,
So near in excellence, should be remov'd,
So far remov'd, in gen'rous sympathy?

Rez. Ay, far remov'd indeed!

Freb. And yet, methought, he made a noble effort,

And with a manly plainness bravely told
The galling debt he owes to your forbearance.

Rez. 'Faith! so he did, and so did I receive it;
When, with spread arms, and heart e'en mov'd to tears,

I frankly proffer'd him a friend's embrace:
And, I declare, had he as such receiv'd it,
I from that very moment had forborne
All opposition, pride-provoking jest,
Contemning carelessness, and all offence;
And had caress'd him as a worthy heart,

From native weakness such indulgence claiming.
But since he proudly thinks that cold respect,
The formal tokens of his lordly favour,
So precious are, that I would sue for them
As fair distinction in the public eye,
Forgetting former wrongs, I spurn it all.
And but that I do bear that noble woman,
His worthy, his incomparable sister,
Such fix'd, profound regard, I would expose him;
And, as a mighty bull, in senseless rage,
Rous'd at the baiter's will, with wretched rags
Of ire-provoking scarlet, chafes and bellows,
I'd make him at small cost of paltry wit,
With all his deep and manly faculties,
The scorn and laugh of fools.

Freb. For heaven's sake, my friend, restrain your wrath!

For what has Monfort done of wrong to you,
Or you to him, bating one foolish quarrel,
Which you confess from slight occasion rose,
That in your breasts such dark resentment dwells,
So fix'd, so hopeless?

Rez. O! from our youth he has distinguish'd me
With ev'ry mark of hatred and disgust.

For e'en in boyish sports I still oppos'd
His proud pretensions to pre-eminence;
Nor would I to his ripen'd greatness give
That fulsome adulation of applause
A senseless crowd bestow'd. Though poor in
fortune,

I still would smile at vain assuming wealth:
But when unlook'd-for fate on me bestow'd
Riches and splendour equal to his own,
Though I, in truth, despise such poor distinction,
Feeling inclin'd to be at peace with him,
And with all men beside, I curb'd my spirit,
And sought to soothe him. Then, with spiteful rage,
From small offence he rear'd a quarrel with me,
And dar'd me to the field. The rest you know.
In short, I still have been th' opposing rock,
O'er which the stream of his o'erflowing pride
Hath foam'd and fretted. Seest thou how it is?

Freb. Too well I see, and warn thee to beware.
Such streams have oft, by swelling floods surcharg'd,
Borne down, with sudden and impetuous force,
The yet unshaken stone of opposition,
Which had for ages stopp'd their flowing course.
I pray thee, friend, beware.

Rez. Thou canst not mean—he will not murder me?

Freb. What a proud heart, with such dark
passion toss'd,

May, in the anguish of its thoughts, conceive,
I will not dare to say.

Rez. Ha, ha! thou knowst him not.
Full often have I mark'd it in his youth,
And could have almost lov'd him for the weakness:
He's form'd with such antipathy, by nature,
To all infliction of corporeal pain,
To wounding life, e'en to the sight of blood,
He cannot if he would.

Freb. Then fie upon thee!
It is not gen'rous to provoke him thus.
But let us part: we'll talk of this again.
Something approaches.—We are here too long.

Rez. Well, then, to-morrow I'll attend your call.
Here lies my way. Good night. [*Exit.*]

Enter CONRAD.

Con. Forgive, I pray, my lord, a stranger's
boldness.

I have presum'd to wait your leisure here,
Though at so late an hour.

Freb. But who art thou?

Con. My name is Conrad, sir,
A humble suitor to your honour's goodness,
Who is the more embolden'd to presume,
In that De Monfort's brave and noble marquis
Is so much fam'd for good and gen'rous deeds.

Freb. You are mistaken, I am not the man.

Con. Then, pardon me: I thought I could not err;
That mien so dignified, that piercing eye
Assur'd me it was he.

Freb. My name is not De Monfort, courteous stranger ;

But, if you have a favour to request, I may, with him, perhaps, befriend your suit.

Con. I thank your honour, but I have a friend Who will commend me to De Monfort's favour : The Marquis Rezenvelt has known me long, Who, says report, will soon become his brother.

Freb. If thou wouldst seek thy ruin from De Monfort,

The name of Rezenvelt employ, and prosper ; But, if aught good, use any name but his.

Con. How may this be ?

Freb. I cannot now explain.

Early to-morrow call upon Count Freberg ; So am I call'd, each burgher knows my house, And there instruct me how to do your service. Good night. [*Exit.*

Con. (alone). Well, this mistake may be of service to me :

And yet my bus'ness I will not unfold To this mild, ready, promise-making courtier ; I've been by such too oft deceiv'd already. But if such violent enmity exist Between De Monfort and this Rezenvelt, He'll prove my advocate by opposition. For if De Monfort would reject my suit, Being the man whom Rezenvelt esteems, Being the man he hates, a cord as strong, Will he not favour me ? I'll think of this. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A lower apartment in JEROME's house, with a wide folding glass door, looking into a garden, where the trees and shrubs are brown and leafless. Enter DE MONFORT with a thoughtful frowning aspect, and paces slowly across the stage, JEROME following behind him, with a timid step. DE MONFORT hearing him, turns suddenly about.

De Mon. (angrily). Who follows me to this sequester'd room ?

Jer. I have presun'd, my lord. 'Tis somewhat late :

I am inform'd you eat at home to-night ; Here is a list of all the dainty fare My busy search has found ; please to peruse it.

De Mon. Leave me : begone ! Put hemlock in thy soup,

Or deadly night-shade, or rank hellebore, And I will mess upon it.

Jer. Heaven forbid !

Your honour's life is all too precious, sure.

De Mon. (sternly). Did I not say begone ?

Jer. Pardon, my lord, I'm old, and oft forget.

De Mon. (looking after him, as if his heart smote him). Why will they thus mistime their foolish zeal, [*Exit.*

That I must be so stern ?

O, that I were upon some desert coast ! Where howling tempests and the lashing tide Would stun me into deep and senseless quiet ; As the storm-beaten traveller droops his head, In heavy, dull, lethargic weariness, And, 'mid the roar of jarring elements, Sleeps to awake no more. What am I grown ? all things are hateful to me.

Enter MANUEL.

(*Stamping with his foot.*) Who bids thee break upon my privacy ?

Man. Nay, good my lord ! I heard you speak aloud,

And dreamt not surely that you were alone.

De Mon. What, dost thou watch, and pin thine ears to holes,

To catch those exclamations of the soul, Which heaven alone should hear ? Who hir'd thee, pray ?

Who basely hir'd thee for a task like this ?

Man. My lord, I cannot hold. For fifteen years, Long-troubled years, I have your servant been, Nor hath the proudest lord in all the realm, With firmer, with more honourable faith His sov'reign serv'd, than I have served you ; But if my honesty be doubted now, Let him who is more faithful take my place, And serve you better. [*thee!*

De Mon. Well, be it as thou wilt. Away with Thy loud-mouth'd boasting is no rule for me To judge thy merit by.

Enter JEROME hastily, and pulls MANUEL away.

Jer. Come, Manuel, come away ; thou art not wise.

The stranger must depart and come again, For now his honour will not be disturb'd.

[*Exit MANUEL sulkily.*

De Mon. A stranger, saidst thou ?

[*Drops his handkerchief.*

Jer. I did, good sir, but he shall go away ; You shall not be disturb'd.

[*Stooping to lift the handkerchief.*

De Mon. (preventing him). Nay, do not stoop, my friend, I pray thee not !

Thou art too old to stoop.

I'm much indebted to thee. — Take this ring — I love thee better than I seem to do.

I pray thee do it—thank me not.—What stranger ?

Jer. A man who does most earnestly intreat

To see your honour ; but I know him not.

De Mon. Then let him enter. [*Exit JEROME.*

A pause. Enter CONRAD.

De Mon. You are the stranger who would speak with me ?

Con. I am so far unfortunate, my lord.
That, though my fortune on your favour hangs,
I am to you a stranger.

De Mon. How may this be? what can I do for you? [ask,

Con. Since thus your lordship does so frankly
The tiresome preface of apology
I will forbear, and tell my tale at once.
In plodding drudgery I've spent my youth,
A careful penman in another's office;
And now, my master and employer dead,
They seek to set a stripling o'er my head,
And leave me on to drudge, e'en to old age,
Because I have no friend to take my part.
It is an office in your native town,
For I am come from thence, and I am told
You can procure it for me. Thus, my lord,
From the repute of goodness which you bear,
I have presum'd to beg. [report.

De Mon. They have befool'd thee with a false

Con. Alas! I see it is in vain to plead,
Your mind is prepossess'd against a wretch,
Who has, unfortunately for his weal,
Offended the revengeful Rezenvelt.

De Mon. What dost thou say?

Con. What I, perhaps, had better leave unsaid.
Who will believe my wrongs if I complain?
I am a stranger, Rezenvelt my foe,
Who will believe my wrongs?

De Mon. (eagerly catching him by the coat).

I will believe them!

Though they were base as basest, vilest deeds,
In ancient record told, I would believe them!
Let not the smallest atom of unworthiness
That he has put upon thee be conceal'd.
Speak boldly, tell it all; for, by the light!
I'll be thy friend, I'll be thy warmest friend,
If he has done thee wrong.

Con. Nay, pardon me, it were not well advis'd,
If I should speak so freely of the man
Who will so soon your nearest kinsman be.

De Mon. What canst thou mean by this?

Con. That Marquis Rezenvelt
Has pledg'd his faith unto your noble sister,
And soon will be the husband of her choice.
So I am told, and so the world believes.

De Mon. 'Tis false! 'tis basely false!

What wretch could drop from his envenom'd tongue
A tale so damn'd?—It chokes my breath—
(Stamping with his foot.) What wretch did tell it
thee?

Con. Nay, every one with whom I have convers'd
Has held the same discourse. I judge it not.
But you, my lord, who with the lady dwell.
You best can tell what her deportment speaks;
Whether her conduct and unguarded words
Belie such rumour.

[DE MONFORT pauses, staggers backwards, and
sinks into a chair; then starting up hastily.

De Mon. Where am I now? 'midst all the
cursed thoughts,

That on my soul like stinging scorpions prey'd,
This never came before—Oh, if it be!
The thought will drive me mad.—Was it for this
She urg'd her warm request on bended knee?
Alas! I wept, and thought of sister's love,
No damned love like this.

Fell devil! 'tis hell itself has lent thee aid
To work such sorcery! (Pauses.) I'll not believe it.
I must have proof clear as the noon-day sun
For such foul charge as this! Who waits without?

[Paces up and down, furiously agitated.

Con. (aside). What have I done? I've carried
this too far.
I've rous'd a fierce ungovernable madman.

Enter JEROME.

De Mon. (in a loud angry voice). Where did she
go, at such an early hour,
And with such slight attendance?

Jer. Of whom inquires your honour? [sister?

De Mon. Why, of your lady. Said I not my

Jer. The Lady Jane, your sister? [her so.

De Mon. (in a faltering voice). Yes, I did call

Jer. In truth, I cannot tell you where she went.
E'en now, from the short beechen walk hard-by,
I saw her through the garden-gate return.
The Marquis Rezenvelt, and Freberg's countess,
Are in her company. This way they come,
As being nearer to the back apartments;
But I shall stop them, if it be your will,
And bid them enter here.

De Mon. No, stop them not. I will remain unseen,
And mark them as they pass. Draw back a little.

[CONRAD seems alarmed, and steals off unnoticed.

DE MONFORT grasps JEROME tightly by the
hand, and drawing back with him two or three
steps, not to be seen from the garden, waits in
silence, with his eyes fixed on the glass door.

De Mon. I hear their footsteps on the grating
sand:

How like the croaking of a carrion bird,
That hateful voice sounds to the distant ear!
And now she speaks—her voice sounds cheerly
too—

Curs'd be their mirth!—
Now, now, they come; keep closer still! keep steady!

[Taking hold of JEROME with both hands.

Jer. My lord, you tremble much.

De Mon. What, do I shake?
Jer. You do, in truth, and your teeth chatter
too.

De Mon. See! see they come! he strutting by
her side.

[JANE, REZENVELT, and COUNTESS FREBERG
appear through the glass door, pursuing their
way up a short walk leading to the other wing
of the house.

See, his audacious face he turns to hers ;
 Uttering with confidence some nauseous jest.
 And she endures it too — Oh ! this looks vilely !
 Ha ! mark that courteous motion of his arm ! —
 What does he mean ? — he dares not take her
 hand !

(*Pauses and looks eagerly.*) By heaven and hell he
 does !

[*Letting go his hold of JEROME, he throws out
 his hands vehemently, and thereby pushes him
 against the scene.*

Jer. Oh ! I am stunn'd ! my head is crack'd in
 twain :

Your honour does forget how old I am.

De Mon. Well, well, the wall is harder than I
 wist.

Begone, and wine within.

[*Exit JEROME, with a sad rueful countenance.*

[*DE MONFORT comes forward to the front of the
 stage, and makes a long pause expressive of
 great agony of mind.*

It must be so : each passing circumstance ;
 Her hasty journey here ; her keen distress
 Whene'er my soul's abhorrence I express'd ;
 Ay, and that damned reconciliation,
 With tears extorted from me : Oh, too well !
 All, all too well bespeak the shameful tale.

I should have thought of heaven and hell conjoin'd,
 The morning star mix'd with infernal fire,
 Ere I had thought of this —

Hell's blackest magic, in the midnight hour,

With horrid spells and incantation dire,

Such combination opposite unseemly,

Of fair and loathsome, excellent and base,

Did ne'er produce — But every thing is possible,

So as it may my misery enhance !

Oh ! I did love her with such pride of soul !

When other men, in gay pursuit of love,

Each beauty follow'd, by her side I stay'd ;

Far prouder of a brother's station there,

Than all the favours favour'd lovers boast.

We quarrell'd once, and when I could no more

The alter'd coldness of her eye endure,

I slipp'd o'tip-toe to her chamber-door ;

And when she ask'd who gently knock'd — Oh ! oh !

Who could have thought of this ?

[*Throws himself into a chair, covers his face
 with his hand, and bursts into tears. After
 some time, he starts up from his seat furiously.*

Hell's direst torment seize the infernal villain !

Detested of my soul ! I will have vengeance !

I'll crush thy swelling pride — I'll still thy vaunt-
 ing —

I'll do a deed of blood ! — Why shrink I thus ?

If by some spell or magic sympathy,

Piercing the lifeless figure on that wall

Could pierce his bosom too, would I not cast it ?

[*Throwing a dagger against the wall.*

Shall groans and blood affright me ? No, I'll do it.
 Though gasping life beneath my pressure heav'd,
 And my soul shudder'd at the horrid brink,
 I would not flinch. — Fie, this recoiling nature !
 O that his sever'd limbs were strew'd in air,
 So as I saw it not !

*Enter REZENVELT behind from the glass door. DE
 MONFORT turns round, and on seeing him, starts
 back, then drawing his sword, rushes furiously upon
 him.*

Detested robber ! now all forms are over ;

Now open villainy, now open hate !

Defend thy life !

Rez. De Monfort, thou art mad.

De Mon. Speak not, but draw. Now for thy
 hated life !

[*They fight: REZENVELT parries his thrusts with
 great skill, and at last disarms him.*

Then take my life, black fiend, for hell assists thee.

Rez. No, Monfort, but I'll take away your sword,
 Not as a mark of disrespect to you,

But for your safety. By to-morrow's eve

I'll call on you myself and give it back ;

And then, if I am charg'd with any wrong,

I'll justify myself. Farewell, strange man ! [*Exit.*

[*DE MONFORT stands for some time quite mo-
 tionless, like one stupified. Enters to him a
 servant: he starts.*

De Mon. Ha ! who art thou ?

Ser. 'Tis I, an' please your honour.

De Mon. (*staring wildly at him.*) Who art thou ?

Ser. Your servant Jacques.

De Mon. Indeed I knew thee not.

Now leave me, and when Rezenvelt is gone,
 Return and let me know.

Ser. He's gone already.

De Mon. How ! is he gone so soon ?

Ser. His servant told me,

He was in haste to go ; as night comes on,

And at the evening hour he purposes

To visit some old friend, whose lonely mansion

Stands a short mile beyond the farther wood,

In which a convent is of holy nuns,

Who chaunt this night a requiem to the soul

Of a departed sister. For so well

He loves such solemn music, he has order'd

His horses onward by the usual road,

Meaning on foot to cross the wood alone.

So says his knave. Good may it do him, sooth !

I would not walk through those wild dells alone

For all his wealth. For there, as I have heard,

Foul murders have been done, and ravens scream ;

And things unearthly, stalking through the night,

Have scar'd the lonely traveller from his wits.

[*DE MONFORT stands fixed in thought.*

I've ta'en your steed, an' please you, from the field,

And wait your farther orders.

[*DE MONFORT heeds him not.*

His hoofs are sound, and where the saddle gall'd,
Begins to mend. What further must be done?

[DE MONFORT still heeds him not.

His honour heeds me not. Why should I stay?

De Mon. (eagerly, as he is going). He goes alone,
saidst thou?

Ser. His servant told me so.

De Mon. And at what hour?

Ser. He 'parts from Amberg by the fall of eve.
Save you, my lord! how chang'd your count'nance
Are you not well? [is!

De Mon. Yes, I am well: begone,

And wait my orders by the city wall:

I'll wend that way, and speak to thee again.

[*Exit servant.*

[DE MONFORT walks rapidly two or three times
across the stage; then seizes his dagger from
the wall, looks steadfastly at its point, and
exit hastily.

SCENE III.

Moonlight. A wild path in a wood, shaded with trees.

*Enter DE MONFORT, with a strong expression of
disquiet, mixed with fear, upon his face, looking
behind him, and bending his ear to the ground, as if
he listened to something.*

De Mon. How hollow groans the earth beneath
my tread!

Is there an echo here? Methinks it sounds

As though some heavy footstep follow'd me.

I will advance no farther.

Deep settled shadows rest across the path,

And thickly-tangled boughs o'erhang this spot.

O that a tenfold gloom did cover it,

That 'mid the murky darkness I might strike!

As in the wild confusion of a dream,

Things horrid, bloody, terrible do pass,

As though they pass'd not; nor impress the mind

With the fix'd clearness of reality.

[*An owl is heard screaming near him.*

(*Starting.*) What sound is that?

[*Listens, and the owl cries again.*

It is the screech-owl's cry.

Foul bird of night! what spirit guides thee here?

Art thou instinctive drawn to scenes of horror?

I've heard of this.

[*Pauses and listens.*

How those fall'n leaves so rustle on the path, [me

With whispering noise, as though the earth around

Did utter secret things.

The distant river, too, bears to mine ear

A dismal wailing. O mysterious night!

Thou art not silent; many tongues hast thou.

A distant gathering blast sounds through the wood,

And dark clouds fleetly hasten o'er the sky:

O! that a storm would rise, a raging storm;

* I have put above *newly-covered* instead of *new-made* grave, as it stands in the former editions, because I wish not to give the idea of a funeral procession, but merely that of a

Amidst the roar of warring elements
I'd lift my hand and strike! but this pale light,
The calm distinctness of each stilly thing,
Is terrible (*starting*). Footsteps, and near me too!
He comes! he comes! I'll watch him farther on—
I cannot do it here. [*Exit.*

*Enter REZENVELT, and continues his way slowly from
the bottom of the stage: as he advances to the front,
the owl screams, he stops and listens, and the owl
screams again.*

Rez. Ha! does the night-bird greet me on my
How much his hooting is in harmony [way?
With such a scene as this! I like it well.

Oft when a boy, at the still twilight hour,

I've leant my back against some knotted oak,

And loudly mimick'd him, till to my call

He answer would return, and, through the gloom,

We friendly converse held.

Between me and the star-bespangled sky,

Those aged oaks their crossing branches wave,

And through them looks the pale and placid moon.

How like a crocodile, or winged snake,

Yon sailing cloud bears on its dusky length!

And now transformed by the passing wind,

Methinks it seems a flying Pegasus.

Ay, but a shapeless band of blacker hue

Comes swiftly after.—

A hollow murmur'ing wind sounds through the trees;

I hear it from afar; this bodes a storm.

I must not linger here—

[*A bell heard at some distance.*

The convent bell.

'Tis distant still: it tells their hour of prayer.

It sends a solemn sound upon the breeze,

That, to a fearful superstitious mind,

In such a scene, would like a death-knell come.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*The inside of a convent chapel, of old Gothic archi-
tecture, almost dark: two torches only are seen at
a distance, burning over a newly covered* grave.
Lightning is seen flashing through the windows, and
thunder heard, with the sound of wind beating upon
the building. Enter two monks.*

1st monk. The storm increases: hark how dis-
mally

It howls along the cloisters. How goes time?

2nd monk. It is the hour: I hear them near at
hand:

And when the solemn requiem has been sung

hymn or requiem sung over the grave of a person who has
been recently buried.

For the departed sister, we'll retire.
Yet, should this tempest still more violent grow,
We'll beg a friendly shelter till the morn.

1st monk. See, the procession enters: let us join.

[*The organ strikes up a solemn prelude. Enter a procession of nuns, with the abbess, bearing torches. After compassing the grave twice, and remaining there some time, the organ plays a grand dirge, while they stand round the grave.*

SONG BY THE NUNS.

Departed soul, whose poor remains
This hallow'd lowly grave contains;
Whose passing storm of life is o'er,
Whose pains and sorrows are no more;
Bless'd be thou with the bless'd above,
Where all is joy, and purity, and love!

Let HIM, in might and mercy dread,
Lord of the living and the dead;
In whom the stars of heav'n rejoice,
And the ocean lifts its voice;
Thy spirit, purified, to glory raise,
To sing with holy saints his everlasting praise!

Departed soul, who in this earthly scene
Hast our lowly sister been,
Swift be thy way to where the blessed dwell!
Until we meet thee there, farewell! farewell!

Enter a young pensioner, with a wild terrified look, her hair and dress all scattered, and rushes forward amongst them.

Abb. Why com'st thou here, with such disorder'd looks,

To break upon our sad solemnity?

Pen. Oh! I did hear through the receding blast,
Such horrid cries! they made my blood run chill.

Abb. 'Tis but the varied voices of the storm,
Which many times will sound like distant screams:
It has deceiv'd thee.

Pen. O no, for twice it call'd, so loudly call'd,
With horrid strength, beyond the pitch of nature;
And murder! murder! was the dreadful cry.
A third time it return'd with feeble strength,
But o' the sudden ceas'd, as though the words
Were smother'd rudely in the grappled throat,
And all was still again, save the wild blast
Which at a distance growl'd.—

Oh! it will never from my mind depart!
That dreadful cry, all i' the instant still'd:
For then, so near, some horrid deed was done,
And none to rescue.

Abb. Where didst thou hear it?

Pen. In the higher cells,
As now a window, open'd by the storm,
I did attempt to close.

1st monk. I wish our brother Bernard were
arriv'd;

He is upon his way.

Abb. Be not alarm'd; it still may be deception.
'Tis meet we finish our solemnity,
Nor show neglect unto the honour'd dead.

[*Gives a sign, and the organ plays again: just as it ceases, a loud knocking is heard without.*

Abb. Ha! who may this be? hush!

[*Knocking heard again.*

2d monk. It is the knock of one in furious haste.
Hush! hush! What footsteps come? Ha! brother
Bernard.

Enter BERNARD bearing a lantern.

1st monk. See, what a look he wears of stiffen'd
fear!

Where hast thou been, good brother?

Bern. I've seen a horrid sight!

[*All gathering round him and speaking at once.*

What hast thou seen?

Bern. As on I hasten'd, bearing thus my light,
Across the path, not fifty paces off,
I saw a murder'd corse, stretch'd on his back,
Smear'd with new blood, as though but freshly slain.

Abb. A man or woman was't?

Bern. A man, a man!

Abb. Didst thou examine if within its breast

There yet were lodg'd some small remains of life?

Was it quite dead?

Bern. Nought in the grave is deader.

I look'd but once, yet life did never lodge

In any form so laid.

A chilly horror seiz'd me, and I fled.

1st monk. And does the face seem all unknown
to thee? [look'd

Bern. The face! I would not on the face have
For e'en a kingdom's wealth, for all the world!

O no! the bloody neck, the bloody neck!

[*Shaking his head and shuddering with horror.*
Loud knocking heard without.

Sist. Good mercy! who comes next?

Bern. Not far behind

I left our brother Thomas on the road;

But then he did repent him as he went,

And threatened to return.

2d monk.

See, here he comes.

Enter Brother THOMAS, with a wild terrified look.

1st monk. How wild he looks!

Bern. (*going up to him eagerly*). What, hast thou
seen it too?

Thom. Yes, yes! it glared upon me as it pass'd.

Bern. What glared upon thee?

[*All gathering round THOMAS, and speaking at once.*

O! what hast thou seen?

Thom. As striving with the blast I onward
came,

Turning my feeble lantern from the wind,

Its light upon a dreadful visage gleam'd,

Which paus'd and look'd upon me as it pass'd ;
But such a look, such wildness of despair,
Such horror-strained features, never yet
Did earthly visage show. I shrank and shudder'd.
If a damn'd spirit may to earth return,
I've seen it.

Bern. Was there any blood upon it ?

Thom. Nay, as it pass'd, I did not see its form ;
Nought but the horrid face.

Bern. It is the murderer.

1st monk. What way went it ?

Thom. I durst not look till I had pass'd it far.

Then turning round, upon the rising bank,

I saw, between me and the paly sky,

A dusky form, tossing and agitated.

I stopp'd to mark it ; but, in truth, I found

'Twas but a sapling bending to the wind,

And so I onward hied, and look'd no more.

1st monk. But we must look to't ; we must
follow it :

Our duty so commands. (*To 2d monk.*) Will you
go, brother ?

(*To BERNARD.*) And you, good Bernard ?

Bern. If I needs must go.

1st monk. Come, we must all go.

Abb. Heaven be with you, then !

[*Exeunt monks.*]

Pen. Amen ! amen ! Good heav'n, be with us all !

O what a dreadful night !

Abb. Daughters, retire ; peace to the peaceful
dead !

Our solemn ceremony now is finish'd. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A large room in the convent, very dark. Enter the abbess, young pensioner bearing a light, and several nuns ; she sets down the light on a table at the bottom of the stage, so that the room is still very gloomy.

Abb. They have been longer absent than I
thought :

I fear he has escap'd them.

1st nun. Heaven forbid !

Pen. No, no, found out foul murder ever is,

And the foul murderer too.

2d nun. The good Saint Francis will direct their
search ;

The blood so near this holy convent shed

For threefold vengeance calls.

Abb. I hear a noise within the inner court—

They are return'd (*listening*) ; and Bernard's voice
I hear :

They are return'd.

Pen. Why do I tremble so ?

It is not I who ought to tremble thus.

2d nun. I hear them at the door.

Bern. (without). Open the door, I pray thee,
brother Thomas ;

I cannot now unhand the prisoner.

(*All speak together, shrinking back from the door,
and staring upon one another.*)

He is with them !

[*A folding door at the bottom of the stage is
opened, and enter BERNARD, THOMAS, and the
other two monks, carrying lanterns in their
hands, and bringing in DE MONFORT. They
are likewise followed by other monks. As they
lead forward DE MONFORT, the light is turned
away, so that he is seen obscurely ; but when
they come to the front of the stage, they turn
the light side of their lanterns on him at once,
and his face is seen in all the strengthened
horror of despair, with his hands and clothes
bloody.*]

(*Abbess and nuns speak at once, and start back.*)

Holy saints be with us !

Bern. (to abb.) Behold the man of blood !

Abb. Of misery too ; I cannot look upon him.

Bern. (to nuns.) Nay, holy sisters, turn not thus
away.

Speak to him, if, perchance, he will regard you :

For from his mouth we have no utter'd heard,

Save one deep groan and smother'd exclamation,

When first we seiz'd him.

Abb. (to DE MON.) Most miserable man, how art
thou thus ? [*Pauses.*]

Thy tongue is silent, but those bloody hands

Do witness horrid things. What is thy name ?

*De Mon. (roused, looks steadfastly at the abbess
for some time ; then speaking in a short hurried
voice.)* I have no name.

Abb. (to BERN.) Do it thyself ; I'll speak to him no
more.

Pen. O holy saints ! that this should be the man
Who did against his fellow lift the stroke,

Whilst he so loudly call'd. —

Still in my ears it rings : O murder ! murder !

De Mon. (starting). He calls again !

Pen. No, he did call, but now his voice is still'd.
'Tis past.

De Mon. 'Tis past.

Pen. Yes, it is past ! art thou not he who did it ?

[*DE MONFORT utters a deep groan, and is sup-
ported from falling by the monks. A noise is
heard without.*]

Abb. What noise is this of heavy lumb'ring steps,
Like men who with a weighty burthen come ?

Bern. It is the body : I have orders given

That here it should be laid.

[*Enter men bearing the body of REZENVELT, covered
with a white cloth, and set it down in the
middle of the room : they then uncover it. DE
MONFORT stands fixed and motionless with
horror, only that a sudden shivering seems to
pass over him when they uncover the corpse.*]

The abbess and nuns shrink back and retire to some distance, all the rest fixing their eyes steadfastly upon DE MONFORT. A long pause.

Bern. (to DE MON.) Seest thou that lifeless corpse, those bloody wounds?

See how he lies, who but so shortly since
A living creature was, with all the powers
Of sense, and motion, and humanity!

Oh! what a heart had he who did this deed!

1st monk (looking at the body). How hard those teeth against the lips are press'd,

As though he struggled still!

2nd monk. The hands too, clench'd: nature's last fearful effort.

[DE MONFORT still stands motionless. Brother THOMAS then goes to the body, and raising up the head a little, turns it towards DE MONFORT.

Thom. Knowst thou this ghastly face?

De Mon. (putting his hands before his face in violent perturbation). Oh, do not! do not! Veil it from my sight!

Put me to any agony but this! [deed?

Thom. Ha! dost thou then confess the dreadful
Hast thou against the laws of awful heaven

Such horrid murder done? What fiend could tempt thee?

[Pauses, and looks steadfastly at DE MONFORT.

De Mon. I hear thy words, but do not hear their sense—

Hast thou not cover'd it?

Bern. (to THOM.) Forbear, my brother, for thou seest right well

He is not in a state to answer thee.

Let us retire and leave him for awhile.

These windows are with iron grated o'er;

He is secur'd, and other duty calls.

Thom. Then let it be.

Bern. (to monks, &c.) Come, let us all depart.

[Exeunt abbess and nuns, followed by the monks, one monk lingering a little behind.

De Mon. All gone! (Perceiving the monk.) O stay thou here!

Monk.

It must not be.

De Mon. I'll give thee gold; I'll make thee rich in gold,

If thou wilt stay e'en but a little while.

Monk. I must not, must not, stay.

De Mon.

I do conjure thee!

Monk. I dare not stay with thee. [Going.

De Mon. And wilt thou go?

[Catching hold of him eagerly.

O! throw thy cloak upon this grizly form!

The unclos'd eyes do stare upon me still.

O do not leave me thus!

[Monk covers the body, and exit.

De Mon. (alone, looking at the covered body, but at a distance). Alone with thee! but thou art nothing now.

'Tis done, 'tis number'd with the things o'erpast;
Would! would it were to come!—

What fated end, what darkly gathering cloud
Will close on all this horror?

O that dire madness would unloose my thoughts,
And fill my mind with wildest fantasies,
Dark, restless, terrible! aught, aught but this!

[Pauses and shudders.

How with convulsive life he heav'd beneath me,
E'en with the death's wound gor'd! O horrid,
horrid!

Methinks I feel him still.—What sound is that?
I heard a smother'd groan.—It is impossible!

[Looking steadfastly at the body.

It moves! it moves! the cloth doth heave and swell.

It moves again! I cannot suffer this——

Whate'er it be, I will uncover it.

[Runs to the corpse, and tears off the cloth in despair.

All still beneath.

Nought is there here but fix'd and grizly death,
How sternly fixed! Oh! those glazed eyes!

They look upon me still.

[Shrinks back with horror.

Come, madness! come unto me, senseless death!
I cannot suffer this! Here, rocky wall,
Scatter these brains, or dull them!

[Runs furiously, and dashing his head against the wall, falls upon the floor.

Enter two monks hastily.

1st monk. See: wretched man, he hath destroy'd himself.

2d monk. He does but faint. Let us remove him hence.

1st monk. We did not well to leave him here alone.

2d monk. Come, let us bear him to the open air.

[Exeunt, bearing out DE MONFORT.

SCENE III.

Before the gates of the convent. Enter JANE DE MONFORT, FREBERG, and MANUEL. As they are proceeding towards the gate, JANE stops short and shrinks back.

Freb. Ha! wherefore? has a sudden illness seiz'd thee?

Jane. No, no, my friend.—And yet I am very faint—

I dread to enter here.

Man. Ay, so I thought:

For, when between the trees, that abbey tower
First show'd its top, I saw your countenance change.

But breathe a little here: I'll go before,
And make inquiry at the nearest gate.

Freb. Do so, good Manuel.

[*MANUEL goes and knocks at the gate.*

Courage, dear madam : all may yet be well.
Rezenvelt's servant, frighten'd with the storm,
And seeing that his master join'd him not,
As by appointment, at the forest's edge,
Might be alarm'd, and give too ready ear
To an unfounded rumour.

He saw it not ; he came not here himself.

Jane (looking eagerly to the gate, where *MANUEL*
talks with the porter). Ha ! see, he talks with
some one earnestly.

And seest thou not that motion of his hands ?

He stands like one who hears a horrid tale.

Almighty God ! [*MANUEL goes into the convent.*

He comes not back ; he enters.

Freb. Bear up, my noble friend. [*ful.*

Jane. I will, I will ! But this suspense is dread-
[*A long pause. MANUEL re-enters from the*
convent, and comes forward slowly with a sad
countenance.

Is this the face of one who bears good tidings ?

O God ! his face doth tell the horrid fact :

There is nought doubtful here.

Freb. How is it, Manuel ?

Man. I've seen him through a crevice in his
door :

It is indeed my master. [*Bursting into tears.*

[*JANE faints, and is supported by FREBERG.—*

Enter abbess and several nuns from the
convent, who gather about her, and apply remedies.
She recovers.

1st nun. The life returns again.

2d nun. Yes, she revives.

Abb. (to *FREB.*) Let me entreat this noble lady's
leave

To lead her in. She seems in great distress :

We would with holy kindness soothe her woe,

And do by her the deeds of christian love.

Freb. Madam, your goodness has my grateful
thanks.

[*Exeunt, supporting JANE into the convent.*

SCENE IV.

DE MONFORT is discovered sitting in a thoughtful
posture. He remains so for some time. His face
afterwards begins to appear agitated, like one
whose mind is harrowed with the severest thoughts ;
then, starting from his seat, he clasps his hands
together, and holds them up to heaven.

De Mon. O that I ne'er had known the light of
day !

That filmy darkness on mine eyes had hung,
And clos'd me out from the fair face of nature !

O that my mind in mental darkness pent,

Had no perception, no distinction known,

Of fair or foul, perfection or defect,

Nor thought conceiv'd of proud pre-eminence !

O that it had ! O that I had been form'd
An idiot from the birth ! a senseless changeling,
Who eats his glutton's meal with greedy haste,
Nor knows the hand which feeds him.—

[*Pauses ; then in a calmer sorrowful voice.*

What am I now ? how ends the day of life ?

For end it must ; and terrible this gloom,

This storm of horrors that surrounds its close.

This little term of nature's agony

Will soon be o'er, and what is past is past ;

But shall I then, on the dark lap of earth

Lay me to rest, in still unconsciousness,

Like senseless clod that doth no pressure feel

From wearing foot of daily passenger ;

Like a steep'd rock o'er which the breaking waves

Bellow and foam unheard ? O would I could !

Enter MANUEL, who springs forward to his master,
but is checked upon perceiving DE MONFORT draw
back and look sternly at him.

Man. My lord, my master ! O my dearest
master !

[*DE MONFORT still looks at him without speaking.*

Nay, do not thus regard me, good my lord !

Speak to me : am I not your faithful Manuel ?

De Mon. (in a hasty broken voice). Art thou
alone ?

Man. No, sir, the Lady Jane is on her way ;
She is not far behind.

De Mon. (tossing his arm over his head in an
agony). This is too much ! All I can bear
but this !

It must not be.—Run and prevent her coming.

Say, he who is detain'd a prisoner here

Is one to her unknown. I now am nothing.

I am a man of holy claims bereft ;

Out of the pale of social kindred cast ;

Nameless and horrible.—

Tell her *De Monfort* far from hence is gone

Into a desolate and distant land,

Ne'er to return again. Fly, tell her this ;

For we must meet no more.

Enter JANE DE MONFORT, bursting into the chamber
and followed by FREBERG, abbess, and several
nuns.

Jane. We must ! we must ! My brother, O my
brother !

[*DE MONFORT turns away his head and hides*
his face with his arm. JANE stops short, and,
making a great effort, turns to FREBERG, and
the others who followed her, and with an air
of dignity stretches out her hand, beckoning
them to retire. All retire but FREBERG, who
seems to hesitate.

And thou too, *Freb.* ; call it not unkind.

[*Exit FREBERG ; JANE and DE MONFORT only*
remain.

Jane. My hapless Monfort!

[*DE MONFORT turns round and looks sorrowfully upon her; she opens her arms to him, and he, rushing into them, hides his face upon her breast, and weeps.*]

Jane. Ay, give thy sorrow vent; here mayst thou weep.

De Mon. (*in broken accents*). Oh! this, my sister, makes me feel again

The kindness of affection.

My mind has in a dreadful storm been tost;

Horrid and dark—I thought to weep no more—

I've done a deed—But I am human still.

Jane. I know thy sufferings: leave thy sorrow free!

Thou art with one who never did upbraid;

Who mourns, who loves thee still.

De Mon. Ah! sayst thou so? no, no; it should not be.

(*Shrinking from her.*) I am a foul and bloody murderer,

For such embrace unmeet: O leave me! leave me!

Disgrace and public shame abide me now;

And all, alas! who do my kindred own,

The direful portion share.—Away, away!

Shall a disgrac'd and public criminal

Degrade thy name, and claim affinity

To noble worth like thine?—I have no name—

I'm nothing now, not e'en to thee: depart.

[*She takes his hand, and grasping it firmly, speaks with a determined voice.*]

Jane. De Monfort, hand in hand we have enjoy'd

The playful term of infancy together;

And in the rougher path of ripen'd years

We've been each other's stay. Dark low'rs our fate,

And terrible the storm that gathers o'er us;

But nothing, till that latest agony

Which severs thee from nature, shall unloose

This fix'd and sacred hold. In thy dark prison-house;

In the terrific face of armed law;

Yea, on the scaffold, if it needs must be,

I never will forsake thee.

De Mon. (*looking at her with admiration*). Heav'n bless thy gen'rous soul, my noble Jane!

I thought to sink beneath this load of ill,

Depress'd with infamy and open shame;

I thought to sink in abject wretchedness:

But for thy sake I'll rouse my manhood up,

And meet it bravely; no unseemly weakness,

I feel my rising strength, shall blot my end,

To clothe thy cheek with shame.

Jane. Yes, thou art noble still.

De Mon. With thee I am; who were not so with thee?

But, ah! my sister, short will be the term:

Death's stroke will come, and in that state beyond,

Where things unutterable wait the soul,

New from its earthly tenement discharg'd,

We shall be sever'd far.

Far as the spotless purity of virtue

Is from the murd'rer's guilt, far shall we be.

This is the gulf of dread uncertainty

From which the soul recoils.

Jane. The God who made thee is a God of mercy:

Think upon this.

De Mon. (*shaking his head*). No, no! this blood! this blood!

Jane. Yes, e'en the sin of blood may be forgiv'n,

When humble penitence hath once aton'd.

De Mon. (*eagerly*). What, after terms of lengthen'd misery,

Imprison'd anguish of tormented spirits,

Shall I again, a renovated soul,

Into the blessed family of the good

Admittance have? Thinkst thou that this may be?

Speak, if thou canst: O speak me comfort here!

For dreadful fancies, like an armed host,

Have push'd me to despair. It is most horrible—

O speak of hope! if any hope there be.

[*JANE is silent, and looks sorrowfully upon him; then clasping her hands, and turning her eyes to heaven, seems to mutter a prayer.*]

De Mon. Ha! dost thou pray for me? heav'n hear thy prayer!

I fain would kneel.—Alas! I dare not do it.

Jane. Not so! all by th' Almighty Father form'd,

May in their deepest misery call on Him.

Come kneel with me, my brother.

[*She kneels and prays to herself; he kneels by her, and clasps his hands fervently, but speaks not. A noise of chains clanking is heard without, and they both rise.*]

De Mon. Hearest thou that noise? They come to interrupt us.

Jane. (*moving towards a side door*). Then let us enter here.

De Mon. (*catching hold of her with a look of horror*). Not there—not there—the corpse—the bloody corpse!

Jane. What, lies he there?—Unhappy Rezenvelt!

De Mon. A sudden thought has come across my mind;

How came it not before? Unhappy Rezenvelt!

Sayst thou but this?

Jane. What should I say? he was an honest man;

I still have thought him such, as such lament him.

[*DE MONFORT utters a deep groan.*]
What means this heavy groan?

De Mon.

It hath a meaning.

Enter abbess and monks, with two officers of justice carrying fetters in their hands to put upon DE MONFORT.

Jane (starting). What men are these?

1st off. Lady, we are the servants of the law, And bear with us a power, which doth constrain To bind with fetters this our prisoner.

[*Pointing to DE MONFORT.*

Jane. A stranger uncondemn'd? this cannot be.

1st off. As yet, indeed, he is by law unjudg'd, But is so far condemn'd by circumstance, That law, or custom sacred held as law, Doth fully warrant us, and it must be.

Jane. Nay, say not so; he has no power t'escape: Distress hath bound him with a heavy chain; There is no need of yours.

1st off. We must perform our office.

Jane. O! do not offer this indignity!

1st off. Is it indignity in sacred law [work. To bind a murderer? (*To 2d off.*) Come, do thy

Jane. Harsh are thy words, and stern thy harden'd brow;

Dark is thine eye; but all some pity have Unto the last extreme of misery.

I do beseech thee! if thou art a man—

[*Kneeling to him.*

[*DE MONFORT, roused at this, runs up to JANE, and raises her hastily from the ground: then stretches himself up proudly.*

De Mon. (to JANE). Stand thou erect in native dignity;

And bend to none on earth the suppliant knee, Though cloth'd in power imperial. To my heart It gives a feller gripe than many irons.

(*Holding out his hands.*) Here, officers of law, bind on those shackles;

And, if they are too light, bring heavier chains, Add iron to iron; load, crush me to the ground: Nay, heap ten thousand weight upon my breast, For that were best of all.

[*A long pause, whilst they put irons upon him.*

*After they are on, JANE looks at him sorrowfully, and lets her head sink on her breast. DE MONFORT stretches out his hand, looks at them, and then at JANE; crosses them over his breast, and endeavours to suppress his feelings.**

1st off. (to DE MONFORT). I have it, too, in charge to move you hence, Into another chamber more secure.

De Mon. Well, I am ready, sir.

[*Approaching JANE, whom the abbess is endeavouring to comfort, but to no purpose.*

Ah! wherefore thus, most honour'd and most dear?

* Should this play ever again be acted, perhaps it would be better that the curtain should drop here; since here the story may be considered as completed, and what comes after,

Shrink not at the accoutrements of ill, Daring the thing itself.

[*Endeavouring to look cheerful.*

Wilt thou permit me with a gyved hand?

[*She gives him her hand, which he raises to his lips.*

This was my proudest office.

[*Exeunt, DE MONFORT leading out JANE.*

SCENE V.

An apartment in the convent, opening into another room, whose low arched door is seen at the bottom of the stage. In one corner a monk is seen kneeling. Enter another monk, who, on perceiving him, stops till he rises from his knees, and then goes eagerly up to him.

1st monk. How is the prisoner?

2d monk (pointing to the door). He is within, and the strong hand of death Is dealing with him.

1st monk. How is this, good brother?

Methought he brav'd it with a manly spirit; And led, with shackled hands, his sister forth, Like one resolv'd to bear misfortune bravely.

2d monk. Yes, with heroic courage, for a while He seem'd inspir'd; but soon depress'd again, Remorse and dark despair o'erwhelm'd his soul: And, from the violent working of his mind, Some stream of life within his breast has burst; For many a time, within a little space, The ruddy tide has rush'd into his mouth. God grant his pains be short!

1st monk. How does the lady?

2d monk. She sits and bears his head upon her lap,

Wiping the cold drops from his ghastly face With such a look of tender wretchedness, It wrings the heart to see her.

How goes the night?

1st monk. It wears, methinks, upon the midnight hour.

It is a dark and fearful night; the moon Is wrapp'd in sable clouds; the chill blast sounds Like dismal lamentations. Ay, who knows What voices mix with the dark midnight winds? Nay, as I pass'd that yawning cavern's mouth, A whisp'ring sound, unearthly, reach'd my ear, And o'er my head a chilly coldness crept. Are there not wicked fiends and damned sprites, Whom yawning charnels, and th' unfathom'd depths Of secret darkness, at this fearful hour, Do upwards send, to watch, unseen, around The murd'rer's death-bed, at his fatal term, Ready to hail with dire and horrid welcome, Their future mate?—I do believe there are.

prolongs the piece too much when our interest for the fate of De Monfort is at an end.

2d monk. Peace, peace! a God of wisdom and of mercy,
Veils from our sight—Ha! hear that heavy groan.

[A groan heard within.

1st monk. It is the dying man. [Another groan.

2d monk. God grant him rest!

[Listening at the door.

I hear him struggling in the gripe of death.

O piteous heaven! [Goes from the door.

Enter Brother THOMAS from the chamber.

How now, good brother? [death

Thom. Retire, my friends. O many a bed of

With all its pangs and horrors I have seen,

But never aught like this! Retire, my friends!

The death-bell will its awful signal give,

When he has breath'd his last.

I would move hence, but I am weak and faint:

Let me a moment on thy shoulder lean.

Oh, weak and mortal man!

[Leans on 2d monk: a pause.

Enter BERNARD from the chamber.

2d monk (to BERN.). How is your penitent?

Bern. He is with HIM who made him; HIM, who knows

The soul of man: before whose awful presence
Th' unscap'd tyrant stands despoil'd and helpless,
Like an unclothed babe. [Bell tolls.

The dismal sound!

Retire, and pray for the blood-stained soul:

May heav'n have mercy on him! [Bell tolls again.
[Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

A hall or large room in the convent. The bodies of DE MONFORT and REZENVELT are discovered laid out upon a low table or platform, covered with black. FREBERG, BERNARD, abbess, monks, and nuns attending.

Abb. (to FREQ.) Here must they lie, my lord, until we know

Respecting this the order of the law. [mother.

Freq. And you have wisely done, my rev'rend

[Goes to the table, and looks at the bodies, but without uncovering them.

Unhappy men! ye, both in nature rich,

With talents and with virtues were endued.

Ye should have lov'd, yet deadly rancour came,

And in the prime and manhood of your days

Ye sleep in horrid death. O direful hate!

What shame and wretchedness his portion is,

Who, for a secret inmate, harbours thee!

And who shall call him blameless, who excites,

Ungen'rously excites, with careless scorn,

Such baleful passion in a brother's breast,

Whom heav'n commands to love? Low are ye laid:

Still all contention now.—Low are ye laid:

I lov'd you both, and mourn your hapless fall.

Abb. They were your friends, my lord?

Freq. I lov'd them both. How does the Lady Jane?

Abb. She bears misfortune with intrepid soul. I never saw in woman, bow'd with grief, Such moving dignity.

Freq. Ay, still the same.

I've known her long: of worth most excellent;

But in the day of woe she ever rose

Upon the mind with added majesty,

As the dark mountain more sublimely tow'rs

Mantled in clouds and storm.

Enter MANUEL and JEROME.

Man. (pointing). Here, my good Jerome, here's a piteous sight.

Jer. A piteous sight! yet I will look upon him: I'll see his face in death. Alas, alas!

I've seen him move a noble gentleman!

And when with vexing passion undisturb'd,

He look'd most graciously.

[Lifts up in mistake the cloth from the body of REZENVELT, and starts back with horror.

Oh! this was the bloody work! Oh! oh, oh, oh!

That human hands could do it!

[Drops the cloth again.

Man. That is the murder'd corpse; here lies De Monfort. [Going to uncover the other body.

Jer. (turning away his head). No, no! I cannot look upon him now.

Man. Didst thou not come to see him?

Jer. Fy! cover him—inter him in the dark—Let no one look upon him.

Bern. (to JER.) Well dost thou show the abhorrence nature feels

For deeds of blood, and I commend thee well.

In the most ruthless heart compassion wakes

For one, who, from the hand of fellow man,

Hath felt such cruelty.

[Uncovering the body of REZENVELT.

This is the murder'd corse:

[Uncovering the body of DE MONFORT.

But see, I pray!

Here lies the murderer. What thinkest thou here?

Look on those features, thou hast seen them oft,

With the last dreadful conflict of despair,

So fix'd in horrid strength.

See those knit brows; those hollow sunken eyes;

The sharpen'd nose, with nostrils all distent;

That writhed mouth, where yet the teeth appear,

In agony, to gnash the nether lip.

Thinkest thou, less painful than the murder's knife

Was such a death as this?

Ay, and how changed too those matted locks!

Jer. Merciful heaven! his hair is grizly grown, Chang'd to white age, that was, but two days since,

Black as the raven's plume. How may this be?

Bern. Such change, from violent conflict of the mind,
Will sometimes come.

Jer. Alas, alas! most wretched!
Thou wert too good to do a cruel deed,
And so it kill'd thee. Thou hast suffer'd for it.
God rest thy soul! I needs must touch thy hand,
And bid thee long farewell.

[*Laying his hand on DE MONFORT.*]

Bern. Draw back, draw back: see where the lady comes.

Enter JANE DE MONFORT. FREBERG, who has been for some time retired by himself at the bottom of the stage, now steps forward to lead her in, but checks himself on seeing the fixed sorrow of her countenance, and draws back respectfully. JANE advances to the table, and looks attentively at the covered bodies. MANUEL points out the body of DE MONFORT, and she gives a gentle inclination of the head, to signify that she understands him. She then bends tenderly over it, without speaking.

Man. (to JANE, as she raises her head.) Oh, madam, my good lord!

Jane. Well says thy love, my good and faithful Manuel:

But we must mourn in silence.

Man. Alas! the times that I have followed him!

Jane. Forbear, my faithful Manuel. For this love

Thou hast my grateful thanks; and here's my hand:

Thou hast lov'd him, and I'll remember thee.

Where'er I am, in whate'er spot of earth

I linger out the remnant of my days,

I will remember thee.

Man. Nay, by the living God! where'er you are,

There will I be. I'll prove a trusty servant:

I'll follow you, even to the world's end.

My master's gone; and I indeed am mean,

Yet will I show the strength of nobler men,

Should any dare upon your honour'd worth

To put the slightest wrong. Leave you, dear lady!

Kill me, but say not this!

[*Throwing himself at her feet.*]

Jane (raising him). Well, then! be thou my servant, and my friend.

Art thou, good Jerome, too, in kindness come?

I see thou art. How goes it with thine age?

Jer. Ah, madam! woe and weakness dwell with age:

Would I could serve you with a young man's strength!

I'd spend my life for you.

Jane. Thanks, worthy Jerome.

O! who hath said, the wretched have no friends?

Freb. In every sensible and gen'rous breast

Affliction finds a friend; but unto thee,

Thou most exalted and most honourable,
The heart in warmest adoration bows,
And even a worship pays.

Jane. Nay, Freberg! Freberg! grieve me not, my friend.

He, to whose ear my praise most welcome was,

Hears it no more! and, oh, our piteous lot!

What tongue will talk of him? Alas, alas!

This more than all will bow me to the earth;

I feel my misery here.

The voice of praise was wont to name us both:

I had no greater pride.

[*Covers her face with her hands, and bursts into tears. Here they all hang about her: FREBERG supporting her tenderly, MANUEL embracing her knees, and old JEROME catching hold of her robe affectionately. BERNARD, abbess, monks, and nuns likewise gather round her, with looks of sympathy.*]

Enter two Officers of Law.

1st off. Where is the prisoner?
Into our hands he straight must be consign'd.

Bern. He is not subject now to human laws;

The prison that awaits him is the grave.

1st off. Ha! sayst thou so? there is foul play in this.

Man. (to off.) Hold thy unrighteous tongue, or hie thee hence,

Nor in the presence of this honour'd dame,

Utter the slightest meaning of reproach.

1st off. I am an officer on duty call'd,

And have authority to say, "How died he?"

[*Here JANE shakes off the weakness of grief, and repressing MANUEL, who is about to reply to the officer, steps forward with dignity.*]

Jane. Tell them by whose authority you come,

He died that death which best becomes a man,

Who is with keenest sense of conscious ill

And deep remorse assail'd, a wounded spirit.

A death that kills the noble and the brave,

And only them. He had no other wound.

1st off. And shall I trust to this?

Jane. Do as thou wilt:

To one who can suspect my simple word

I have no more reply. Fulfil thine office.

1st off. No, lady, I believe your honour'd word,

And will no further search.

Jane. I thank your courtesy: thanks, thanks to all;

My rev'rend mother, and ye honour'd maids;

Ye holy men, and you, my faithful friends;

The blessing of the afflicted rest with you!

And He, who to the wretched is most piteous,

Will recompense you.—Freberg, thou art good;

Remove the body of the friend you lov'd:

'Tis Rezenvelt I mean. Take thou this charge:

'Tis meet, that with his noble ancestors

He lie entomb'd in honourable state.

And now I have a sad request to make,
Nor will these holy sisters scorn my boon ;
That I, within these sacred cloister walls,
May raise a humble, nameless tomb to him,
Who, but for one dark passion, one dire deed,
Had claim'd a record of as noble worth,
As e'er enrich'd the sculptur'd pedestal.

[*Exeunt.*]

Note.—The last three lines of the last speech are not intended to give the reader a true character of *De Monfort*, whom I have endeavoured to represent throughout the play

as, notwithstanding his other good qualities, proud, suspicious, and susceptible of envy, but only to express the partial sentiments of an affectionate sister, naturally more inclined to praise him from the misfortune into which he had fallen.

The Tragedy of *De Monfort* has been brought out at Drury-Lane Theatre, adapted to the stage by *Mr. Kemble*. I am infinitely obliged to that gentleman for the excellent powers he has exerted, assisted by the incomparable talents of his sister, *Mrs. Siddons*, in endeavouring to obtain for it that public favour, which I sincerely wish it had been found more worthy of receiving.

[*The following were prefixed to the Second Volume of Plays on the Passions.*]

TO

MATTHEW BAILLIE, M.D.,

AS

AN OFFERING OF GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION

FOR THE UNWEARIED ZEAL AND BROTHERLY PARTIALITY

WHICH HAVE CHEERED AND SUPPORTED ME

IN THE COURSE OF THIS WORK,

I INSCRIBE THIS VOLUME.

TO THE READER.

AFTER a considerable interval of time from the publishing of the first, I now offer to the public a second volume of the "Series of Plays;" and, with it, my very grateful thanks for that indulgence and cheering approbation which has encouraged me to proceed thus far in my work. I have to thank it for that kind of reception which is best calculated to make a work go on well—praise mixed with a considerable portion of censure. I have to thank it, indeed, for that kind of reception which I solicited; conscious that it was the best, in regard to my real interest, which I could receive; as well as the very best, in regard to my merits, which I could possibly presume to expect. If with this great advantage, beyond what I enjoyed when I wrote the first part of this work, I have fallen short in the second volume of what might have been reasonably

expected from me, I have only to say for myself, that I have done my best, and that my abilities are in fault, and not my industry. The time indeed that has elapsed since the publication of the first volume will, I trust, be considered as a proof that the portion of public approbation with which I have been favoured has not rendered me presumptuous.

I know there are causes why the second part of a work should be more severely dealt with than that which has preceded it; but after what I have experienced, it would be ungrateful in me not to suppose that the generality of readers will take up this volume with a disposition to be pleased: and that they will also, in favour of one who has no great pretensions to learning or improvements, be inclined to extend the term of good-natured indulgence a little beyond its ordinary limits.

The first play in this volume is a comedy on Hatred, as a companion to the tragedy I have already published upon the same subject. Of this I shall say little. I have endeavoured in it to show this passion in a different situation, and fostered by a different species of provocation, from that which was exhibited in *De Monfort*, and existing in a character of much less delicacy and reserve. I am aware, that it falls greatly short of that degree of comic effect which the subject is calculated to produce, and which a writer of truer comic talents would have given it.

The subject of the other three plays is Ambition. It is with regret that I have extended the serious part of it to an unusual length, but I found that within a smaller compass I could not give such a view of the passion as I wished. Those passions which are of a permanent nature are the proper subjects of this work; such I mean as are capable

of taking up their abode in the mind, and of gaining a strong ascendancy over it during a term of some length; I have, therefore, in all these plays, given myself greater scope in point of time than is usual with dramatic writers. But compared with Ambition, perhaps all other passions may be considered as of a transient nature. They are capable of being gratified; and, when they are gratified, they become extinct, or subside and shade themselves off (if I may be allowed the expression) into other passions and affections. Ambition alone acquires strength from gratification, and after having gained one object, still sees another rise before it to which it as eagerly pushes on; and the dominion which it usurps over the mind is capable of enduring from youth to extreme age. To give a full view, therefore, of this passion, it was necessary to show the subject of it in many different situations, and passing through a considerable course of events; had I attempted to do this within the ordinary limits of one play, that play must have been so entirely devoted to this single object, as to have been left bare of every other interest or attraction. These are my reasons for making so large a demand on the patience of my reader in favour of this passion; and if I am pardoned in this instance, there is little danger of my offending again in the same manner.

I am perfectly sensible, that from the length of these tragedies, and, perhaps, some other defects, they are not altogether adapted to the stage; but I would fain flatter myself, that either of the parts of Ethwald might, with very little trouble, be turned into an acting play, that would neither fatigue nor offend. I should, indeed, very much regret any essential defect in this work, that might render it unfit for being more generally useful and amusing.

The scene of these plays is laid in Britain, in the kingdom of Mercia, and the time towards the end of the Heptarchy. This was a period full of internal discord, usurpation, and change; the history of which is too perplexed, and too little connected with any very important or striking event in the affairs of men, to be familiarly known, not merely

to common readers, but even to the more learned in history. I have, therefore, thought, that I might here, without offence, fix my story; here give it a "habitation and a name," and model it to my own fancy, as might best suit my design. In so doing, I run no risk of disturbing or deranging the recollection of any important truth, or of any thing that deserves to be remembered. However, though I have not adhered to history, the incidents and events of the plays will be found, I hope, consistent with the character of the times; with which I have also endeavoured to make the representation I have given of manners, opinions, and persons, uniformly correspond. I have, indeed, given a very dark picture of the religion and the clergy of those days; but it is a true one: and I believe it will be perceived throughout the whole, that it is drawn by one, who would have touched it with a lighter hand, had the spirit and the precepts of Christianity, and above all, the superlatively beautiful character of its divine Founder, been more indifferent to her.

To give a view of Ambition, as it is generally found in the ordinary intercourse of life, excited by vanity rather than the love of power, and displayed in a character which is not, like that of Ethwald, supported by the consciousness of abilities adequate to its designs, has been my object in the comedy that accompanies the foregoing tragedies. As a long period of time, and a long chain of events, did not appear necessary to this purpose, I have confined myself to the usual limits of a dramatic work. There is nothing, I believe, either in the story or the characters of the piece, that calls upon me to say any thing in regard to them. Such as it is, I leave it with its companions, in the hands of my reader, with some degree of confidence struggling against many fears: and I am willing to hope, that, if in the course of this volume I have given, in general, a true representation of human nature, under such circumstances as interest our hearts and excite our curiosity, many sins will be forgiven me; especially as, I trust, they are not sins of carelessness or presumption.

THE ELECTION:

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

BALTIMORE, *a country gentleman, and the head of an old family, fallen into decay.*FREEMAN, *a great clothier, who has acquired by his own industry a very large fortune.*TRUEBRIDGE, *the friend of BALTIMORE.*CHARLES, *an idle young man, cousin to BALTIMORE, and brought up in his house.*JENKINSON, } *two attorneys.*SERVET, } *an Italian master.*DAVID, } *servants to BALTIMORE.*

PETER, }

Voters, mob, boys, jailers, &c. &c.

WOMEN.

MRS. BALTIMORE.

MRS. FREEMAN.

CHARLOTTE, *daughter to FREEMAN.*

GOVERNESS.

MARGERY, *an old servant of the BALTIMORE family.*

Servants, voters' wives, mob, &c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The open market-place of a small country town, a crowd of men, women, and children seen in the background; MARGERY and Countryman, surrounded with several others, are discovered talking on the front of the stage.

Margery. Patron! pot-man an' you will. As long as he holds the brown jug to their heads, they'll run after him an' he were the devil. Oh! that I should live to see the heir of the ancient family of Baltimore set aside in his own borough by a nasty, paltry, nobody-knows-who of an upstart! What right has he, forsooth! to set himself up for to oppose a noble gentleman? I remember his own aunt very well; a poor industrious pains-taking woman, with scarcely a pair of shoes to her feet.

Countryman. Well, well, and what does that signify, Goody? He has covered more bare feet with new shoes since he came among us, than all the noble families in the country, let his aunt wear

what shoes she would; ay, and his bounty has filled more empty bellies too, though his grannam might dine on a turnip, for aught I know or care about the matter.

Mar. Don't tell me about his riches, and his bounty, and what not: will all that ever make him any thing else than the son of John Freeman the weaver? I wonder to hear you talk such nonsense, Arthur Wilkins; you that can read books and understand reason: such a fellow as that is not good enough to stand cap in hand before Mr. Baltimore.

[*The rabble come forward, huzzaing, and making a great noise, and take different sides of the stage.*

Crowd on F. side. Huzza! Huzza! Freeman for ever!

Mar. Yes, yes, to be sure: Freeman for ever: fat Sam the butcher for ever! black Dick the tinker for ever! any body is good enough for you, filthy rascallions!

1st mob on F. side. Ay, scold away, old Margery! Freeman for ever! say I. Down with your proud pennyless gentry! Freeman for ever!

Mar. Down with your rich would-be-gentry, say I; Baltimore for ever! (*To mob on her side.*) Why don't you call out, oafs?

[*The mob on her side call out BALTIMORE, and the mob on the other FREEMAN; but the F. side gets the better.*

What, do you give it up so? you poor, spiritless nincumpoops! I would roar till I bursted first, before I would give it up so to such a low-lived, beggarly rabble.

2d mob on F. side. They lack beef and porter, Margery. That makes fellows loud and hearty, I trow. Coats of arms and old pictures won't fill a body's stomach. Come over to Freeman-hall, and we'll show you good cheer, woman. Freeman for ever!

Mar. Ha' done with your bawling, blackamoor! what care I for your good cheer? none of your porter nor your beef for me, truly!

2d mob on F. side. No, Goody! mayhap, as you have been amongst the gentry all your life, you may prefer a cup of nice sage tea, or a little nice rue-water, or a leg of a roasted snipe, or a bit of a nice tripe dumplin.

Mar. Close your fool's mouth, oaf! or I'll cram a dumplin into it that you won't like the chewing of. Mr. Baltimore's father kept a table like a prince, when your poor beggarly candidate's father had scarcely a potato in his pot. But knaves like

you were not admitted within his gates to see it, indeed. Better men than you, or your master either, were not good enough to take away his dirty trenchers; and the meanest creature about his house was as well dressed, and in as good order, as if it had been the king's court, and every day in the year had been a Sunday.

2d mob on F. side. So they were, Goody; I remember it very well; the very sucking pigs ran about his yard with full bottom'd wigs on, and the grey goose waddled through the dirt with a fine founced petticoat.

Mar. Hold your fool's tongue, do! no upstart parliament-men for me! Baltimore for ever!

Crowd on B. side call out, Baltimore for ever!

1st mob on B. side. Sour paste and tangled bobbins for weavers!

1st mob on F. side. Empty purses and tatter'd lace for gentlemen!

Old woman on B. side. We'll have no strange new-comers for our member: Baltimore for me!

Old woman on F. side. Good broth is better than good blood, say I: Freeman for me!

Little boy on B. side. Weaver, weaver, flap, flap, Grin o'er your shuttle, and rap, rap!

[*Acting the motion of a weaver.*]

Little boy on F. side. Gentleman, gentleman, proud of a word!

Stand on your tip-toes, and bow to my lord!

[*Acting a gentleman.*]

Mar. Go, you little devil's imp! who teaches you to blaspheme your betters?

[*She gives the boy a box on the ear: the mob on the other side take his part: a great uproar and confusion, and exeunt both sides fighting.*]

SCENE II.

A walk leading through a grove to BALTIMORE'S house, and close by it. Enter MRS. BALTIMORE, as if just alighted from her carriage, followed by her maid and PETER, carrying a box and portfolio, and other things.

Mrs. Balt. But what does all this distant noise and huzzaga mean? the whole town is in commotion.

Pet. It is nothing, as I know of, ma'am, but my master and Mr. Freeman's voters fighting with one another at the alehouse doors, to show their goodwill to the candidates, as all true hearty fellows do at an election.

Mrs. B. Yes, our member is dead suddenly; I had forgotten. But who are the candidates?

Pet. My master, madam, and Mr. Freeman.

Mrs. B. Gentlemen supported by them you mean?

Pet. No, ma'am, I mean their own two selves, for their own two selves. But I beg pardon for naming

such a man as Freeman on the same day with a gentleman like my master.

Mrs. B. Mr. Freeman, if you please, Peter; and never let me hear you name him with disrespect in my presence. Carry those things into the house (*to the maid*): and you too, Blond; I see Mr. Baltimore. [*Exeunt servants.*]

Enter BALTIMORE.

Bal. My dear Isabella, you are welcome home: how are you after your journey?

Mrs. B. Perfectly well; and very glad, even after so short an absence, to find myself at home again. But what is going on here? I have heard strange news just now: Peter tells me you are a candidate for the borough, and Mr. Freeman is your rival. It is some blunder of his own, I suppose?

Balt. No, it is not.

Mrs. B. (*stepping back in surprise, and holding up her hands*). And are you actually throwing away the last stake of your ruined fortune on a contested election?

Balt. I will sell every acre of land in my possession, rather than see that man sit in parliament for the borough of Westown.

Mrs. B. And why should not he as well as another? The declining fortunes of your family have long made you give up every idea of the kind for yourself: of what consequence, then, can it possibly be to you? I know very well, my dear Baltimore, it is not a pleasant thing for the representative of an old family, declined in fortune, to see a rich obscure stranger buy up all the land on every side, and set himself down like a petty prince in his neighbourhood. But if he had not done it some other most likely would; and what should we have gained by the change?

Balt. O! any other than himself I could have suffered.

Mrs. B. You amaze me. He has some disagreeable follies, I confess; but he is friendly and liberal.

Balt. Yes, yes, he affects patronage and public spirit: he is ostentatious to an absurdity.

Mrs. B. Well then, don't disturb yourself about it. If he is so, people will only laugh at him.

Balt. O! hang them, but they won't laugh! I have seen the day, when, if a man made himself ridiculous, the world would laugh at him. But now, every thing that is mean, disgusting, and absurd, pleases them but so much the better! If they would but laugh at him, I should be content.

Mrs. B. My dear Baltimore! curb this strange fancy that has taken such a strong hold of your mind, and be reasonable.

Balt. I can be reasonable enough. I can see as well as you do that it is nonsense to disturb myself about this man; and when he is absent I can resolve to endure him; but whenever I see him again, there is something in his full satisfied face;

in the tones of his voice; ay, in the very gait and shape of his legs, that is insufferable to me.

Mrs. B. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Balt. What makes you laugh, madam?

Mrs. B. Indeed I have more cause to cry! yet I could not help laughing when you talked of his gait and his legs; for people, you must know, have taken it into their heads that there is a resemblance between you and him! I have myself, in twilight, sometimes mistaken the one for the other.

Balt. It must have been in midnight, I think. People have taken it into their heads! blind idiots! I could kick my own shins if I thought they had the smallest resemblance to his.

Mrs. B. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Balt. And this is matter of amusement for you, ma'am? I abhor laughing.

Mrs. B. Pray, pray, forgive me! This is both ludicrous and distressing. I knew that you disliked this man from the first day he settled in your neighbourhood, and that, during two years' acquaintance, your aversion has been daily increasing; but I had no idea of the extravagant height to which it has now arrived.

Balt. Would I had sold every foot of my lands, and settled in the lone wilds of America, ere this man came to be the swollen possessor of my forefathers' lands; their last remaining son, now cramped and elbow'd round, in one small corner of their once wide and extensive domains! Oh! I shall never forget what I felt, when, with that familiar and disgusting affability, he first held out to me his detested palm and hailed me as a neighbour. (*Striding up and down the stage.*) Ay, indeed, he pretends to be affable!

Mrs. B. You feel those things too keenly.

Balt. A stock or a stone would feel it. He has opposed me in every contest, from the election of a member of parliament down to the choosing of a parish clerk; and yet, he will never give me a fair occasion of quarrelling with him, for then I should be happier. (*Striding up and down again.*) Hang it: it was not worth a pinch of snuff to me whether the high road went on one side of my field or the other; but only that I saw he was resolved to oppose me in it, and I would have died rather than have yielded to him.

Mrs. B. Are you sure, Baltimore, that your own behaviour has not provoked him to that opposition?

Balt. (*striding up and down as he speaks.*) He has extended his insolent liberalities over the whole country round. The very bantlings lisp his name as they sit on their little stools in the sun.

Mrs. B. My dear friend!

Balt. He has built two new towers to his house; and it rears up its castled head among the woods, as if its master were the lord and chieftain of the whole surrounding country.

Mrs. B. And has this power to offend you?

Balt. No, no, let him pile up his house to the clouds, if he will! I can bear all this patiently; it is his indelicate and nauseous civility that drives me mad. He goggles and he smiles; he draws back his full watery lip like a toad. (*Making a mouth of disgust.*) Then he spreads out his nail-bitten fingers as he speaks—hah!

Mrs. B. And what great harm does all this do you?

Balt. What harm! it makes my very flesh creep like the wriggings of a horse-leech or a maggot. It is an abomination beyond all endurance!

Mrs. B. The strange fancies you take in regard to every thing this poor man does, are to me astonishing.

Balt. (*stopping short and looking fixedly on her.*) Are to you astonishing! I doubt it not; I was a fool to expect that a wife so many years younger than myself would have any sympathy with my feelings.

Mrs. B. Baltimore! you wrong me, unkindly,—but his daughter comes: she will overhear us.

Balt. What brings that affected fool here? She is always coming here. It is an excrescence from the toad's back; the sight of her is an offence to me.

Enter CHARLOTTE, with an affected air of great delicacy.

Char. How do you do, my dear Mrs. Baltimore? I am quite charmed to see you. (*Curtseys affectedly to BALT.*)

Mrs. B. I thank you, my dear; you are early abroad this morning.

Char. Oh! I am almost killed with fatigue; but I saw your carriage at the gate, and I could not deny myself the pleasure of inquiring how you do. The heat overcomes one so much in this weather; it is enough to make one faint; it is really horrid. (*Speaking in a faint, soft voice, and fanning herself affectedly.*)

Mrs. B. It does not affect me.

Char. No! O you are not so robust, I am sure.

Enter a little country girl, trailing a great piece of muslin after her.

Girl to Char. Here, miss; here is a piece of your petticoat that you left on the bushes, as you scrambled over the hedge to look at the bird's nest yonder.

Char. (*in confusion.*) O la! the briars will catch hold of one so, as one goes along. Give it me, give it me. (*Takes the muslin, and crams it hastily into her pocket.*) This weather makes one go by the side of ditches, and amongst bushes, and any where for a little shade.

Balt. Tadpoles love ditches in all weathers.

Char. (*looking after him strangely for a moment or two, and then skipping lightly up to Mrs. B. and* [Exit.

taking her kindly by the hand). Thank heaven he's gone! I stand more in awe of him than my mother and my governess, and all the whole pack of masters that ever came about the house. If there was not a certain look about him now and then, that puts me in mind of my father, I should take a downright aversion to him. O! I beg pardon! I mean I should not like him very well, even though he is your husband. But was it not provoking in that little chit to follow me with those rags in her hand?

Mrs. B. I suppose we shall have a glove or a garter coming after you by and bye.

Char. O they may bring what they please now! — Well, how d'ye do? how d'ye do? how d'ye do?

(Taking Mrs. B. by the hand, and skipping round her joyfully.)

Mrs. B. Very well, my good little Charlotte.

Char. I am delighted to see you returned. Ah, don't you remember how good you were to me, when I was a little urchin at Mrs. Highman's school? and how I used to stand by your side when you dressed, and count over the pins in your pincushion?

Mrs. B. I remember it very well.

Char. But how comes it that we meet so seldom? you never come to see us now, and I dare not come to you so often as I wish, for Mr. Baltimore looks at me so sternly. Let papa and him contend with one another as they please; what have we to do with their plaguy election? O if we were but together! we could work and talk to one another all day long, and it would be so pleasant!

Mrs. B. Indeed, my dear Charlotte, I wish I could have you frequently with me; but I hope you have many pleasant employments at home.

Char. Ah, but I have not though. I am tired to death of music, and drawing, and Italian, and German, and geography, and astronomy, and washes to make my hands white. *(Shaking her head piteously.)* But what does it signify fretting? I know I must be an accomplished woman; I know it very well.

Mrs. B. (smiling). Don't you like to be occupied?

Char. O yes: it is not that I am a lazy girl. If they would plague me no more with my masters, but give me some plain pocket-handkerchiefs to hem, I would sit upon the footstool all day, and sing like a linnet.

Mrs. B. My dear girl, and so there must be things in this mixed world to keep even thy careless breast from being as blithe as a linnet. But you were going home: I'll walk a little way with you.

Char. I thank you. *(Looking off the stage.)* Is not that Charles at a distance? I dare say, now, he has been a fishing, or looking after coveys of partridges, or loitering about the horse dealers. I hope he did not see me get over the hedge though.

Mrs. B. Alas, poor Charles! I wish he had more useful occupations. It is a sad thing for a young man to be hanging about idle.

Char. So my papa says: and, do you know, I believe he had it in his head to get some appointment for him when this election came in the way. Shall I put him in mind of it?

Mrs. B. No, no, my dear Charlotte, that must not be. Shall we walk?

Char. (scampering off). Stop a little, pray. *[Exit.*

Mrs. B. Where is she gone to now?

Char. (returning with something in her lap). Only to fetch my two black kittens. I bought them from a boy, as I went along, to save them from drowning. I could not curtsy to Mr. Baltimore, you know, with kittens in my lap, so I dropp'd them slyly under the hedge as I enter'd; for this fellow with the white spot on his nose makes a noise like a little fury. *(They go arm in arm to the side of the stage to go out, when Mrs. B., looking behind her, stops short.)*

Mrs. B. No, I must not walk farther with you just now: I see Mr. Truebridge coming this way, and I wish to speak to him. Good morning, my dear Charlotte. *[Exit CHARLOTTE.*

Enter TRUEBRIDGE.

You are hurrying away very fast; I did not know you were here.

True. I have been in the library writing a letter, which I ought to have done before I left my own house. I am going from home for a few days, and I came to see Baltimore before I set out.

Mrs. B. You are always going from home. I am very sorry you are going at this time, when your presence here might have been so useful. You might have persuaded Baltimore, perhaps, to give up this foolish contest with so rich a competitor as Freeman.

True. No, it is better, perhaps, to let them fight it out. We should only have separated them, like two game-cocks, who are sure to be at it again, beak and spurs, with more fury than ever.

Re-enter BALTIMORE.

Balt. to True. You have forgotten your letter. A pleasant journey to you! *(Gives him a letter.)*

True. Farewell for a few days! I hope to learn, on my return, that you have carried on this contest with temper and liberality, since you will engage in it.

Balt. Why, you know, Truebridge, I am compelled to engage in it.

True. O certainly, and by very weighty reasons too! A man may injure in a hundred different ways and provoke no hostile return; but when, added to some petty offences, he varies his voice and gesture, wears his coat and doublet, nay, moves his very hand in a manner that is irksome to us, what mortal is there, pagan or believer, that can refrain from setting himself in array against him?

Balt. Well, well! give yourself no trouble. I'll

keep my temper; I'll do every thing calmly and reasonably.

True. Do so; I sha'n't return, probably, till the poll is closed. I have told you my reasons for taking no part in the business; and let the new member be who he will, I'm resolved to shake hands cordially with him. It won't do for one who has honours and pensions in view, to quarrel with great men. Good bye to you!—madam, all success to your wishes. *[Exit.]*

Balt. Ask favours of such a creature as Freeman! He speaks it but in jest. Yet if I did not know him to be one of the most independent men in the world, I should be tempted to believe that he too had become sophisticated.

Mrs. B. Ah, do not torment yourself with suspicions! I am afraid it is a disposition that has been growing upon you of late.

Balt. No, madam; it is upon you this disposition has been growing. Whenever I am in the company of that—I will not name him—I have of late observed that your eyes are bent upon me perpetually. I hate to be looked at when I am in that man's company.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A room in FREEMAN'S house; a table with drawings, &c. scattered upon it, in one corner, and a writing-table near the front of the stage. MRS. FREEMAN is discovered writing. Enter CHARLOTTE and her governess.

Mrs. F. (raising her head). Come here, Miss Freeman: that gown sits with no grace in the world. *(Turning CHAR. round.)* No, it is not at all what I intended: I shall have it taken to pieces again. *(To the gov.)* Was she in the stocks this morning?

Gov. Yes, madam.

Mrs. F. From her manner of holding her head one would scarcely believe it. Go to your drawing, and finish it if you can before Mr. Bescatti comes. *(CHARLOTTE sits down unwillingly to the drawing-table; the governess takes her work and sits by her; and MRS. FREEMAN sits down again to write.)*

Enter MR. BESCATTI.

Mrs. F. O, Bescatti! you are just the very person I want. I have put a quotation from one of your Italian poets, expressive of the charms of friendship, into the letter I am writing to my dear, amiable Mrs. Syllabub; and as I know she shows all the letters she receives from her friends, I would not have a fault in it for the world. Look at it, pray! Will it do? *(Giving him the letter with an air of self-satisfaction.)*

Bes. (shaking his head). No, madam; I must be free to say, dat it won't do: de two first ords are wrong, and de two last ords are not right.

Mrs. F. (colouring and bridling up). Why there are but four words of it altogether, Mr. Bescatti.

Bes. Yes, madam; der you be very right; der you be under no mistake at all; der be just four ords in it, neider more nor less.

Mrs. F. Well, well, pray correct it for me! I suppose I was thinking of something else when I wrote it.

Bes. (after correcting the letter). It is done, madam. I hope de young lady will soon finish her drawing, dat I may have de honour to propose my little instruction.

Char. (rising from the table). I can finish it to-morrow.

Mrs. F. Show Mr. Bescatti your two last drawings. *(CHAR. shows him her drawings.)* Every one from your country is fond of this delightful art. How do you like this piece?

Bes. It be very agreeable.

Gov. (looking over his shoulder). O beautiful, charming! de most pretty of de world!

Mrs. F. There is such a fine glow in the colouring! so much spirit in the whole.

Bes. (turdily). Yes.

Mrs. F. And so much boldness in the design.

Bes. (turdily). Yes.

Mrs. F. And the cattle in that landscape are so spirited and so correct.

Bes. O dey be de very pretty sheep, indeed.

Mrs. F. Why, those are cows, Mr. Bescatti—those are cows.

Bes. O, madam, I make no doubt dat in reality dey are the cows, alto in appearance dey are de sheep.

Mrs. F. (showing him another piece). He will understand this better. The subject is so prettily imagined! a boy with an apple in his hand: such pleasing simplicity! look at those lights and shades: her master himself says it is touched with the hand of an artist.

Bes. Yes, he be a very pretty fellow—and a very happy one too: he has got one apple in his hand, and anoder in his mouth.

Mrs. F. Another in his mouth! why that is the round swelling of his cheek, Mr. Bescatti. But look at this head. *(Impatiently, as he looks at the wrong one.)* No, no, this one.

Bes. O dat one—dat has one side of the face white and t'oder black!

Gov. O beautiful, excellent!—all dat der is of pretty—all dat der is of—of de most pretty!

Mrs. F. There is so much effect in it; so much force and distinctness.

Bes. Yes, der be good contrast; nobody will mistake de one side of de face for de oder.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Every thing in the next room is set out, ma'am—Have you any orders?

Mrs. F. Don't trouble me about it: I'll look at it by and bye, if I have nothing better to do. (*Exit ser.*)—Miss Freeman, there is no time to lose; Bescatti and you must be busy, for I expect Mr. Tweedle this morning with a new song in his pocket.

Enter a Servant hastily.

Ser. All the voters are come, ma'am, and my master says we must open the great room immediately. (*Opens folding-doors at the bottom of the stage, and discovers a large room with a long table set out, plentifully covered with cold meats, &c. &c.*)

Mrs. F. What could possess the creatures to come so early? If I am to have the whole morning of it, I shall be dead before it is over. Heigh ho! here they are.

Enter a great number of voters with their wives and daughters, and FREEMAN showing them in himself.

Free. (*with a very affable smiling countenance.*) Come in, ladies and gentlemen; come in, my very good neighbours; my wife will be proud to see you. (*Presents them to MRS. FREEMAN, who receives them with affected condescension; whilst CHARLOTTE draws herself up by her mother's side, and curtsies to them in the same affected manner.*)—This is my very good friend Mr. Ginger, my dear; and this is worthy Mr. Fudge.—But where is your wife, Mr. Fudge? we are near neighbours, you know, and I see no reason why your good woman and mine should not be better acquainted.

Mr. Fudge. She is standing close by you, sir.

Free. O, I beg pardon, my dear madam! I did not know you. (*To MRS. FUDGE.*)—My dear, this is Mrs. Fudge. (*Presenting her to MRS. F.*)—But, my good Mr. Hassock, why have not you brought your pretty daughter with you?

Mr. Hassock. So I have, your honour; this be she. (*Pointing to his daughter.*)

Free. She must give me her hand: I have a girl of my own too, you see; but she does not hold up her head so well as this young lady.

[*More people still coming in.*]

Ha! welcome, my good friends! welcome, my good neighbour Huskins, and you too, my good Mrs. Huskins!—Ha, Mr. Grub! you do me honour. How do the soap-works go on? you will soon be the richest man in the country, though you do spare me a morning now and then.

Mr. Grub (*conceitedly*). Ay, picking up a little in my poor way, just to keep the pot boiling. (*Going up to MRS. FREEMAN, and wiping his face.*) Madam, I make bold, as the fashion goes on them there occasions. (*Gives her a salute with a good loud smack, whilst she shrinks back disconcerted, and BESCATTI*

and the governess shrug up their shoulders, and CHARLOTTE skulls behind their backs frightened.)

Mr. Fudge (*wiping his mouth*). As the fashion goes round, madam—

Free. (*preventing him as he is going up to MRS. F.*) No, no, my good neighbours: this is too much ceremony amongst friends. Let us go into the next room, and see if there is any thing to eat: I dare say there is some cold meat and cucumber for us. Let me have the honour, Mrs. Fudge.

[*They all go into the next room and seat themselves round the table. Re-enter FREEMAN in a great bustle.*]

More chairs and more covers here! Thomas! Barnaby! Jenkins! (*The servants run up and down carrying things across the stage. Enter more people.*) Ha! welcome—welcome, my good friends! we were just looking for you. Go into the next room and try if you can find any thing you like.

Voter. O, sir, never fear but we shall find plenty of good victuals. [*Exeunt into the next room.*]

[*Manet CHARLOTTE, who comes forward.*]

Char. La, how I should like to be a queen, and stand in my robes, and have all the people introduced to me! for then they would kiss no more than my hand, which I should hold out so. No, no; it should be so. (*Stretching out her hand whilst CHARLES BALTIMORE, entering behind and overhearing her, takes and kisses it with a ludicrous bending of the knee.*)

Charles. And which should be kissed so?

Char. (*affectedly*.) You are always so silly, Mr. Charles Baltimore.

Charles. Are you holding court here for all those good folks? I thought there was no harm in looking in upon you, though I do belong to the other side. (*Peeping.*) Faith, they are busy enough! mercy on us, what a clattering of trenchers! How do you like them?

Char. Oh! they are such savages; I'm sure if I had not put lavender on my pocket-handkerchief, like mamma, I should have fainted away.

Charles. How can you talk of fainting with cheeks like two cabbage roses?

Char. Cabbage roses!

Charles. No, no—pest take it!—I mean the pretty, delicate damask rose.

Char. La, now you are flattering me!

Charles. I am not indeed, Charlotte! you have the prettiest—(*peeping at the other room and stopping short.*)

Char. (*eagerly*.) I have the prettiest what?

Charles. Is that a venison pasty they have got yonder?

Char. Pooh, never mind!—I have the prettiest what?

Charles. Yes, I mean the most beautiful (*peeping again*). By my faith and so it is a venison pasty, and a monstrous good odour it has!

[*Exit hastily into the eating-room.*]

Char. (looking after him). What a nasty creature he is! he has no more sense than one of our pointers; he's always running after a good scent.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

An open lane near a country town. Enter BALTIMORE, who passes half way across the stage, and then, stopping suddenly, shrinks back.

Balt. Ha, it is he!—I'll turn and go another way. (*Turns hastily back again, and then stops short.*) No, no, he sha'n't see me avoiding him. I'll follow Truebridge's advice, and be civil to him.— (*Enter FREEMAN bowing with stiff civility.*) Good morning, sir.

Free. And the same to you, Mr. Baltimore: how does your lady do?

Balt. And your amiable lady, Mr. Freeman! she is a great scholar, I hear.

Free. (with his face brightened up). You are very good to say so; she does indeed know some few things pretty well; and though we are rivals for the present, why shouldn't we act liberally and speak handsomely of one another at the same time? Does Mrs. Baltimore like pine-apples as well as she used to do?

Balt. (shrinking back). No, she dislikes them very much.

Free. Don't say so now! I believe you don't like me to send them to you, but if you would just send over for them yourself when she wants them, I have mountains of them at her service.

Balt. (with a contemptuous smile). Shall I send a tumbler for them to-morrow morning? (*FREE. draws back piqued.*) But you are liberal to every body, Mr. Freeman. I hope you and your friends have got over the fatigues of your morning feast? You were at it by times I hear.

Free. Yes, we have been busy in the eating and drinking way to be sure. I don't make speeches to them, and fill their heads with fine oratory; I give them from my plain stores what they like better, Mr. Baltimore.

Balt. And what you can spare better, Mr. Freeman. It is fortunate for both parties, that your stores are more applicable to the stomach than the head.

Free. It is better, at least, than flattering them up with advertisements in the newspapers, about their great dignity and antiquity, &c. I don't spend my money in feeding other people's vanity.

Balt. No, certainly, sir; charity begins at home; and your own has, thank heaven! a very good appetite.

Free. Pamper'd vanity is a better thing perhaps than starved pride. Good morning, sir. [*Exit.*]

Balt. (looking after him). See how consequentially he walks now, shaking his long coat skirts with that abominable swing! I should detest my own

brother if he swung himself about after that manner.—Resemblance to him do they say! I could lock myself up in a cell, if I thought so, and labour my own shoulders with a cat-o'-nine-tails.

Enter PETER with one of his idle companions, and starts back upon seeing BALTIMORE.

Pet. (aside to his com.) Pest take it! a body can never be a little comfortable in a sly way, but there is always some cross luck happens to him. Yonder is my master, and he thinks I am half a dozen miles off with a letter that he gave me to Squire Houndly. Stand before me, man; perhaps he'll go past. (*Skulking behind his com.*)

Balt. (seeing him). What, you careless rascal, are you here still, when I told you the letter was of consequence to me? To have this stick broken over your head is less than you deserve: where have you been, sirrah? (*Holding up his stick in a threatening manner.*)

Pet. Oh! your honour, if you should beat me like a stock fish I must e'en tell you the truth: for as I passed by the Cat and Bagpipes a little while ago, I could not help just setting my face in at the door to see what they were all about; and there I found such a jolly company of Squire Freeman's voters, sitting round a bowl of punch, drinking his liquors and laughing at his grandeur, and making such a mockery of it, that I could not help staying to make a little merry with them myself.

Balt. (lowering his stick). Art thou sure that they laughed at him?—In his own inn, and over his own liquor?

Pet. Ay, to be sure, your honour; what do they care for that? When he orders a hog'shead of ale for them out of his own cellar, they call it a pack of lamb's wool from the wool chamber. Don't they, neighbour? (*Winking to his companion.*)

Com. To be sure they do.

Balt. Ha, ha, ha! ungrateful merry varlets!—Well, well! get thee along, and be more expeditious with my letters another time. (*To himself as he goes out.*) Ha, ha! a good name for his ale truly.

[*Exit.*]

Pet. I wonder he did not give me a little money now for such a story as this. Howsomever, it has saved my head from being broke.

Com. And that I think is fully as much as it is worth. I wonder you an't ashamed to behave with so little respect to a gentleman and your own master.

Pet. Fiddle faddle with all that! do you think one gets on the blind side of a man to treat him with respect? When I first came to live with Mr. Baltimore, I must say I was woundily afraid of his honour, but I know how to manage him now well enough.

Com. I think thou dost, indeed. Who would have thought it, that had seen what a bumpkin he took thee from the plough's tail, but a twelvemonth

ago, because he could not afford to hire any more fine trained servants to wait upon him ?

Pet. Nay, I wa'n't such a simpleton as you took me for neither. I was once before that very intimate, in my fashion, with an old Squire, of the North Country, who was in love with his grand-daughter's dairy-maid. I warrant you I know well enough how to deal with any body that has got any of them strange fancies working within them, for as great a bumpkin as you may take me to be ; and if you don't see me, ere long time goes by, make a good penny of it too, I'll give you leave to call me a noodle. Come away to the Blue-Posts again, and have another glass, man. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

FREEMAN'S library fitted up expensively with fine showy books and book-cases, &c. &c. Enter FREEMAN and MRS. FREEMAN, speaking as they enter.

Free. They sha'n't come again, then, since it displeases you : but they all went away in such good humour, it did my heart good to see them.

Mrs. F. Oh the Goths and the Huns ! I believe the smell of their nauseous tobacco will never leave my nostrils. You don't know what I have suffered to oblige you. To any body of delicacy and refinement, it was shocking. I shall be nervous and languid for a month. But I don't complain. You know I do every thing cheerfully that can promote your interest. Oh ! I am quite overcome. [*Sits down languidly.*]

Free. Indeed, my dear, I know you never complain, and I am sorry I have imposed such a task upon your goodness. But the adversary gains ground upon us, and if I do not exert myself, the ancient interest of the Baltimores—the old prejudice of family, may still carry the day.

Mrs. F. [*starting up eagerly, and throwing aside her assumed languor.*] That it sha'n't do if gold and activity can prevent it ! Old prejudice of family ! Who has a better right than yourself to serve for the borough of Westown !

Free. So you say, my dear ; and you are generally in the right. But I don't know : I don't feel as if I did altogether right in opposing Mr. Baltimore, in his own person, in the very spot where his family has so long presided. If he did not provoke me—

Mrs. F. What, have you not got over these scruples yet ? Has not all the rancorous opposition you have met with from him wound you up to a higher pitch than this, Mr. Freeman ? It has carried you through many petty struggles against his proud will already, and would you let him get the better of you now ?

Free. [*thoughtfully.*] I could have wished to have lived in peace with him.

Mrs. F. Yes, if he would have suffered you.

Free. Ay, indeed, if he would have suffered me. [*Musing for some time.*] Well, it is very extraordinary this dislike which he seems to have taken to me ; it is inexplicable ! I came into his neighbourhood with the strongest desire to be upon good terms with, nay to be upon the most friendly and familiar footing with him ; yet he very soon opposed me in every thing. [*Walking up and down, and then stopping short.*] I asked him to dine with me almost every day, just as one would ask their oldest and most intimate acquaintance ; and he knew very well I expected no entertainments in return, which would have been a foolish expense in his situation, for I took care in the handsomest manner to let him understand as much.

Mrs. F. Well, well, never trouble your head about that now, but think how you may be revenged upon him.

Free. Though his fortune was reduced, and I in possession of almost all the estates of the Baltimores, of more land, indeed, than they ever possessed, I was always at pains to assure him that I respected him as much as the richest man in the county ; and yet, I cannot understand it, the more friendly and familiar I was with him, the more visibly his aversion to me increased. It is past all comprehension !

Mrs. F. Don't trouble yourself about that now.

Free. I'm sure I was ready upon every occasion to offer him my very best advice, and after the large fortune I have acquired, I may be well supposed to be no novice in many things.

Mrs. F. O, he has no sense of obligations.

Free. Ay, and knowing how narrow his income is in respect to the style of living he has been accustomed to ; when company came upon him unexpectedly, have I not sent and offered him every thing in my house, even to the best wines in my cellars, which he has pettishly and absurdly refused ?

Mrs. F. O, he has no gratitude in him !

Free. If I had been distant, and stood upon reserve with him, there might have been some cause. Well, it is altogether inexplicable !

Mrs. F. I'm sure it is not worth while to think so much about it.

Free. Ah, but I can't help thinking ! Have I not made the ground round his house, as well as my own, look like a well-weeded garden ? I have cut down the old gloomy trees ; and where he used to see nothing from his windows but a parcel of old knotted oaks shaking themselves in the wind, he now looks upon two hundred rood of the best hot-walls in the North of England, besides two new summer-houses and a green-house.

Mrs. F. O, he has no taste.

Free. The stream which I found running through the woods, as shaggy and as wild as if it had been

in a desert island, and the foot of man never marked upon its banks, I have straightened, and levelled, and dressed, till the sides of it are as nice as a bowling-green.

Mrs. F. He has no more taste than a savage, that's certain. However, you must allow that he wants some advantages which you possess: his wife is a woman of no refinement.

Free. I don't know what you mean by refinement: she don't sing Italian and play upon the harp, I believe; but she is a very civil, obliging, good, reasonable woman.

Mrs. F. (contemptuously). Yes, she is a very civil, obliging, good, reasonable woman. I wonder how some mothers can neglect the education of their children so! If she had been my daughter, I should have made a very different thing of her, indeed.

Free. I doubt nothing, my dear, of your good instructions and example. But here comes Jenkinson.

Enter JENKINSON.

How now, Jenkinson? things go on prosperously I hope.

Jen. Sir, I am concerned—or, indeed, sorry,—that is to say, I wish I could have the satisfaction to say that they do.

Free. What say you? sorry and satisfied? You are a smooth spoken man, Mr. Jenkinson; but tell me the worst at once. I thought I had been pretty sure of it as the poll stood this morning.

Jen. It would have given me great pleasure, sir, to have confirmed that opinion; but, unfortunately for you, and unpleasantly for myself—

Free. Tut, tut, speak faster, man! what is it?

Jen. An old gentleman from Ensford, who formerly received favours from Mrs. Baltimore's father, has come many a mile across the country, out of pure good will, to vote for him, with ten or twelve distant voters at his heels; and this, I am free to confess, is a thing that was never taken into our calculation.

Free. That was very wrong though: we should have taken every thing into our calculation. Shall I lose it, think you? I would rather lose ten thousand pounds.

Mrs. F. Yes, Mr. Freeman, that is spoken like yourself.

Jen. A smaller sum than that, I am almost sure,—that is to say, I think I may have the boldness to promise, would secure it to you.

Free. How so?

Jen. Mr. Baltimore, you know, has many unpleasant claims upon him.

Free. Debts, you mean: but what of that?

Jen. Only that I can venture to assure you, many of his creditors would have the greatest pleasure in life in obliging me. And when you have bought up their claims, it will be a very simple matter just

to have him laid fast for a little while. The disgrace of that situation will effectually prevent the last days of the poll from preponderating in his favour. It is the easiest thing in the world.

Free. (shrinking back from him). Is that your scheme? O fie, fie! the rudest tongued lout in the parish would have blushed to propose it.

Mrs. F. If there should be no other alternative?

Free. Let me lose it then! To be a member of Parliament, and not an honest man! O, fie, fie, fie! (*Walking up and down much disturbed.*)

Jen. To be sure; indeed it must be confessed gentlemen have different opinions on these subjects; and I am free to confess, that I have great pleasure, upon this occasion, in submitting to your better judgment. And now, sir, as I am sorry to be under the necessity of hurrying away from you upon an affair of some consequence to myself, will you have the goodness to indulge me with a few moments' attention, just whilst I mention to you what I have done in regard to Southerdown churchyard?

Free. Well, it is my duty to attend to that. Have you ordered a handsome monument to be put up to my father's memory? Ay, to the memory of John Freeman, the weaver. They reproach me with being the son of a mechanic; but I will show them that I am not ashamed of my origin. Ay, every soul of them shall read it if they please, "erected to his memory by his dutiful son," &c.

Jen. Yes, sir, I have ordered a proper stone, with a plain neat tablet of marble.

Free. A plain tablet of marble! that is not what I meant. I'll have it a large and a handsome thing, with angels, and trumpets, and deaths' heads upon it, and every thing that a good handsome monument ought to have. Do you think I have made a fortune like a prince, to have my father's tombstone put off with a neat plain tablet?

Mrs. F. Now, my dear, you must allow me to know rather more in matters of taste than yourself, and I assure you a plain tablet is the genteel and handsomest thing that can be placed over it.

Free. Is it?

Mrs. F. Indeed is it. And as for the inscription about his dutiful son and all that, I think it would be more respectful to have it put into Latin.

Free. Very well; if it is but handsome enough, I don't care; so pray, Jenkinson, write again, and desire them to put a larger tablet, and to get the curate to make the inscription, with as much Latin in it as he can conveniently put together. I should be glad likewise, if you would write to the Vicar of Blackmorton to send me the register of my baptism: I shall want it by and bye, on account of some family affairs.

Jen. I shall have the greatest pleasure in obeying your commands. Good day! [*Exit.*]

Free. Where is the state of the poll, and the list of the outstanding voters?

Mrs. F. Come to my dressing-room, and I'll show you exactly how every thing stands. You won't surely give up your point for a little—

Free. What do you mean to say?

Mrs. F. Nothing—nothing at all. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

BALTIMORE's house. *Enter* BALTIMORE, followed by DAVID, and speaking as he enters.

Balt. And so the crowd gave three cheers when good old Humphries tottered up to the hustings to give his vote, as he declared, for the grandson of his old benefactor, Mr. Legender Baltimore? I should have liked to have seen it.

Dav. O, your honour, they gave three such hearty cheers! and old Goody Robson clapped her poor withered hands till the tears ran over her eyes.

Balt. Did she so? she shall be remembered for this! I saw her little grandson running about the other day barefooted—he shall run about barefooted no longer.—And so my friends begin to wear a bolder face upon it?

Dav. Yes, sir, they begin to look main pert upon it now.

Balt. Well, David, and do thou look pert upon it too. There's something for thee. (*Gives him money.*) A noise of laughing heard without.) Who is that without? is it not Peter's voice? Ho, Peter!

Enter PETER followed by NAT.

What were you laughing at there?

Pet. (*with a broad grin.*) Only, sir, at Squire Freeman, he, he, he! who was riding up the Back-lane, a little while ago, on his new crop-eared hunter as fast as he could canter, with all the skirts of his coat flapping about him, for all the world like a clucking hen upon a sow's back, he, he, he!

Balt. (*with his face brightening.*) Thou art pleasant, Peter; and what then?

Pet. When just turning the corner, your honour, as it might be so, my mother's brown calf, bless its snout! I shall love it for it as long as I live, set its face through the hedge, and said "Mow!"

Balt. (*eagerly.*) And he fell, did he?

Pet. O yes, your honour! into a good soft bed of all the rotten garbage of the village.

Balt. And you saw this, did you?

Pet. O yes, your honour, as plain as the nose on my face.

Balt. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! and you really saw it?

David. (*aside to NAT.*) I wonder my master can demean himself so as to listen to that knave's tales: I'm sure he was proud enough once.

Balt. (*still laughing.*) You really saw it?

Pet. Ay, your honour, and many more than me saw it. Didn't they, Nat?

Balt. And there were a number of people to look at him, too?

Pet. Oh! your honour, all the rag tag of the parish were grinning at him. Wa'n't they, Nat?

Balt. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! this is excellent! ha, ha, ha! He would shake himself but ruefully before them (*still laughing violently*).

Pet. Ay, sir, he shook the wet straws and the withered turnip-tops from his back. It would have done your heart good to have seen him.

Dav. Nay, you know well enough, you do, that there is nothing but a bank of dry sand in that corner. (*With some indignation to PET.*)

Balt. (*impatently to DAVID.*) Pooh, silly fellow, it is the dirtiest nook in the village.—And he rose and shook himself, ha, ha, ha! (*Laughing still violently.*) I did not know that thou wert such a humorous fellow, Peter. Here is money for thee to drink the brown calf's health.

Pet. Ay, your honour, for certain he shall have a noggen.

Dav. (*aside.*) To think now that he should demean himself so!

Enter MRS. BALTIMORE.

Mrs. B. (*aside to BALT.*) Mr. Freeman is at the door: should you wish to receive him? I hurried to give you notice. Will it be disagreeable to you?

Balt. O, not at all. Let him in by all means! (*To the servants.*) I am at home. [*Exeunt servants.*]

Mrs. B. Now, this is as it should be, my dear Baltimore. I like to see you in this good temper of mind.

Balt. Say no more about that. Things go on prosperously with me at present: there is a gleam of sunshine thrown across us.

Enter FREEMAN and CHARLES BALTIMORE.

(*To FREE.*) Good morning, sir; a very good morning to you.

Free. I thank you, Mr. Baltimore. You see I take, notwithstanding all that is going on between us at present, the liberty of a neighbour.

Balt. (*smiling.*) O, no apology, sir! I am very glad to see you. This is a fine morning for riding on horseback, Mr. Freeman; I hope you have enjoyed it.

Free. (*aside to CHAR.*) How gracious he is! We are certainly come in a lucky moment.

Char. He is in a monstrous good humour certainly; now is the time to manage him. (*Aside to FREE.*)

Free. I am much obliged to you, sir, for this good neighbourly reception; and I flatter myself you will think I am come on a neighbourly visit too.

Balt. O certainly, sir, but let us talk a little more of this fine morning: it is really a very fine morning for riding on horseback: how does your cropeared hunter do?

Free. Eating his oats, I dare say very contentedly. All my horses are pretty well off: I buy the best oats in the country for them, and I pay the best price for them too. They are not, to be sure, so well lodged as they shall be. My architect has just given me in his plan for my new stables: two thousand pounds is the estimate, and I suppose I must allow him to go a little beyond it, to have every thing handsome and complete. That is my way. Will you look at the plan? (*Taking a plan from his pocket.*)

Balt. (*drawing back with disgust.*) I have no taste for architecture.

Free. That is a pity now, for it is really a complete thing. By the bye, are not you going to do something to the roof of your offices soon? They'll be down about your ears presently, and the longer you delay that job, the heavier it will be when it comes. (*Aside to CHARLES, on seeing BALT. bite his lips and turn away from him.*) What is the matter with him now?

Char. (*aside.*) Only a little twitching at his heart: it will soon be off again.

Mrs. Balt. (*aside to BALT.*) For heaven's sake don't let this discompose you: his absurdity makes me laugh.

Balt. (*aside.*) Does it? I did not see you laugh. Well, I am a fool to mind it thus. (*Going up to FREE, with affected good humour.*) I am glad to hear your horses are to be lodged in a manner suitable to their owner's dignity. But you are the best horseman too, as well as the best horse-master, in the county, though your modesty prevents you from talking of it.

Free. O, dear sir! I am but middling in that way.

Balt. Pray don't let your diffidence wrong you. What do you jockeys reckon the best way of managing a fiery mettled steed, when a brown calf sets his face through the hedge, and says "Mow?"

Free. Ha, ha, ha! faith, you must ask your friend Mr. Saunderson that question. His cropeared horse has thrown him in the lane a little while ago, and he has some experience in the matter. As for myself, I have the rheumatism in my arm, and I have not been on horseback for a week. (*BALT. looks mortified and disappointed.*)

Mrs. B. (*to FREE.*) He is not hurt, I hope?

Free. No, madam; he mounted again and rode on.

Char. It was no fault of the horse's neither, if the goose had but known how to sit on his back. He has as good blood in him as any horse in —

Free. No, no, Charles! not now, if you please. (*Going up frankly to BALT.*) And now, sir, that we

have had our little laugh together, and it is a long time, it must be confessed, since we have had a joke together — ha, ha, ha! I like a little joke with a friend as well as any man — ha, ha, ha!

Balt. (*retreating as FREE advances.*) Sir.

Free. But some how, you have been too ceremonious with me, Mr. Baltimore, and I'm sure I have always wished you to consider me as a neighbour, that would be willing to do you a kind office, or lend you or any of your family a lift at any time.

[*Still advancing familiarly to BALT.*]

Balt. (*still retreating.*) Sir, you are very gracious.

Free. So, as I said, since we have had our little joke together, I'll make no more preface about it, my good neighbour.

[*Still advancing as BALT. retreats, till he gets him close to the wall, and then putting out his hand to take hold of him by the buttons, BALT. shrinks to one side, and puts up his arm to defend himself.*]

Balt. (*hastily.*) Sir, there is no button here! (*Recovering himself, and pointing in a stately manner to a chair.*) Do me the honour, sir, to be seated, and then I shall hear what you have to say.

Free. (*offended.*) No, sir, I perceive that the shorter I make my visit here the more acceptable it will be; I shall therefore say what I have to say, upon my legs (*assuming consequence.*) Sir, I have, by my interest and some small degree of influence which I believe I may boast of possessing in the country, procured the nomination of a young man to a creditable and advantageous appointment in the East Indies. If you have no objection, I bestow it upon your relation, here, Mr. Charles Baltimore, of whom I have a very good opinion.

Balt. Sir, I am at a loss to conceive how you should take it into your head to concern yourself in the affairs of my family. If Mr. Charles Baltimore chooses to consider himself as no longer belonging to it, he may be glad of your protection.

Mrs. B. My dear Mr. Baltimore, how strangely you take up this matter! Indeed, Mr. Freeman, you are very good: and pray don't believe that we are all ungrateful.

Balt. (*angrily to CHARLES.*) And you have chosen a patron, have you?

Char. I'm sure I did not think — I'm sure I should be very glad — I'm sure I don't know what to do.

Free. Good morning, madam; I take my leave. (*Slightly to BALT.*) Good morning. [*Exit.*]

Char. I'm sure I don't know what to do.

Mrs. B. Whatever you do, I hope you will have the civility, at least, to see that worthy man down stairs, and thank him a hundred times over for his goodness.

Char. That I will.

Mrs. B. Oh, Baltimore! how could you treat any body so, that came to you with offers of kindness?

Balt. (striding up and down). What would you have had me do? what would you have had me do, madam? His abominable fingers were within two inches of my nose.

Mrs. B. Oh, Baltimore, Baltimore!

Balt. Leave me, madam!

[*Exit Mrs. B. with her handkerchief to her eyes.*

[*BALTIMORE still strides up and down; then stopping suddenly to listen.*

He's not gone yet! I hear his voice still! That fool, with some cursed nonsense or other, is detaining him still in the hall! It is past all endurance! Who waits there?

Enter PETER.

What, dost thou dare to appear before me with that serpent's tongue of thine, sloughed over with lies? You dare to bring your stories to me, do you? (*Shaking him violently by the collar.*)

Pet. Oh! mercy, mercy, your honour! I'm sure it was no fault of mine that it was not Squire Freeman that fell. I'm sure I did all I could to make him.

Balt. Do what thou canst now, then, to save thy knave's head from the wall. (*Throwing PETER violently from him after shaking him well; and exit into an inner room, flapping the door behind him with great force.*)

Pet. (after looking ruefully, and scratching his head for some time). Well, I see plainly enough that a body who tells lies should look two or three ways on every side of him before he begins.

[*Exit, very ruefully.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

MRS. BALTIMORE'S dressing-room. She is discovered sitting by a table, looking over papers.

Mrs. B. Well, I have the satisfaction to find that my personal expenses, for this last year, have been very moderate; but I am resolved they shall be still more contracted. Though ruin, I fear, cannot be averted, yet, when it does come, I can lift up my unblushing head, and say, "this is no work of mine." No foolish debts of my contracting, Baltimore, shall add to the number of those claims that already so gallingly press upon your proud and irritable mind; and will, perhaps, in the end, drive you from the long and fondly retained habitation of your forefathers. (*Leans pensively upon her arm for some time, then continues to look over more papers.*)

Enter CHARLES, with a slow, sauntering step.

Char. Let me see what o'clock it is now. What says my watch to it? (*Looking at his watch.*) Pest take it! it is but ten minutes since I looked

last; and I could have sworn it was as good three quarters, or, at least, half an hour, as ever clock ticked, or ever sand-glass ran. (*Yawning and stretching himself.*) Ah! I find it has been but half an hour of a weary man's reckoning, who still sees two long periods cycled hours, lying between him and his dinner, like a dreary length of desert waste before the promised land. (*Yawning and stretching again.*) My fishing tackle is all broken and destroyed, and Squire Sapling has borrowed my pointer. I have sat shaking my legs upon the corn-chest, till every horse in the stable is rubbed down, and the groom, happy dog! has gone with his broom in his hand, to sweep out the yard and the kennel. O dear! O dear! O dear! What shall I do?

Mrs. B. (rising from the table). Poor man! I pity you with all my heart; but I do think I could contrive to find employment for you, if you are inclined to it.

Char. Yes, yes! I am inclined to it! Idleness is tiresome enough, heaven knows! I am inclined to it, be it what it will. But what is it though? Have you any skeins of thread to wind?

Mrs. B. No, something better than that, Charles.

Char. What, card-boxes to paste?

Mrs. B. Something better than that too.

Char. Poetry or advertisements to cut out of the newspaper?

Mrs. B. No, no; something better than all these.

Char. (eagerly). It is some new employment then.

Mrs. B. Yes, Charles, a very new one indeed. What would you think of taking up a book and reading an hour before dinner?

Char. (disappointed). Pshaw! is that your fine employment? I thought I was really to have something to do. I'll e'en go to the village again, and hear stories from old Margery, about the election and the old family grandeur of the Baltimores.

Mrs. B. Nay, don't put such an affront upon my recommendation. Do take up this book, and try, for once in your life, what kind of a thing reading quietly for an hour to one's self may be. I assure you there are many good stories in it, and you will get some little insight into the affairs of mankind, by the by.

Char. No, no; no story read can ever be like a story told by a pair of moving lips, and their two lively assistants the eyes, looking it to you all the while, and supplying every deficiency of words.

Mrs. B. But try it, only try it. You can't surely be so ungallant as to refuse me. (*Gives him a book.*)

Char. Well then, since it must be so, show me where to begin. Some people, when they open a book, can just pop upon a good thing at once, and be diverted with it; but I don't know how it is, whenever I open a book, I can light upon nothing but long dry prefaces and dissertations; beyond which, perhaps, there may lie, at last, some pleasant story, like a little picture-closet at the end of a long

stone gallery, or like a little kernel buried in a great mountain of shells and of husks. I would not take the trouble of coming at it for all that one gets.

Mrs. B. You shall have no trouble at all. There is the place to begin at. Sit down, then, and make no more objections. (*Points out the place, and returns to her papers again.*)

[*CHARLES sits down with his book; reads a little with one arm dangling over the back of the chair; then changes his position, and reads a little while with the other arm over the back of the chair; then changes his position again, and after rubbing his legs with his book, continues to read a little more; then he stops, and brushes some dust off his breeches with his elbow.*

Mrs. B. (*Observing him and smiling.*) How does the reading go on?

Char. Oh, pretty well; I shall finish the page presently. (*He reads a little longer, still fidgetting about, and then starting up from his seat.*) By the bye, that hound of a shoemaker has forgotten to send home my new boots. I must go and see after them.

Mrs. B. What could possibly bring your boots into your mind at this time, I wonder?

Char. It is no wonder at all; for whenever I begin to read, and that is not often, I confess, all the little odd things that have slipped out of my head for a month, are sure to come into it then. I must see after the boots though.

Mrs. B. Not just now.

Char. This very moment. There is no time to be lost. I must have them to-morrow at all events. Good bye to you. (*Looking to the window as he passes on towards the door.*) Ha! there comes a visitor for you.

Mrs. B. Who is it?

Char. It is Charlotte Freeman, walking very demurely, because she is within sight of the windows.

Mrs. B. I am sorry she is come. I have desired the servants to say I am from home. It is unpleasant to Mr. Baltimore to see any part of that family, and I have promised——no, no, I have——you must go to inquire after your boots, you say. (*A gentle tap at the door.*) Come in.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Char. (*going up affectionately to Mrs. B.*) I thought you would let me in. (*Curtseys affectedly to CHARLES.*)

Mrs. B. Did the servants——

Char. I saw no servants at all. I stole in by the little door of the shrubbery; for I did not like to go in by the great gate, lest I should meet Mr. Baltimore; and he always looks so strangely at me——But I beg pardon: I see I hurt you by saying so.

Mrs. B. Have you walked far this morning?

Char. Only so far to see you; for you seemed unwell when I saw you last, and I could not be happy till I inquired after you.

Mrs. B. You are very good, my dear Charlotte; I am very well.

Char. (*observing her embarrassed.*) I fear I come unreasonably.

Char. O, no! We were just wishing for some good girl to come to us; and when you go home again, I shall have the honour of attending you.

Char. (*affectedly.*) No, I thank you, there is no occasion; I know my way very well.

Char. But I can show you a better way, where there are fine sloes and blackberries on the hedges, if you have a mind to gather any. Eating such sweet fruit puts people into good humour, and cures them of affectation.

Char. (*disdainfully.*) I don't know what you mean, sir, by your sloes and your blackberries, but I suppose you want to show me the place where you cropped your black puppy's ears the other day, and had your fingers well bit for your pains. I wonder whether you or the puppy were in the best humour upon that occasion.

Char. Faith, the puppy and I were very much the better for a piece of your flogged furbelow, which we found upon the hedge, to bind up our wounds for us. For you have a great sense of justice, Miss Freeman; you never take any thing off the bushes, without leaving something in return.

Char. And you, too, Mr. Charles, are a gentleman of great honesty; for you would not take a bit of the poor dog's ears off without leaving a bit of your own fingers in his mouth as an equivalent.

Mrs. B. How comes it that you two are always quarrelling, and yet always coming in one another's way? (*To CHAR.*) You forget: you must go and see after your boots.

Char. O! I can go to-morrow morning.

Mrs. B. But there is not a moment to be lost! you must have them at all events, you know. No, no; no lingering here: it is an errand of necessity. (*Pointing to the door.*) [*Exit CHAR. unwillingly.*

Char. I'm glad you have sent him away; he is so forward and so troublesome. Perhaps I am a little so myself just now. If I am, don't make any ceremony of sending me off; for I see, my dear Mrs. Baltimore, your spirits are not so good as they used to be. O! if I could do any thing to cheer them! (*Looking wistfully at her.*)

Mrs. B. I thank you, my good girl! you are not at all troublesome; you are very pleasant to me; and if it depended upon myself, I should like that we were often together.

Char. (*taking her hand warmly.*) Should you? Well, and if it depended upon me, I should be always with you. I should go wherever you went, and do whatever you did, and wear the same caps and gowns that you wear, and look just as like you as I could. It is a sad thing that I can get to you so seldom, with those eternal lessons at home, and Mr. Baltimore's stern looks, which almost frighten me

when I come here. Do you know I have often thought of writing to you, but then I don't know what to say. It is strange now! I know ladies, who love one another, write such long letters to one another every day, and yet I don't know what to say.

Mrs. B. And I have known, my dear Charlotte, ladies who did not love one another do just the same thing.

Charl. Have you, indeed? La, that is wonderful! But don't you very often write long letters to the friends you love most?

Mrs. B. Indeed I don't write very often, nor very long letters to any body; and yet I have some friends whom I very dearly love.

Charl. (taking *Mrs. B.'s* hand and skipping about her). O! I am so glad to hear that! I thought all dear friends wrote to one another every day, and that every body knew what to say but myself.—When I am with mamma, I think it will be so difficult to become amiable and accomplished, as I ought to be, that I am quite discouraged; but when I am with you, it appears so pleasant and so easy, that I am put quite into good spirits again.—But, no, no! I do every thing so clumsily! and you do every thing so well!

Mrs. B. Don't be so diffident of yourself, Charlotte: remember you are but fifteen, and I am four-and-twenty.

Charl. I wonder how I shall look when I am four-and-twenty. I'm sure, notwithstanding all the pains both mamma and my governess take with me, I don't think I look very well at present.

Mrs. B. Nay, my good Charlotte, you look very well always, when you don't attempt to look too well. I hope to see you turn out a very agreeable woman.

Charl. Do you think so? I am to go to public places with mamma next winter; and I have overheard her and my governess whispering together as if I should have admirers coming about me then. But I don't think I shall. Do you think so?

Mrs. B. (smiling). Indeed, I can't say: perhaps you may, and it is possible you may not; but the less you think of them, the more you will probably have.

Charl. I'm sure I think very little about them. And yet I can't help fancying to myself sometimes, how I shall behave to them.

Mrs. B. Ah! that is but a poor way of employing your fancy. Don't think too much about admirers: they won't admire you the more for that.

Charl. But I won't let them know that I think about them.

Mrs. B. But they will find it out.

Charl. Ha! but I will hold myself very high indeed, and not seem to care a farthing for one of them.

Mrs. B. But they will find it out—nevertheless.

Charl. I'm sure I have heard that the young men now-a-days are no great conjurers.

Mrs. B. That may be very true; but they are all conjurers enough to find that out, though better things should escape their penetration. (With some alarm.) I hear Mr. Baltimore coming.

Charl. You seem uneasy. Will he be angry to find me here?

Mrs. B. (much embarrassed). He will be surprised, perhaps; but he won't come here—he is only passing to the library, I hope.

Charl. Ha! but he is coming though! (Creeping behind *Mrs. B.*) He is just at the door. I will hide myself behind the open door of this cabinet, and do you stand before me till he goes away.

[*She skulks behind the door of an open cabinet, and Mrs. B. stands up close by her to conceal her completely.*]

Enter BALTIMORE.

Balt. The tide is running against me again; and even my own old servants, I have learnt, at this moment, are swilling themselves at the Cat and Bagpipes, with the cursed ale and roast-beef of mine adversary. I am going to my attorney immediately; if any person on business should call in my absence, detain him till I return.

Mrs. B. Certainly. I wish you a pleasant ride. I think I shall take a little ramble presently, but shall leave your orders with the servants.

Balt. No, don't go out just now, I beg it of you. That little affected jade of Freeman's is prowling about; and I have already confessed to you, that it disturbs me to see you together.

Mrs. B. Ah! you are prejudiced: you talk without knowing her. She is a sweet-tempered, kind-hearted-girl, and nature meant her for something very different from what she appears to be.

[*CHARLOTTE behind catches hold of Mrs. B.'s hand and kisses it.*]

Balt. Yes, nature meant her for a clumsy—

Mrs. B. Pray don't delay going to your attorney!

Balt. A clumsy hoyden only; and, under the tuition of her ridiculous mother, she assumes all the delicate airs of a fine lady.

Mrs. B. Well, well, go to your attorney; it is all very harmless.

Balt. Well, well, it is all very harmless, if you will; and I have laughed at a thousand little affected fools, nearly as absurd as herself. But when I see those broad features of her father, stamped so strongly by nature upon her common-place countenance, pretending to wear the conscious importance of superior refinement, it provokes me beyond all patience that you should be so intimate with her.

Mrs. B. She is a girl that will very much improve by any reasonable intimacy, and will very soon become like the people she is with.

Balt. Very well, let her be as little with you, then, and as much with her own foolish absurd mother as possible; and the more ridiculous they

both are, the greater pleasure I shall have in seeing them any where but in your company. I assure you I have no wish to reform them. It is one of the few consolations I receive in my intercourse with this man, to see him connected with such a couple of fools.

Mrs. B. O, Baltimore! for heaven's sake stay no longer here!

Balt. Pray what is the meaning of this? are you in your senses?

Mrs. B. Scarcely, indeed, while you remain here, and talk thus.

Balt. What, does it affect you to this pitch then? Are you attached to that girl?

Mrs. B. Indeed I am. (*CHARL. behind, catches Mrs. B.'s hand again and kisses it very gratefully.*)

Balt. Well, madam; I see plainly enough the extent of your attachment to me. (*Walking up and down vehemently.*) Methinks it should have been offensive to you even to have stroked the very ears of his dog. And that excrescence, that wart, that tadpole, that worm from the adder's nest, which I abhor—

Mrs. B. For heaven's sake go away! you kill, you distract me!

Balt. Yes, yes, madam; I see plainly enough I am married to a woman who takes no common interest, who owns no sympathy with my feelings.

[*He turns upon his heel in anger to go away, whilst CHARLOTTE springs from her hiding place, and, slipping softly after him, makes a motion with her foot as if she would give him a kick in the going out; upon which BALT. turns suddenly round and sees her. She stops short quite confounded: and he, glancing a look of indignation at his wife, fixes his eyes sternly upon CHARLOTTE, who, recoiling from him step by step as he sternly frowns upon her, throws herself upon Mrs. B.'s neck, and bursts into tears. BALT. then turns upon his heel angrily, and exits.*]

Charl. (*sobbing.*) I shall never be able to look up again as long as I live. There never was any body like me! for always when I wish to behave best, something or other comes across me and I expose myself. I shall be so scorn'd and laugh'd at!—I'll never enter this house any more—Oh!—oh! oh! Some devil put it into my head, and I could not help it. I'll go home again, and never come a visiting any more—Oh! oh! oh! I am so disgraced!

Mrs. B. Be comforted, my dear Charlotte! It was but a girl's freak, and nobody shall know any thing of it. But, indeed, you had better go home.

Charl. Yes, I'll go home and never return here any more. But, oh, my dear Mrs. Baltimore, don't despise me.

Mrs. B. No, my dear girl, I love you as much as ever.

Charl. Do you indeed? And yet I must not come to you again. O, I shall wander every morning on the side of the little stream that divides your grounds from ours; and if I could but see you sometimes on the opposite side calling over to me, I should be happy! It is so good in you to say that you love me; for I shall never love myself any more.

[*Exeunt: Mrs. B. soothing and comforting CHARL. as they go off.*]

SCENE II.

A small ante-room in FREEMAN'S house. Enter Mrs. FREEMAN with letters in her hand.

Mrs. Free. (*holding out her letters.*) Pretty well I think for one day's post. I should write to my dear Mrs. Languish too, if my extracts from Petrarch were ready.

Enter Governess, in great haste.

Gov. O dear, madame! I don't know what ting I shall do wit Miss Freeman.

Mrs. Free. What is the matter?

Gov. She come in, since a very little time from her walk, and I believe she be to see Madame Baltimore too, as drooping and as much out of spirit as a pair of ruffles wid de starch out of dem; and she sit down so (*imitating her*), quite frompish, and won't read her lesson to me, though I speak all de good words to her dat I can.

Mrs. Free. Well, go to her again, and I'll follow you immediately, and speak to her myself.

[*Exit governess.*]

[*Mrs. Free., after putting up her letters very leisurely, and looking at one or two of them, goes out.*]

SCENE III.

CHARLOTTE is discovered sitting in a disconsolate posture, on a low stool in the middle of the room; the Governess standing by her endeavouring to soothe and coax her, whilst she moves away from her fretfully, pushing her stool towards the front of the stage every time the Governess attempts to soothe her.

Gov. Do be de good young lady, now, and read over your lesson.

Charl. Can't you let me alone for a moment? I'm not in a humour just now.

Gov. You be in de humours, but in de bad humours, I see. I will put you in de good humours. Look here! Fal, lal, de laddy, daddy. (*Singing fantastically.*) Why don't you smile, miss? You love dat air, don't you? (*Putting her hand soothingly on CHARLOTTE'S shoulder, and grinning in her face.*)

Charl. (*shaking off her hand impatiently, turning her back to her, and sitting on the other side of the stool.*) I don't like it a bit.

Gov. O, but you do! And den de pretty steps I showed you; if you would read your lesson, now, we should dance dem togeder. (*Singing and dancing some French steps fantastically.*) Why don't you look at me? Don't it amuse you, miss?

Charl. What amusement is it to me, do you think, to see a pair of old fringed shoes clattering upon the boards?

Gov. (*shrugging her shoulders.*) Mon Dieu! she has no taste for any of the elegancies. (*Putting her hand upon CHARLOTTE'S shoulder coaxingly.*) But if you don't speak well de French, and write well de French, de pretty fine gentlemans won't admire you.

Charl. (*shaking off her hand again, and turning from her to sit on the other side of the stool.*) And what do I care for de pretty fine gentlemans, or de pretty fine ladies either? I wish there was not such a thing in the world as either of them.

Gov. (*casting up her eyes.*) Mon Dieu! She wish us all out of de world.

Charl. I'm sure I should live an easier life than I do, if there was not —

Enter MRS. FREEMAN.

Mrs. Free. What freak is this you have taken into your head, Miss Freeman, not to read with ma'moiselle. It won't do, I assure you, to follow your own whimsies thus. You must study regularly and diligently, if you would ever become an elegant and accomplished woman.

Charl. I'm sure I shall never become either elegant or accomplished. Why need I scrawl versions eternally, and drum upon the piano-forte, and draw frightful figures till my fingers ache, and make my very life irksome to me, when I know very well I shall never be better than a poor heedless creature, constantly forgetting and exposing myself, after all? I know very well I shall never be either elegant or accomplished.

Mrs. Free. Why should you suppose so? there is no merit in being too diffident.

Gov. You should not tink so poor of yourself, miss. You come on very well. Several lady say dat you are become so like to me in all de airs, and de grace, and de manners, dat you are quite odder ting dan you were.

Charl. No wonder then that they laugh at me.

Gov. (*casting up her eyes.*) Mon Dieu! She is mad! shall I shut her up in her chamber?

Mrs. Free. Stop a little, if you please; she does not speak altogether from the purpose neither. Come, come, Miss Freeman: rouse yourself up, and have some laudable ambition: the distinction of elegant accomplishments is not to be obtained without industry and attention.

Charl. I wish I were with some of the wild people that run in the woods, and know nothing about accomplishments! I know I shall be a blundering

creature all my life, getting into scrapes that nobody else gets into; I know I shall. Why need I study my carriage, and pin back my shoulders, and hamper myself all day long, only to be laughed at after all?

Mrs. Free. I don't know what you may meet with when you choose to visit by yourself, Miss Freeman; but in my company, at least, you may be satisfied upon that score.

Charl. And what satisfaction will it be to me that we are ridiculous together? I would rather be laughed at alone than have people laughing at us both, as they do.

Mrs. Free. (*with amazement.*) The creature is beside herself in good earnest! What do you mean, child? Whom have you been with? Who has put these things into your head? If Mrs. Baltimore can find no better conversation for you than this kind of insolent impertinence, she is poorly employed indeed.

Charl. It was not Mrs. Baltimore that said so.

Mrs. Free. Who said so then? somebody has, I find.

Charl. It was Mr. Baltimore.

Mrs. Free. And you had the meanness to suffer such words in your presence?

Charl. It was not in my presence neither, for he did not see me.

Mrs. Free. And where were you then?

Charl. Just behind the train of Mrs. Baltimore's gown, till he should go out again.

Mrs. Free. And so you sneaked quietly in your hiding-place, and heard all this insolent abuse? Mean creature! a girl of any spirit would have rushed out upon him with indignation.

Charl. And so did I rush out.

Mrs. Free. And what did you say to him!

Charl. (*sillyly.*) I did not say any thing.

Mrs. Free. I hope you resented it then, by the silent dignity of your behaviour.

Charl. (*much embarrassed.*) I'm sure I don't know—I did but give him a little make-believe kick with my slipper, as he went out at the door, when he turned round of a sudden, with a pair of terrible eyes staring upon me like the Great Mogul.

Mrs. Free. A make-believe kick! what do you mean by that?

Charl. La! Just a kick on—on——

Mrs. Free. On what, child?

Charl. La! just upon his coat behind as he went out at the door.

Mrs. Free. And did you do that? Oh! it is enough to make one mad! You are just fit to live with the Indians, indeed, or the wild Negroes, or the Hottentots! To disgrace yourself thus, after all the pains I have taken with you! It is enough to drive one mad! Go to your room directly, and get sixteen pages of blank verse by rote. But I'm

sure you are fitter company for the pigs than the poets.

Charl. How was I to know that he had eyes in the back of his neck, and could know what was doing behind him?

Mrs. Free. He shall have eyes upon all sides of his head if he escape from my vengeance. It shall cost him his election, let it cost me what it will. (*Rings the bell violently.*)—Who waits there? (*Enter a servant.*) Order the chariot to be got ready immediately. (*Exit servant.*) I will go to Mr. Jenkinson directly. He has already pointed out the means; and I shall find money, without Mr. Freeman's knowing any thing of the matter, to manage it all well enough.

Charl. La! I'm sure I knew well enough I did wrong; but I did not think of all this uproar about it.

Mrs. Free. Go to your own room, child: I can't abide the sight of you.

[*Exeunt, MRS. FREE, on one side of the stage, and CHARL. and governess on the other.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A summer apartment in BALTIMORE'S house, with a glass-door opened to a lawn. The scene without is seen in the sober light of a calm summer evening, with the sun already set. Enter BALTIMORE and MRS. BALTIMORE from an inner room.

Baltimore (speaking as they enter). Let us say no more about it then. I forgive the little deceit of concealment which my temper, become too hasty of late, may, perhaps, justify. I will confess that the irritation excited in my mind by seeing that girl so frequently with you is unreasonable, is capricious. But you must bear with me a little, my Isabella. It is a part of the infirmity that oppresses me: it is the fretted edge of a deep and rankling—Come, come, come! we'll say no more about it. Let us forswear this subject. Let us now talk, even when we are alone, of light and indifferent things.

Mrs. B. Indeed, I believe it will be safest for us, till this passing storm—it will be but a summer storm I hope—is past over our heads. (*Assuming cheerfulness.*) And now, to begin upon this salutary plan of yours without loss of time, let me boast to you of the beautiful collection of plants I have nursed with my own hands, in a sly corner of the garden. You have never yet been to see them.

Balt. (eagerly). Ay, even there too.

Mrs. B. What do you mean?

Balt. (peevishly). Go to! you have heard as well as I, of the ridiculous expense he has been at in

seeds, and rare plants, and flower-roots, and nonsense; and of the learned botanist he is to pay so liberally for publishing a catalogue of them for the use of the scientific world—All that abominable ostentation. Ha, ha, ha! He does not know a nettle from a crow-foot on his native fields. Ha, ha, ha, ha!—You don't laugh, I think?

Mrs. B. We were to talk, you know, of indifferent things. But I have forgotten to tell you of what really is not indifferent: I had a letter from my sister this morning, and she says your little godson is quite recovered from the remains of his illness. (*Pauses for an answer.*)

Balt. (nodding his head, but not attending to her). Umph.

Mrs. B. (coaxingly). She says he has become so chattering, and so playful, it is delightful to see him! And he talks of his godfather very often!

Balt. (nodding again). Umph.

Mrs. B. He was always a great favourite of yours.

Balt. (breaking out vehemently). If any man but himself had been guilty of half that ridiculous vanity, the dullest fool in the county would have laughed at him.

Mrs. B. O dear! still dwelling upon these ideas.

[*He turns from her, and walks to the bottom of the stage; she sighs deeply, and follows him with her eyes. A long pause.*]

Enter SERVET.

Serv. (to BALT.) Excuse me if I intrude, sir. And you too, my good lady. (*Bowing very low to Mrs. B.*) Here is a letter that I received a few moments ago, and I thought it expedient and proper that you should know its contents immediately. (*Gives the letter to BALT.*)

Balt. Let me see. (*Reads.*) "An unknown well-wisher thinks it right to inform you, that your friend—"

Serv. He ought to have said patron, sir. I'm sure, I have always been proud to name you as my patron to every body:—the family of Baltimore has always been such to me.

Balt. Well, well, no matter. (*Reads again.*) "To ruin your friend, Squire Baltimore. His adversary—"

Serv. Meaning Freeman, sir.

Balt. I understand! (*Reads again.*) "His adversary being busy in buying up the claims of some of his principal creditors. If he would walk long at large, let him walk cautiously."

Serv. Meaning that he will lay you up sir.

Balt. I understand it perfectly.

Mrs. B. O no, no! Some malicious person has written this.

Balt. Permit me madam, to speak to my man of business, without interruption.

Serv. No wonder, sir, that Mrs. Baltimore should

think so. He makes such a good show with his actions, that he must set about such things very cunningly.

Balt. Yes, Servet, thou hast always had some notion of his true character.

Serv. To think that there should be such hypocrisy in the world! It grieves, it distresses me!

Balt. Pooh, man! never mind how many hypocrites there are in the world, if he be but found amongst the number.

Serv. Ay, sir; but if he get you once into prison—

Balt. Will he not be detested for it?

Serv. But if he should take the borough from you—

Balt. Well! and if he should take my life too, would he not be hanged for it?

Serv. To be sure, there would be some satisfaction in that, if you could peep through your winding-sheet to see it.

Balt. He will now appear to the world in his true colours: I shall now speak boldly of a determined and palpable wrong: it relieves me from a heavy load. Give me thy hand, my friend Servet; thou hast brought me admirable news.

Serv. But, sir, we must take care of ourselves; for he is come of such a low, cunning, mean set of people—

Balt. Ha! you know this, do you? You know something of his family?

Serv. Yes, I know well enough: and his father every body knows was no better than a—a—a—

Balt. Than a what?—Out with it, man!

Serv. Than a—Than a—

Balt. (*eagerly*). Than a thief? is that it? O prove to me, only prove to me, that his father was a thief, and I'll give thee all that I have in the world.

Serv. No, not absolutely that—but no better than a paltry weaver.

Balt. (*disappointed*). Pooh! I knew that before.

Serv. Yes, every body knows it, to be sure. But there is no time to be lost: I am so zealous about it, that I can't rest till I have further information. I'll take horse directly and go in quest of it. I know where to inquire, and I shall return to you without loss of time.

Balt. Do so, my good friend, and don't be afraid of bringing back what you will call bad news. I shall not shrink from it. [*Exit SERVET.*]

[*Turning to MRS. B., who has been listening to their conversation with great marks of distrust and disapprobation.*]

And so, madam, you are diffident of all this?

Mrs. B. It will be impossible at this moment to make you view it in the same light that I do.

Balt. Yes, madam, I knew it would be so with you. He has bewitched and thrown a veil over the understandings of all men! I have perceived it long. Even from the first of his settling in the neighbour-

hood, my friends have begun to look on me not as they were wont to do. Even my very tenants and dependants salute me less cheerily. He has thrown a veil over the understandings of all men! He has estranged from me that sympathy and tenderness, which should have supported my head in the day of adversity.

Mrs. B. Ah, my dear Baltimore! It is you who have got a veil, a thick and gloomy veil, cast over your mind. That sympathy and tenderness is still the same. (*Pressing his hand.*) And, if the day of adversity must come, you will be convinced of it. But let us for a while give up thinking of these things: let us walk out together, and enjoy the soothing calmness of this beautiful twilight. The evening-star already looks from its peaceful sky; no sound of busy man is to be heard; the bat, and the beetle, and the night-fly, are abroad, and the pleasing hum of happy unseen life is in the air. Come forth, my husband. The shade of your native trees will wave over your head; the turf your infant feet first trode will be under your steps. Come forth, my friend, and more blessed thoughts will visit you.

Balt. No, no; my native trees and my native lawns are to me more cheerless than the dreary desert. I can enjoy nothing. The cursed neighbourhood of one obnoxious being has changed every thing for me. Would he were—(*clenching his hands and muttering.*)

Mrs. B. O! what are you saying?

Balt. (*turning away from her*). No matter what.

Enter a little boy from the lawn by the glass-door, running wildly and frightened.

Boy. He'll be drown'd, if nobody runs to save him! he'll be drown'd! he'll be drown'd!

Mrs. B. Has any body fallen into the pond?

Boy. Yes, madam; into the deepest part of it; and, if nobody don't run to pull him out, he'll be drown'd.

Balt. (*running eagerly towards the glass-door*). I'll go. Dost thou know who it is, boy?

Boy. Yes, to be sure, sir; it is Squire Freeman's own self. (*BALT. starts and stops short. MRS. B., clasping her hands and holding them up to heaven, remains in anxious suspense. BALT., after a moment's pause, rushes out quickly.*)

Mrs. B. O God! what will this come to! (*Throws herself back into a chair, and remains stupid and motionless. The boy stands staring at her.*)

Boy. Are you not well, ma'am? Shall I call any body? (*She makes no answer; he still stands staring at her.*) She don't speak: she don't look at nothing: I will call somebody. (*Goes to the side-scene, and calls.*) Who's there, I beseech you? O, hear me, hear me! Who's there, I say?

Enter Housemaid and Coachman.

Housem. What a bawling you make here, with

your dusty feet, you little nasty jackanapes! How dare you for to steal into a clean house?

Coach. If he ben't that little rascal that put the cracker under my horse's tail, I have no eyes in my head. He is always prowling about: there is never a dog hanged nor a kitten drowned in the parish, but he must be after it.

Boy. (pointing). Look there: what is the matter with the lady?

Housem. O mercy on us! my dear good lady: Are you sick, ma'am? or swooning? or beside yourself? Run, coachy, stupid oaf! and fetch us something.

Coach. I would run to the farthest nook of the earth, if I only knew what to bring. Will burnt feathers, or a little aqua-vitæ do you any good.

Mrs. B. (starting up). Do you hear any noise? Are they coming yet? I'll go out myself. (*Endeavours to go out, but cannot. Housemaid and coachman support her.*)

Enter DAVID hastily from the lawn.

Dav. He is saved, madam!

Mrs. B. O, what say you, David?

Dav. He has saved Squire Freeman. He threw himself into the deep water, and plashed about his arms lustily, till he caught him by the hair of his head, and drew him to the bank. One minute more had made a dead man of him.

Mrs. B. Who did that? Who caught him by the hair of the head?

Dav. My master, madam; and a brave man he is.

Mrs. B. (holding up her hands in ecstasy). Thy master! ay, and my husband! and God Almighty's good creature, who has formed every thing good! O, yes! He has made every being with good in it, and will at last make it perfectly so, in some way or other, known only to His wisdom. Ha! I hear a noise on the lawn.

Boy. (running out). I must not lose a sight of the drowned man. For he'll be as dropping wet as any corpse, I dare say; for all that there is life in him.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. B. I'll go and meet them. I'm strong enough now.

Dav. Let me support you, madam.

Housem. (to coach, as they go out). La! will he be all wet, do you think, and stretched upon his back?

[*Exeunt by the glass-door into the lawn, Mrs. B. supported by DAVID. Light from a window is now thrown across the path without doors, and discovers BALTIMORE and servants carrying FREEMAN into the house by another entry. The scene closes.*]

SCENE II.

A room in BALTIMORE'S house. Enter SIMEON and DAVID.

Dav. Now, my old Simeon, you'll see your master as hearty, after his ducking, as if he were an otter, and could live either in the water or out of it; though we had some trouble to bring him to his senses at first.

Sim. Ay, do let me go to him quickly. It had been a sorrowful day to this grey head if my master had—

Dav. Yes, and if my master had not, as a body may say, put his life in his hand to save him.

Sim. Very true, David, I say nothing against all that: I honour your master for it: thof I must say he has but an ungracious look with him. There is not another gentleman in the neighbourhood, thof I say it myself, that does not stop and say, "How do ye do, Old Simeon?" when he passes me.

Dav. I don't know; I am sure he used not to be ungracious. All the old folks of the parish used to thrust themselves in his way, as if it had been good for the ague, or an aching in the bones, to say, "God bless your honour."

Sim. That must have been before we came amongst you then. Ha! here comes his honour.

Enter FREEMAN, dressed in a night-gown, with TRUEBRIDGE and CHARLES BALTIMORE. Mrs. BALTIMORE, at the same time, enters by another door.

Sim. (going eagerly to his master, and kissing his hand, which FREEMAN holds out to him). God bless and preserve your worthy honour!

Free. I thank you, Simeon; a good God has preserved me. You have not been much alarmed, I hope?

Sim. No, sir; I heard of your safety before I heard of your danger; but some how or other it came across my heart, for all that; and I could not but think—I could not—(*pauses and draws the back of his hand across his eyes*). But the blessings of the aged and helpless have borne you up: the water could have no commission to hurt you.

True. Well said, good Simeon! the blessings of the aged and the helpless are of a very buoyant quality. A cork jacket is nothing to them.

Free. Do my wife and daughter know of it?

Sim. No, please your honour; my mistress is not returned from her visit yet, and my poor young lady is closed up in her room with madamselle, taking on her book-larning, as I suppose.

Free. I'll go home then, before they know any thing of it. (*To Mrs. B.*) My dear madam, I return you my warmest acknowledgments. You flattered me that I should have an opportunity, before I leave the house, of thanking, once more, the brave man who has saved my life.

Mrs. B. He will come to you immediately.

Char. (to *Mrs. B.*) Faith! I went to him myself as you desired me, and he won't come.

Mrs. B. (frowning significantly to *CHAR.*) I have just come from him, and he will be here immediately.

Char. You went too, did you? I couldn't—

[*Mrs. B.* frowns again, and *CHAR.* is silent.

True. (to *FREE.*) You had better sit down till he come.

Char. Yes, do sit in this chair in the recess; for you don't like the light in your eyes, I perceive.

[*Leading FREE.* kindly to the chair.

Free. I thank you. You are very good to me, friend Charles. I think you would have lent a helping hand yourself, if you had been in the way, to have saved a poor neighbour from drowning.

Char. I should have been a Pagan else. (*FREE.* sits down, and they all gather round him.) Now, my good sir, it is pleasanter to sit in a dry seat like this, with so many friendly faces round you, than to squash among the cold mud and duck-weed with roaches and eels for your comrades.

Free. Indeed, friend Charles, I sha'n't contradict you.

Enter BALTIMORE, going directly across the stage towards the opposite door, by which FREE, and the others had entered, without perceiving them in the recess.

Free. He thinks I am still in the bed-room. (*Goes behind BALT. and lays his hand kindly upon his shoulder.*)

Balt. Nay, my dear Isabella! let me go by myself! I would rather encounter him alone, than when you are all staring upon me.

Free. (still holding him.) Ha, ha, ha! My brave deliverer! I have caught you.

Balt. (turning hastily about and shaking himself loose from his hold.) Ha! is it you?

Free. (stepping back disappointed.) It is I, sir; and I flattered myself that the overflowings of a grateful heart would not be offensive.

Balt. They are not offensive, sir! you mistake me. You are too—There is no occasion for all these thanks: I do not deserve them.

Sim. (vehemently.) Ha, but you do, sir! and all the country round will thank you too. There is not a soul of them all, thof he might not care a brass penny for you before, who will not fill a bumper to your health now, for saving to them his noble and liberal honour. O, sir! the blessings of every body will be upon you head now.

Balt. (turning away frowningly from *SIM.*) So, so!
Mrs. B. Old Simeon says very true: every body will bless you.

Balt. (turning away from her.) This is pleasant, indeed!

Char. I'll be hanged if every old woman in the parish don't foist you into her next Sunday's prayers along with the Royal Family.

Bolt. (turning away from *CHAR.*) Must I be beleaguered by every fool? (*Goes hastily towards the door.*)

Mrs. B. (aside, running after him.) You will not go away so abruptly?

Balt. (aside to her.) Will there be no end to this cursed gratitude? (*About to FREE.*) Sir, I am very happy—I—I hope you will have a good sleep after this accident; and I shall be happy to hear good accounts of you to-morrow morning.

Free. No, Mr. Baltimore, we must not part thus. My gratitude for what you have done is not to be spent in words only: that is not my way. I resign to you, and resign to you most cheerfully, all my interest in the borough of Westown. [*BALT.* pauses.

True. That is nobly said, Mr. Freeman, and I expected it from you.

Char. (rubbing his hands, and grinning with delight.) I thought so!—I thought it would come to this: he has such a liberal way with him in every thing.

Balt. (half aside to *CHAR.*) Wilt thou never give over that vile habit of grinning like a dog? (*Going up with a firm step to FREE.*) No, sir; we have entered the lists as fair combatants together, and neither of us I hope (significantly) has taken any unfair advantage of the other. Let the most fortunate gain the day. I will never receive reward for a common office of humanity. That is not my way (*mimicking FREEMAN.*)

Free. Let me entreat you!

Balt. Mention it no more: I am determined.

Free. It would make me infinitely happy.

Balt. Do me the honour to believe that I speak truth, when I say, I am determined. If you give up the borough, I give it up also.

Free. Then I say no more. I leave with you the thanks of a grateful heart. I should have said, if it had been permitted me, the very grateful affection of an honest heart, that will never forget what it owes to you but in that place where both affection and animosity are forgotten.

[*Exit with emotion, followed by CHARLES and SIMEON.*

Mrs. B. O Baltimore! Baltimore! Will you suffer him to go thus?

Balt. (*going two or three steps after him, and stopping short.*) He is gone now.

Mrs. B. No, he is not; you may easily overtake him. Do—for the love of gentleness and charity!

Balt. (*going hastily towards the door, and stopping short again.*) No, hang it! I can't do it now.

[*Exit hastily by the opposite side.*

Mrs. B. (*shaking her head.*) I had great hopes from this accident; but his unhappy aversion is, I fear, incurable.

True. Don't despair yet: I prophesy better things. But do not, my dear madam, before Baltimore at least, appear so anxious about it. It serves only to irritate him.

Mrs. B. Is it possible to be otherwise than anxious? This unlucky prejudice, gradually gaining strength from every little trivial circumstance, embitters all the comfort of our lives. And Freeman has so many good qualities—he might have been a valuable friend.

True. Very true; he is liberal, good-tempered, and benevolent: but he is vain, unpolished, and, with the aid of his ridiculous wife to encourage him, most provokingly ostentatious. You ought to make some allowance for a proud country gentleman, who now sees all the former dependants of his family ranging themselves under the patronage of a new, and, what he will falsely call, a mean man.

Mrs. B. O, I would make every allowance! but I would not encourage him in his prejudice.

True. The way to reclaim him, however, is not to run directly counter to it. I have never found him so ready to acknowledge Freeman's good qualities as when I have appeared, and have really been half provoked myself with his vanity and magnificence. When we would help a friend out of the mire, we must often go a little way into it ourselves.

Mrs. B. I believe you are right. Ah! True-bridge! if you had been more among us lately, we should not now, perhaps, have been so unhappy. He would have listened more to you than to any other friend.

True. Have good comfort: I don't despair.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Night. An open space before the Blue Posts: the scene dark, except where the light gleams from the open door of the house. A noise of drinking and merriment heard within. Enter some of BALTIMORE'S voters, &c. from the house, carrying a table, a bowl of punch and glasses, which they set down in the porch, and place themselves round on the benches at the door.

Sailor. Now, messmates, let us set down our bowl here. We have been long enough stowed in that there close smoky hold, while the fresh air has been playing on the decks. Let us sit down and be merry! I am returned home in a good jolly time, old neighbours; let us enjoy it.

1st vot. Ay, I remember at our last election, when Squire Burton was chosen, we drank a hearty bowl in this very porch, and neighbour Bullock, the tanner, sat, as it were, in that very corner. Rest his soul! he loved his country, and his king, and his cause, and his candidate, as well as any heart in Old England.

2d vot. Ay, and he was always ready to knock any body down that was not as hearty as himself. That was what I liked in him. That was the true spirit. That was the true roast beef of Old England.

1st vot. And he had such a good knack at a

toast. Come, stand up, Mr. Alderman. We have drunk already to the ancient family of the Baltimores; give us some other good public toast. You have a good knack at the business too. I would give you one myself, but then I doesn't know how to do it for want of education.

Ald. (standing up conceitedly). May all the king, and the queen, and the royal family, and all the rest of the nobility and members of parliament, serving over them and under us be good; and may all us, serving under them again be—be—be happy and be good too, and be—and be——

2d vot. Just as we should be.

1st vot. Ay, just so. Very well and very nicely said, Mr. Alderman!

2d vot. But does nobody drink to the navy of Old England.

Ald. Yes, man: stop a little, and I'll have a touch at that too.

1st vot. Ay, do so. I stand up for the British navy; that I do. The sea is our only true friend either by land or by water. Come, give us a sailor's song, Will Weatherall. I have lived upon dry land all my days, and never saw better than a little punt-boat shoved across the ferry for a sixpence; but somehow or other I have a kindness for every thing that pertains to the great salt sea, with all the ships, and the waves roaring, and all that; and whenever I see a good heart of oak seated at an alehouse door with his glass in his hand, my heart always turns to him, an there should be a hundred men besides. Give us a song, man.

Sailor. That I will. Hang me if thou doesn't deserve to feed upon biscuit.

SONG.

Merry mantling social bowl,
Many a cheerful kindly soul
Fills his glass from thee:
Heaths go round, care is drown'd,
Every heart with lighter bound
Gen'rous feels and free.

Cann and beaker by thy side,
Mayst thou oft in flowing pride
Thus surrounded be:
And shame befall the narrow mind,
That to a messmate proves unkind,
Who once has fill'd his glass from thee!

Whate'er our state, where'er we meet,
We still with kindly welcome greet
The mate of former jollity:
Far distant, in a foreign land,
We'll give to all a brother's hand,
That e'er have fill'd their glass from thee!

Enter MARGERY, in a great fury.

Mar. Dash down your bowl, and break all your glasses in shivers! Are you sitting singing here,

and Squire Baltimore hurried away to prison by his vile rascality creditors? Shame upon your red chops! Who pays for the liquor you are drinking?

All. You're wrong in the head, Margery.

Mar. Ye're wrong in the heart, and that's a worse thing, ungrateful punch-swillers! You would be all up on end in a moment else; for I saw them lay their detestable paws upon him with mine own eyes. Rise up every skin of you, or I'll break the bowl about your ears! I'll make the liquor mount to your noddles, I warrant you!

All. (*starting up*). Which way did they go?

Mar. Come, follow me, and I'll show you. Let them but come within reach of my clenched fist, and I'll teach them to lay hands upon his honour! An esquire and a gentleman born.

[*Exeunt, every body following her with great noise and hubbub.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A vaulted passage in a prison. Enter Keeper, with several Turnkeys bearing pots of porter, &c. for the prisoners.

Keep. (*calling to somebody without*). Take another pot of porter to the dog-stealer in the north ward, and a Welsh rabbit to his comrade. (*To another who enters with a covered dish.*) Where have you been all this time?

1st turn. Waiting on the rich debtor in the best chamber; he has fallen out with his stewed carp, because the sauce of it ben't cooked to his liking.

Keep. I'm sorry for that: we must spare no pains upon him.

Enter 2d Turnkey.

2d turn. (*holding out a small jug*). Come, come, this won't do. Transportation-Betty says, nothing but true neat Hollands for her; and this here gin you have sent her ben't fit for a gentlewoman to drink.

Keep. Yes, yes; travelled ladies are wondrous nice. However, we must not quarrel with her neither: take it to the poor author in the debtor's ward; it will be good enough for him.

Enter TRUEBRIDGE.

True. What part of the prison is Mr. Baltimore in?

Keep. I'll show you, sir; follow me.

True. I thought to have found him in your own house. In the common prison?

Keep. It is his own fault, sir; he would go nowhere else; and the more miserably every thing is about him, the better he likes it. His good lady

could scarcely prevail upon him to let us set a couple of chairs in his room.

True. Has she been long here?

Keep. Better than an hour, I should think.

True. Does he seem much affected?

Keep. Anan, sir?

True. I mean much cast down.

Keep. O, dear; no, sir! I dare say not; you know people are used to such things every day.

True. Very true, Mr. Keeper, I forgot that— Show me the way. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A prison. BALTIMORE is discovered sitting in a thoughtful posture, with MRS. BALTIMORE resting her arm on the back of his chair, and observing him attentively.

Balt. (*after starting up with alacrity, and walking several times up and down*). And they are calling out, as they go through the streets, that I am a true Baltimore, and the son of their old benefactor?

Mrs. B. They are, indeed. The same party that assembled to attempt your rescue, are still parading about tumultuously, and their numbers are continually increasing.

Balt. That's right! The enemy, I hope, has heard the sound of it round his doors: they have bid him a good morrow cheerily.

Mrs. B. I don't believe they suspect him yet, for it is too bad to imagine.

Balt. (*exultingly*). But they will all know it soon. All the world will know it. Man, woman, and child will know it; and even clothed in the very coats his ostentatious bounty has bestowed upon them, the grey-headed labourers will curse him. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! How many chaldrons of coals and hogsheads of ale, and well fattened oxen will, in one untoward moment, be forgotten by those ungrateful hinds! Ha, ha, ha! The very children will call to him as he passes by. Methinks I tread lightly on the floor of this dungeon, with the step of an injured man who rises from the grasp of oppression. Raise thy drooping head, my Isabella: I am a thousand times more happy than I have been: all mankind will sympathise with me now.

Mrs. B. Every honest breast, indeed, must detest baseness and hypocrisy.

Balt. Ay, thou speakst with some energy now. Come to my heart! there will be sympathy between us. Now, thou art the wife of Baltimore! But oh! my Isabella! a poor man's wife has many duties to fulfil.

Mrs. B. None that I will not most cheerfully fulfil.

Balt. Ah! thou art a fair flower planted on an ungracious soil, and I have nursed thee rudely.

Mrs. B. O, no! you were most kind and gentle once.

Balt. And I will be so again, Isabella: for this viper gnawed at my heart, and I could be gentle to nothing; not even to thee. But my heart feels lighter now: I will be rough to thee no more.

Enter TRUEBRIDGE.

Ha! my friend! good morning to you! Nay, nay (*taking his hand frankly*): don't be afraid to look at me: I wear no desponding face upon it. (*Pointing to the bare walls of his prison.*) You see that a happy thing it is to have a liberal, generous, magnificent rival to contend with. Have you seen any of my good noisy friends in your way?

True. Yes, crowds of them; and I really believe this arrest will gain you your election. There is something in man that always inclines him to the side of the oppressed.

Balt. Ay, indeed, and the savage feels it more strongly than the philosopher.

True. He was always a ridiculous ostentatious fellow; but if Freeman has thought to ruin your cause by the unworthy means you hint at, he is the greatest fool, as well as the greatest knave, in the community.

Balt. (*ironically*). Don't be too severe upon him! he has been bred to turn his money to good account, you know: a purchased debt is his property as well as a balc of broadcloth; and he has a great many charitable deeds and bountiful donations to put into the balance against one little underhand act of unmanly baseness.

True. Hang all his bountiful donations! If he has done this, I will revile him by the hour-glass with any good fellow that will keep me company.

Balt. Nay, nay, nay! you are warm, Truebridge. You are of an irritable disposition. You have no charitable allowances to make for the failings of good people. Ha, ha, ha!

Enter Turnkey.

Turn. Mr. Freeman begs to be admitted to see Mr. Baltimore.

Balt. (*stretching out his arm vehemently*). Does he, by my conscience! (*To TRUE.*) What think you of this?

True. If things are as we suspect, it does, indeed, exceed all ordinary calculations of effrontery.

Balt. (*to TURN.*) Let him be admitted. (*Exit turn.*) Now we shall see the smoothness of his snake's skin; but the switch, not the sword, shall scotch it. (*Walks hastily up and down.*)

Enter FREEMAN.

Balt. (*stopping short upon his entrance, and assuming an ironical respect*). Good morning, worthy sir. You are the only man in England—I may say in Europe; nay, I will say in the whole habit-

able globe, for you love magnificence, Mr. Freeman, whose dauntless confidence could have been wound up to the steady intrepidity of such a visit.

Free. (*simply*). O, no, my friend; don't praise me more than I deserve. In courage to run to the assistance of a friend, you yourself have set me the example; and my character, I hope, will never be found deficient in any thing that becomes a good neighbour and an honest man.

Balt. (*smiling sarcastically*). Certainly, sir; be at all pains to preserve, in the public opinion, your invaluable character. I would really advise you to have a certificate of all your eminent virtues drawn up and signed by every housekeeper in the parish. Your wonderful liberalities in worsted hose and linsey-woolsey petticoats; your princely subscriptions for bridges and market-places; and your noble donations to lying-in hospitals, have raised your reputation over the whole country: and if the baseness of treacherously entrapping a fair and open rival, whom you professed to respect, can throw any shade upon your sublime virtues, you have only to build a tower to the parish church, or a new alms-house, and that will set every thing to rights again. (*Aside to TRUE.*) Look how he draws in his detestable mouth and stares upon me like a cat!

Free. I now perceive, sir, the point of your discourse, and I forgive every thing that it insinuates. I might say many things, but there is just one simple answer I will return to it. All my fortune is at this moment at your disposal. You shall now be a free unencumbered man, owing no man anything. For how can you be said to be indebted to one who owes even his own life to you? To tell you this was my errand here.

Balt. (*shrinking back, and then recovering himself with proud disdain*). And I, noble sir, have one simple answer to return to you: I will rather remain in this prison till the hand of death unbolt my door than owe my enlargement to you: your treachery and your ostentatious generosity are equally contemptible.

Free. On the word of an honest man, I have had no knowledge of this shameful arrest.

Balt. And on the word of a gentleman, I believe you not.

Free. Will you put this affront upon me?

Balt. (*smiling maliciously*). Only if you are obliging enough to bear it. Do entirely as you please. (*Aside to TRUE., turning away contemptuously from FREE.*) See how like a sneaking timid reptile he looks. (*Walks up and down proudly.*)

Mrs. B. (*much alarmed, to FREE.*) O leave him! leave him! You must not speak to him now: he knows not what he says.

True. (*aside to FREE.*) Go away for the present, Mr. Freeman, and I will call upon you by and bye. If you are an honest man, you are a noble one.

Free. (*impressively*). In simple truth, then, I am

an honest man ; and shall be glad to have some discourse with you whenever you are at leisure. [*Exit.*]

Balt. (*stopping short in his walk, and looking round.*) Is he gone? (*To TRUE.*) What did you think of that? Was it not admirable? (*Endeavouring to laugh, but cannot.*) The devil himself will now appear a novice in hypocrisy.

True. Faith! Baltimore, I cannot think him guilty; he wears not the face of a guilty man.

[*BALTIMORE's countenance falls: he turns away abruptly from TRUEBRIDGE, and walks up and down in disorder.*]

Mrs. B. (*perceiving FREEMAN's hat on the ground, which he had dropped in his confusion.*) Mr. Freeman has left his hat behind him.

[*As she stops to lift it, BALT. runs furiously up to her, and prevents her.*]

Balt. Touch not the cursed thing, or I will loathe thee! Who waits without? holla! Turnkey! (*Enter turnkey; and he, giving the hat a kick with his foot, tosses it across the stage.*) Take away that abomination, do.

[*Exit hastily into an inner apartment.*]

True. Don't lose hopes of fair weather, my dear madam, though we are now in the midst of the storm. Follow and soothe him, if it be possible, and I'll go in the mean time to Freeman.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.

An open scattered street in a small country town.

Enter JENKINSON and SERVET by opposite sides; and are going to pass without observing one another.

Serv. (*calling to JENK.*) Not so fast, Mr. Jenkinson; I was just going to your house.

Jenk. And I was just going to do myself the pleasure to call at your's.

Serv. And you were glad to go quickly along, I believe. It would neither be pleasant nor safe for you, perhaps, to meet the new member in his chair, with all his friends round him. "Baltimore for ever!" could not sound so very pleasantly in your ears. Ay, Mr. Jenkinson! You have made a fine hand of this business for a man of your pretensions in the profession.

Jenk. I believe, Mr. Servet, I may be permitted to assume to myself, without the imputation of vanity, as much professional dexterity in this affair as the most able of my contemporaries could have brought into the service. Every thing has been done that the very nicest manoeuvres of the law would admit of. Who could have thought of a rich friend, from nobody knows where, paying Baltimore's debts for him? Who could have thought of those fools taking him up so warmly upon his imprisonment, in manifest contradiction to the old proverb, that "rats and vermin leave a falling house?" Who could have thought so many of Mr.

Freeman's friends would have stayed from the poll, too, after solemnly promising their votes? I am sure you are too polite not to do me the justice to confess that these things were not to be counted upon. A pinch of your snuff, if you please: you keep the best rappee of any gentleman in the country.

Serv. But what can you say for yourself in the present business, Mr. Jenkinson? I'm sure my client, Mr. Baltimore, has given you advantages enough, if you had known how to use them. Since his quarrel with Mr. Freeman in the prison, have not you and I gone between them with at least half-a-dozen messages, unknown to their friends? and nothing but a paltry meeting with pistols to come of it after all! It is a disgrace to the profession.

Jenk. What could I have done, Mr. Servet?

Serv. What could you have done! Has not my client by my mouth, told your client in pretty plain terms, in return for all his amicable advances, that he is a liar, and a hypocrite, and a knave, and a coward; and with but very little difficulty on your part a kick or a cudgel might have been added: and do you ask me what was to be done with all this? A meeting with pistols, indeed! It is a disgrace to the profession. I once procured for a smug-faced client of mine a good douse o' the chops, which put a couple of hundred pounds into his pocket; enabled him thereby to run off with a rich heiress, and make his fortune, as you may well say, by a stroke. As for myself, I put, of course, double the sum into my own.

Jenk. Do me the favour to believe, my worthy sir, that I have always looked up to your superior abilities with the profoundest respect. But have a little patience: and do me the honour to suppose I am not altogether a novice. We may have a duel first, and a law-suit afterwards. I suppose we shall have the pleasure of meeting at the place and hour appointed.

Serv. Never doubt that. But I hear the crowd coming this way. (*Some of the crowd begin to enter, and a great noise is heard at a distance.*) Let us avoid them, and talk further of this matter as we go.

[*Exeunt JENK. and SERV. Enter more of the crowd.*]

1st mob. Well, I can't say but it was a rare speech.

2d mob. And very nicely delivered.

1st mob. Ay, he is a nice man.

1st woman. And such a sweet-faced gentleman. He'll stand by his king and country, I warrant ye.

1st mob (to 3d mob). But you lost it all, neighbour Brown, you was so long of coming. "Gentlemen!" said he, and he bowed his head so, "the honour you have this day preferred me to—"

2d mob. No, no, man; "that you have conferred upon me."

1st mob. Well, well, where's the difference? "I shall ever consider upon.—"

2d mob. Reflect upon.

1st mob. Did not I say reflect upon? "With—"

with great joy;" no "great"—I don't know very well; but he meant, as one should say, as how he would think upon us with good-will. And then, quoth he—but first of all, you know, he said, stretching out his hand so, that "the confidence imputed to him——"

2d mob. Tut, man! reposed upon him.

1st mob. Did not I say so as plain as a man could speak?—"Was a trust that, with the greatest scrupulousness of regard"—That is to say, you know, that he won't sell his vote for a pension: nor give away our poor little earnings to feed a parcel of lazy placemen and courtiers, Lord help us! And that he won't do.

3d mob. No, no! I'll answer for him. Why, I have heel-pieced his shoes for him when he was no bigger than a quart-pot.

1st mob. But what pleased me most of all was, when he waved his hands in this fashion, and said, "Gentlemen, it has always been the pride and boasting——"

2d mob. Pride and boast.

1st mob. No, indeed; I say pride and boasting, Thomas Truepenny; have not I a pair of ears in my head as well as you?

2d mob. Well, well, boasting be it then!

1st mob. Yes, "boasting of this honourable borough to support its own dignity and independency against all corruptful encroachments." And then he went on to tell us, you know, all about the glory and braveness of our ancestors—O! let him alone for a speech! I'll warrant ye, when he stands up among the great men in that there house of parliament, he'll set his words together in as good a fashion as the best of them.

2d mob. Yes, to be sure, if he does it in the fashion that you have been a-showing us.

2d woman. O la! there he comes, and the pretty chair and all the pretty ribbons flying about! Do come and let us run after him. (*Enter a great crowd, and BALTIMORE carried in a chair ornamented with boughs and ribbons, &c. on the back-ground, and crossing over the bottom of the stage, exeunt with acclamations: the first crowd joining them.*)

SCENE IV.

An open space in a forest, surrounded with thickets, and fern, &c. Enter BALTIMORE and SERVET, looking out several ways as they enter.

Serv. Now I do see them a-coming!

Balt. You have discovered them half-a-dozen times already since we entered the forest: are they at hand?

Serv. (*still looking out through some bushes.*) They ain't far off, but I don't know how it is, they keep always a-moving, and always a-moving, and yet they never come nearer.

Balt. He stops to take heart, perhaps. (*Smiling with malicious satisfaction.*)

Serv. Yes, poor man, ha, ha, ha! his mind is disturbed enough, no doubt. But you, sir, are so composed! You have the true strong nerves of a gentleman. Good blood always shows itself upon these occasions. (*Looking out again.*) Yonder now I could tell you, even at this distance, by that very manner of waving his pocket-handkerchief, that he is in a terrible quandary.

Balt. Indeed! dost thou already discover in him the disturbed gait of a frightened man? This is excellent!—Let me look! let me look! (*Looking through the bushes with great satisfaction and eagerness.*) Where, Servet?

Serv. Look just between the birch-tree and the little gate.

Balt. (*peevishly.*) Pooh, nonsense! It is a colt feeding amongst the bushes, and lashing off the flies with his tail.

[*As they are looking, enter FREEMAN and JENKINSON behind them.*]

Free. Good morning, gentlemen: I hope we have not kept you waiting.

Balt. I am here, sir, at your request, to give you the satisfaction you require, and I have waited your time without impatience.

Free. Ah, Mr. Baltimore! it is a cruel necessity that has compelled me to require such a meeting as this from a man to whom I owe my life. But life, with contempt and degradation in the eye of the world annexed to it, is no benefit: you have cruelly compelled me——

Balt. Make no apology, sir, for the invitation you have given me to this place: it is the only one in my life that I have received from you with pleasure, and obeyed with alacrity.

Free. You will regret, perhaps, when it is too late, that some explanation, on your part, did not prevent——

Jenk. Yes, sir, some little explanation of your words. The most honourable gentleman is always free to confess that words are not always intended to convey the meaning they may obviously seem to express.

Balt. (*contemptuously.*) I make no doubt, sir, that you can find a great many different meanings to the same words. A lie may be easily turned into a slight mistake, or a villain into a gentleman of deep and ingenious resource, in your polite dictionary; but I am a plain, unpolished man, Mr. Jenkinson, and I have but one sense in which I offer what I have said by the mouth of my friend here (*pointing to SERV.*) to Mr. Freeman, and to the world, unretreated and unexplained. (*Aside to SERV.*) Does he not look pale?

Serv. O, very pale.

Free. Then, Mr. Baltimore, you compel a man of peace to be what he abhors.

Balt. I am sorry, sir, this business is so disagreeable to you : the sooner we dispatch it, in that case, the better. Take your ground. (*Aside to SERV.*) Does he not look very pale ?

Serv. (aside). O, as white as a corpse.

Free. I believe you are right. (*To SERV. and JENK.*) Mark out the distance, gentlemen : you know what is generally done upon these occasions. I am altogether ignorant. You seem to be ready, Mr. Baltimore, and so am I.

Serv. (aside to BALT.). He would bully it out now, but he is in a great quandary for all that.

Balt. (aside to SERV. angrily). No, hang him, he is as firm as a rock ! (*Aloud to FREE.*) I am perfectly ready also, sir. Now take your fire.

Free. No ; I cannot call you out, and take the first fire myself : this does not appear to me reasonable.

Balt. You are the insulted man.

Free. Yes, but I am the challenger, and must insist on first receiving yours.

[*They take their ground, and BALT. is about to fire, when TRUEBRIDGE and CHARLES BALTIMORE break in upon them through the bushes.*]

True. (seizing BALTIMORE'S arm). Hold your rash hand, madman, and make not yourself accused !

Balt. What do you mean, Truebridge ?

True. (pointing to FREE.) That there stands before you the unknown friend —

Free. (to TRUE. eagerly). Hold ! hold ! remember your promise : I have bound you to it.

True. But you release me from that promise by effecting this meeting unknown to me, when I had every claim upon your confidence. I will not hold my tongue.

Balt. For heaven's sake, then, tell the worst thou hast to say, for I am distracted !

True. There stands before you, then, that unknown friend ; the great uncle of your wife, as I suffered you to suspect, who has paid all your debts, opened your prison doors, and even kept back his own friends from the poll to make you the member for Westown. (*BALT. staggers back some paces, and the pistol falls from his hand.*)

Char. (capering with joy). O, brave and noble ! this makes a man's heart jump to his mouth ! Come here, Mr. Spitfire, (*taking up the pistol*), we shall have no more occasion for you.

Balt. (giving CHARLES an angry push, as he stoops down close by him to lift the pistol.) Get away, cursed fool ! Does this make you happy ?

True. Fie, Baltimore ! It is not manly in thee to be thus overcome.

Balt. If thou hadst lodged a bullet in my brain, I had thanked thee for it.

True. And is there nothing, then, within your breast that is generously called forth to meet the noble gratitude of a liberal mind ? — a mind which has striven to acquit itself of the obligation that it

owes to you, and to make you ample reparation for an injury which you have suffered on his account, though entirely unknown to him. There is nothing in your breast that comes forth to meet such sentiments as these. Injuries and oppression are pleasing to your mind ; generosity and gratitude oppress it. Are these the feelings of a brave man ? Come, come ! (*Taking his arm gently.*)

Balt. Hold away ! I am fooled, and depressed, and degraded ! (*Turns away from him abruptly.*)

True. Well, then, battle out with your own proud spirit the best way you can. Freeman, I must agree to it, is a magnificent, boasting, ostentatious fellow ; and hang me, if I could bear to have any reciprocity in good offices with him myself !

Balt. Truebridge ! I'll run you through the body if you say that again.

True. Ha ! come nearer to me then. I shall now tell Freeman of an obligation he owes to you, Baltimore, and we shall see if he bears it more graciously.

Free. I owe my life to his courage.

True. Yes, but it is not that. Come nearer me, Baltimore. (*To FREE.*) You were anxious, I believe, to erect a monument to the memory of your father.

Free. Yes, sir ; and Mr. Jenkinson has written for me to have it accomplished.

True. And also, at the same time, to have a certificate of your baptism ?

Free. Yes, sir, some family business required it ; but I have yet received no answer.

True. No ; the clergyman to whom you wrote is my particular friend ; he has made the inquiries you desired ; and the result is of such a nature that he has thought it necessary to be the bearer of it himself.

Free. What may it be ?

True. He is at my house, and will inform you of every thing minutely ; but just at this moment, I cannot help telling you myself, that to erect a monument to the memory of your father is unnecessary, as Mr. Baltimore has already piously saved you that trouble.

Free. What do you mean by that ? I am a man of peace, but I will tear the heart out of any one who dares to insult my father's memory.

True. He has done it in sober piety.

Free. What ! erected a monument for my father in the parish church of Southerndown ?

True. No, in the parish church of Westown.

Free. My father is not buried there.

True. Ay, but he is indeed. One church, one grave, one coffin, contains both your father and his.

Free. O, heaven ! what is this ? (*BALT. starts and puts his hands before his eyes.*)

Char. I would give a thousand pounds that this were true.

True. (to CHAR.) Thou hast lost thy money, then.

But prithee be quiet, Charles! (JENKINSON and SERVET look ruefully upon one another.)

Free. (after a pause). Was not my mother the wife of Freeman?

True. Yes, and, I believe, his faithful wife; but she was your mother first.

Free. She was seduced and betrayed?

True. We will not, if you please, enter into that part of the story at present. My account says, that she married, after bringing you into the world, a poor but honest man; that the late Mrs. Baltimore discovered her some years afterwards, sympathised with her misfortune, and from her own pin-money, for the family affairs were even then very much involved, paid her a yearly sum for the support and education of her son, which laid the foundation of his future wealth and prosperity.

Balt. (stepping forward with emotion). Did my mother do this?

True. Yes, Baltimore, she did; till Mrs. Freeman, informed of the state of your father's affairs, with an industry that defied all pain and weariness, toiled day and night to support the aspiring views of her son, independent of a bounty which she would no longer receive, though it was often and warmly pressed upon her.

Free. (with emotion). And did my mother do that?

True. She did indeed.

Free. Then heaven bless her! I do not blush to call myself her son.

True. (stretching out his hands to BALT. and FREE.) Now, don't think that I am going to whine to you about natural affection, and fraternal love, and such weaknesses; I know that you have lived in the constant practice of all manner of opposition and provocation towards one another for some time past; you have exercised your tempers thereby, and have acquired habits that are now, perhaps, necessary for you. Far be it from me to break in upon habits and gratifications! Only, as you are both the sons of one father, who now lies quietly in his grave, and of the good women, for I call them both good, who bore no enmity to one another, though placed in a situation very favourable for its growth, do, for the love of decency, take one another by the hand, and live peaceably and respectably together! (Taking each of them by the hand.)

Balt. (shaking off TRUE.) Get away, Truebridge, and leave us to ourselves.

[TRUE. retires to the bottom of the stage, and makes signs for JENK. SERV. and CHAR. to do so too; they all retire.

[BALT. and FREE. stand looking at one another for some time without speaking. BALT. then drawing nearer to FREE. clears his voice, and puts on the action of one who is going to speak emphatically; but his energy is suddenly dropped and he turns away without speaking.

He draws near him a second time, clears his voice again, and speaks in broken accents.

Balt. I have been to you, Mr. Freeman, most unreasonable and unjust. I have—I have—my behaviour has been stern and ungracious—But—but my heart—O! it has offended beyond—beyond even the forgiveness of a—of a—

Free. (eagerly). Of a what, Mr. Baltimore?

Balt. Of a brother.

Free. Heaven bless you for that word! Are you the first to pronounce it? Yes, I will be a brother, and a father, and a friend, and an every thing to you, as long as there is breath in my body. And though we do not embrace as brothers—

Balt. (rushing into his arms). Ah! but we do! we do! most heartily! But I have something to say. Let me lean against this tree for a little.

[Leans his back against a tree.

Free. What would you say?

Balt. (in a broken voice). I am—I am where I ought not to be. Your generosity imposed upon you—the borough of Westown is vacant.

Free. No; it is filled with the man for whom I will henceforth canvass, through thick and thin, every shire, town, and village in the kingdom, if need be; the borough of Westown is not vacant.

Balt. (endeavouring to open his waistcoat, and collar). My buttons are tight over my breast; I can't get this thing from my throat. (FREE. attempts to assist him.)

True. (running forward from the bottom of the stage). Let me assist you, Baltimore.

Balt. No, no, hold away: he will do it for me. I feel the touch of a brother's hand near my breast, and it does me good.

True. (exulting). Ha! is it thus with you? Then we have triumphed! conquest and victory!

Char. (tossing up his hat in the air). Conquest and triumph and victory! O it is all right now!

True. Yes, Charles, thou mayst now be as boisterous as thou wilt.

Jenk. (aside to SERV.) We have made but a bad business of it here.

Ser. (aside to JENK.) It was all your fault.

[They quarrel in a corner, whilst FREE. and TRUE. are occupied with BALT.; and CHARLES runs exultingly about, tossing his hat in the air.

Enter nearly at the same time, by opposite sides, MRS. BALTIMORE and MRS. FREEMAN, with CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. B. (alarmed). O! you are wounded, Baltimore.

True. No, no! there are no wounds here: we are victorious.

Mrs. B. Over whom?

True. Over a whole legion of devils! or, at least, over one great black one, who was as strong and as stubborn as a whole legion.

Mrs. B. (joyfully). Ha! and is he overcome at last? Let me rejoice with you, my Baltimore! We have found our lost happiness again.

Balt. We have found something more, my dear Isabella: we have found a brother. (*Presenting FREE to Mrs. B.*)

Mrs. B. Yes, I knew you would find in this worthy man a friend and a brother.

Balt. Nay, nay! you don't catch my meaning: he is the son of my father.

Mrs. Free. What does he say?

Charl. The son of his father! My ears are ringing.

Mrs. B. (after a pause of surprise). In sober earnest truth? (*Clasping her hands together.*) O thank heaven for it! (*Holding out her hand to FREE.*) My friend and my brother.

Balt. (to FREE.) Yes, she has always been your friend.

Free. (hissing her hand with emotion). I know she has, and I have not been ungrateful. (*Presenting MRS. FREE to Mrs. B. and BALT.*) And here is one who has not been so much your friend as she will be. Her too warm interest in a husband's success misled her into an error which she sincerely repents.

Mrs. Free. (affectedly). Mrs. Baltimore has too much sensibility herself not to pardon the errors it occasions in others.

Mrs. B. (taking her hand). Be assured, my dear madam, I can remember nothing with resentment that is connected with our present happiness.

Serv. (aside to JENK.) And Mrs. Freeman is shaking hands with them too! O! there will be a stagnation to all activity! there will not be a lawsuit in the parish for a century to come!

Jenk. (aside). Well, how could I help it? Walk this way, I beg, or they will hear us.

[JENK. and SERV. retire to the bottom of the stage quarrelling.]

Mrs. B. (looking round). But there is something wanting for me still: My dear Charlotte—

Charl. (coming forward and jumping into Mrs. B.'s arms). Yes, I was just waiting for this. O! I shall love you, and live with you, and hang about you continually! My sister, my aunt, my cousin! how many names may I call you?

Mrs. B. As many as you please. But there is another name that you must learn to say: (*leading her up to BALT.*) Do you think you can look gravely in this gentleman's face and call him uncle? Nay,

don't be frightened at him. (*To BALT.*) Poor girl, she has stood in awe of you intolerably.

Balt. (embracing her). She shall stand in awe of me no more; and if ever I look sternly upon her again, I will cheerfully submit to whatever correction she may think proper to inflict upon me. (*Smiling significantly.*)

Char. (holding out his hand to CHARLOTTE). And is there no such thing as cousins to be made out of all this store of relationship?

Charl. O yes, there is a lazy, idle, good-for-nothing thing called a cousin, that we must all have some little kindness for, as in duty bound, notwithstanding.

Free. Don't mind her, my friend Charles: you shall be lazy and idle no longer. I'll find employment for you; I'll rouse you up and make a man of you. There is not a peer of the realm has it in his power to do more for his relations than I have. And I will do it too.

True. (laying his hand on FREEMAN'S shoulder). Gently now, my good sir! we know all that perfectly well.

Balt. (aside to TRUE.) O let him boast now, he is entitled to it.

True. (aside to BALT. giving a nod of satisfaction). Ay, all is well I see. (*Aloud.*) Now, my happy friends, if I have been of any use among you, show me your gratitude by spending the rest of the day at my house, with my good friend the Vicar of Blackmorton, who has many things to tell you.

Mrs. Free. (aside to TRUE). As I am the elder brother's wife, the foolish ceremony of my taking precedence of Mrs. Baltimore will be settled accordingly; and I'm sure it will distress me extremely.

True. (aside to her). Don't distress yourself, madam; there is a bar to that, which you shall have the satisfaction of being acquainted with presently. Pray don't let your amiable delicacy distress you. (*Aloud.*) Now let us leave this happy nook. But I am resolved to have a little bower erected in this very spot, where we will all sometimes retire, whenever we find any bad disposition stirring within us, with that book in our hands which says, "If thy brother offend thee seven times in a day"—No, no, no! I must not repeat sacred words with an unlicensed tongue; but I will bless God in silence for restoring a rational creature to the kindly feelings of humanity. [*Exeunt.*]

ETHWALD:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PART FIRST.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

OSWAL, *king of Mercia.*EDWARD, *his nephew, and ethling or heir to the crown.*SEAGURTH, *father to EDWARD.*

ETHWALD.

ETHELBERT, *a noble Thane.*SELRED, *elder brother to ETHWALD.*MOLLO, *father to ETHWALD, a Thane of small consideration.*HEXULF, *a bigoted bishop.*ALWY, *an artful adventurer.*WOGGARWOLFE, *a rude marauding Thane.*ONGAR, *a creature of ALWY'S.*

Mystics and Mystic Sisters, supposed to be successors of the Druidical diviners; soldiers, attendants, &c.

WOMEN.

ELBURGA, *daughter to king OSWAL.*BERTHA, *attached to ETHWALD.*SIGURTHA, *mother to BERTHA, and niece to MOLLO, living in his castle, with her daughter, as part of his family.*DWINA, *attendant on ELBURGA.*

Ladies, attendants, and female Druids.

The scene is supposed to be in England, in the kingdom of Mercia, and the time near the end of the Heptarchy.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*The court of a Saxon castle. ETHWALD is discovered lying upon the ground as if half asleep. The sound of a horn is heard without, at which he raises his head a little, and lays it down again. The gate of the castle opens at the bottom of the stage, and enter SELRED, ETHELBERT, and attendants, as if returned from hunting. SEL and ETH walk forward to the front, and the others retire by different sides of the stage.**Selred.* This morning's sport hath bravely paid our toil.

Have not my dogs done credit to their breed?

Eth. I grant they have.*Sel.* Mark'd you that tawny hound,With stretched nostrils snuffing to the ground,
Who still before, with animating yell,Like the brave leader of a warlike band,
Through many a mazy track his comrades led
Right in the tainted path?I would not for the weregild of a Thane
That noble creature barter.*Eth.* I do not mean to tempt thee with the sum.Seest thou where Ethwald, like a cottage cur
On dunghill stretch'd, half sleeping, half awake,
Doth bask his lazy carcass in the sun?

Ho! laggard there!

[*To ETHW., who just raises his head, and lays it down again. ETH. going up close to him.*When slowly from the plains and nether woods,
With all their winding streams and hamlets brown,
Updrawn, the morning vapour lifts its veil,And through its fleecy folds, with soften'd rays,
Like a still'd infant smiling in his tears,

Looks through the early sun:—when from afar

The gleaming lake betrays its wide expanse,

And, lightly curling on the dewy air,

The cottage smoke doth wind its path to heaven:

When larks sing shrill, and village cocks do crow,

And lows the heifer loosen'd from her stall:

When heaven's soft breath plays on the woodman's brow,

And every hare-bell and wild tangled flower

Smells sweetly from its cage of checker'd dew:

Ay, and when huntsmen wind the merry horn,

And from its covert starts the fearful prey;

Who, warm'd with youth's blood in his swelling veins,

Would, like a lifeless clod, outstretched lie,

Shut up from all the fair creation offers?

(ETHW. yawns and heeds him not.) He heeds me not.

Sel. I will assail him now. (*In a louder voice.*)

Ho! heads of foxes deck our huntsman's belt,

Which have through tangled woods and ferny moors

With many wiles shaped out their mazy flight,

Have swum deep floods, and from the rocky brows

Of frightful precipices boldly leap'd

Into the gulf below.

Nay, e'en our lesser game hath nobly done;

Across his shoulders hang four furred feet,

That have full twenty miles before us run

In little space. O, it was glorious!

Ethw. (raising his head carelessly). Well, well,
I know that hares will swiftly run
When dogs pursue them. (*Stretches himself and
goes to rest again.*)

Eth. Leave him to rest, he is not to be rous'd.

Sel. Well, be it so. By heaven, my fretted soul
Did something of this easy stupor lack,
When near the latter limits of our chace
I pass'd the frowning tower of Ruthergeld.
He hangs a helmet o'er his battlements,
As though he were the chief protecting Thane
Of all the country round.
I'll teach th' ennobled Ceorl, within these bounds,
None may pretend in noble birth to vie
With Mollo's honour'd line!

Eth. (proudly). Hast thou forgot?
Or didst thou never hear whose blood it is
That fills these swelling veins?

Sel. I cry you mercy, Thane: I little doubt
Some brave man was the founder of your house.

Eth. Yes, such an one, at mention of whose name
The brave descendants of two hundred years
Have stately ris'n with more majestic step,
And proudly smiled.

Sel. Who was this lordly chieftain?

Eth. A Swabian shepherd's son, who, in dark
times,

When ruin dire menaced his native land,
With all his native lordship in his grasp,
A simple maple spear and osier shield,
Making of keen and deep sagacity,
With daring courage and exalted thoughts,
A plain and native warrant of command,
Around him gather'd all the valiant youth;
And, after many a gallant enterprise,
Repell'd the foe, and gave his country peace.
His grateful country bless'd him for the gift,
And offer'd to his worth the regal crown.

Sel. (bowing respectfully). I yield me to thy
claim.

[*ETHWALD, who has raised himself up by de-
grees upon hearing the story, and listened
eagerly, now starts up, impatient of the pause,
and catches ETH. by the arm.*

Ethw. And did they crown him then?

Eth. No; with a mind above all selfish wrong,
He gen'rously the splendid gift refused:
And drawing from his distant low retreat
The only remnant of the royal race,
Did fix him firmly on his father's seat;
Proving until his very latest breath
A true and loyal subject.

[*ETHWALD'S countenance changes, then turning
from ETH. he slowly retires to the bottom of
the stage and exit. ETH. follows him atten-
tively with his eye as he retires.*

Eth. Mark'd you the changes of the stripling's
eye?

You do complain that he of late has grown

A musing sluggard. Selred, mark me well:
Brooding in secret, grows within his breast
That which no kindred owns to sloth or ease.
And is your father fix'd to keep him pent
Still here at home? Doth the old wizard's prophecy,
That the destruction of his noble line
Should from the valour of his youngest son,
In royal warfare, spring, still haunt his mind?
This close confinement makes the pining youth
More eager to be free.

Sel. Nay, rather say, the lore he had from thee
Hath o'er him cast this sullen gloom. Ere this,
Where was the fiercest courser of our stalls
That did not shortly under him become
As gentle as the lamb? What bow so stiff
But he would urge and strain his youthful strength,
Till every sinew o'er his body rose,
Like to the sooty forger's swelling arm,
Until it bent to him? What flood so deep
That on its foaming waves he would not throw
His naked breast, and beat each curling surge,
Until he gain'd the far opposing shore?
But since he learnt from thee that letter'd art,
Which only sacred priests were meant to know,
See how it is, I pray! His father's house
Has unto him become a cheerless den.
His pleasant tales and sprightly playful talk,
Which still our social meals were wont to cheer,
Now visit us but like a hasty beam
Between the showery clouds. Nay, e'en the maid
My careful father destines for his bride,
That he may still retain him here at home,
Fair as she is, receives, when she appears,
His cold and cheerless smile.
Surely thy penanced pilgrimage to Rome,
And the displeasure of our holy saint,
Might well have taught thee that such sacred art
Was good for priests alone. Thou'st spoil the
youth.

Eth. I've spoil the youth! What thinkst thou
then of me?

Sel. I'll not believe that thou at dead of night
Unto dark spirits sayst unholy rhymes;
Nor that the toreh, on holy altars burnt,
Sinks into smoth'ring smoke at thy approach;
Nor that foul fiends about thy castle yell,
What time the darken'd earth is rock'd with
storms;
Though many do such frightful credence hold,
And sign themselves when thou dost cross their
way.

I'll not believe—

Eth. By the bless'd light of heaven!—

Sel. I cannot think—

Eth. Nay, by this well-proved sword!

Sel. Patience, good Thane! I meant to speak thy
praise.

Eth. My praise, sayst thou?

Sel. Thy praise. I would have said,

“That he who in the field so oft hath fought,
So bravely fought, and still in the honour'd cause,
Should hold unhallow'd league with damned sprites,
I never will believe.” Yet much I grieve
That thou with bold intrusive forwardness,
Hast enter'd into that which holy men
Hold sacred for themselves ;
And that thou hast, with little prudence too,
Entrapp'd my brother with this wicked lore,
Although methinks thou didst not mean him harm.

Eth. I thank thee, Selred ; listen now to me,
And thou shalt hear a plain and simple tale,
As true as it is artless.
These cunning priests full loudly blast my fame,
Because that I with diligence and cost,
Have had myself instructed how to read
Our sacred Scriptures, which, they would maintain,
No eye profane may dare to violate.
If I am wrong, they have themselves to blame ;
It was their hard extortions first impell'd me
To search that precious book, from which they draw
Their right, as they pretend, to lord it thus.
But what thinkst thou, my Selred, read I there ?
Of one sent down from heav'n in sov'reign pomp,
To give into the hands of leagu'd priests
All power to hold th' immortal soul of man
In everlasting thraldom ? O far otherwise !

[*Taking SELRED'S hand with great earnestness.*

Of one who health restored unto the sick,
Who made the lame to walk, the blind to see,
Who fed the hungry, and who rais'd the dead,
Yet had no place wherein to lay His head.
Of one from ev'ry spot of tainting sin
Holy and pure ; and yet so lenient,
That He with soft and unupbraiding love
Did woo the wand'ring sinner from his ways,
As doth the elder brother of a house
The erring stripling guide. Of one, my friend,
Wiser by far than all the sons of men,
Yet teaching ignorance in simple speech,
As thou wouldst take an infant on thy lap
And lesson him with his own artless tale.
Of one so mighty
That He did say unto the raging sea
“Be thou at peace,” and it obeyed His voice ;
Yet bow'd Himself unto the painful death
That we might live. — They say that I am proud —
O ! had they like their gentle master been,
I would, with suppliant knee bent to the ground,
Have kiss'd their very feet.
But, had they been like Him, they would have par-
don'd me

Ere yet my bending knee had touch'd the earth.

Sel. Forbear, nor tempt me with thy moving words !

I'm a plain soldier, and unfit to judge
Of mysteries which but concern the learn'd.

Eth. I know thou art, nor do I mean to tempt thee.

But in thy younger brother I had mark'd
A searching mind of freer exercise,
Untrammell'd with the thoughts of other men :
And like to one, who, in a gloomy night,
Watching alone amidst a sleeping host,
Sees suddenly along the darken'd sky
Some beauteous meteor play, and with his hand
Wakens a kindred sleeper by his side
To see the glorious sight, e'en so did I
With pains and cost I divers books procured,
Telling of wars, and arms, and famous men ;
Thinking it would his young attention rouse ;
Would combat best a learner's difficulty,
And pave the way at length for better things.
But here his seized soul has wrapp'd itself,
And from the means is heedless of the end.
If wrong I've done, I do repent me of it.
And now, good Selred, as thou'st seen me fight
Like a brave chief, and still in th' honour'd cause,
By that good token kindly think of me,
As of a man who long has suffered wrong
Rather than one deserving so to suffer.

Sel. I do, brave Ethelbert.

Eth. I thank thee, friend.

And now we'll go and wash us from this dust :

We are not fit at goodly boards to sit.

Is not your feast-hour near ?

Sel. I think it is.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A small apartment in MOLLO'S castle. Enter ETHWALD very thoughtful, who leans against a pillar for some time without speaking.

Ethw. (*coming forward.*) Is it delusion this ?
Or wears the mind of man within itself
A conscious feeling of its destination ?
What say these suddenly imposed thoughts,
Which mark such deepen'd traces on the brain
Of vivid real persuasion, as do make
My nerved foot tread firmer on the earth,
And my dilating form tower on its way ?
That I am born, within these narrow walls,
The younger brother of a petty chief,
To live my term in dark obscurity,
Until some foul disease or bloody gash,
In low marauding strife, shall lay me low ?
My spirit sickens at the hateful thought,
Which hangs upon it with such thick oppres-
sion,

As doth the heavy, dense, sulphureous air
Upon the breath it stifles.

[*Pulling up the sleeve of his garment, and baring his right arm from the shoulder.*

A firmer strung, a stronger arm than this
Own'd ever valiant chief of ancient story ?

And lacks my soul within, what should impel it ?
Ah ! but occasion, like th' unveiling moon

Which calls the advent'rer forth, did shine on them!
I sit i' the shade! no star-beam falls on me!

[*Bursts into tears, and throws himself back against the pillar. A pause; he then starts forward full of animation, and tosses his arms high as he speaks.*

No; storms are hush'd within their silent cave,
And unflesh'd lions slumber in the den,
But there doth come a time!

Enter BERTHA, stealing softly upon him before he is aware.

What, Bertha, is it thou who stealst upon me?

Ber. I heard thee loud:

Conversest thou with spirits in the air?

Ethw. With those whose answering voice thou canst not hear.

Ber. Thou hast of late the friend of such become,
And only *them*. Thou art indeed so strange,
Thy very dogs have ceas'd to follow thee,
For thou no more their fawning court receiv'st,
Nor callest to them with a master's voice.
What art thou grown, since thou hast lov'd to pore
Upon those magic books?

Ethw. No matter what! a hermit an' thou wilt.

Ber. Nay, rather, by thy high assumed gait
And lofty mien, which I have mark'd of late,
Oftimes thou art, within thy mind's own world,
Some king or mighty chief.

If so it be, tell me thine honour's pitch,
And I will cast my regal mantle on,
And mate thy dignity. [*Assuming much state.*

Ethw. Out on thy foolery!

Ber. Dost thou remember

How on our throne of turf, with birchen crowns
And willow branches waving in our hands,
We shook our careless feet, and caroll'd out,
And call'd ourselves the king and queen of Kent?

Ethw. Yes, children ever in their mimic play
Such fairy state assume.

Ber. And bearded men

Do sometimes gild the dull unchanging face
Of sombre stilly life with like conceits.
Come, an' you will we'll go to play again.

[*Tripping gaily round him.*

Ethw. Who sent thee here to gambol round me
thus? [*well*

Ber. Nay, fie upon thee! for thou knowst right

It is an errand of my own good will.
Knowest thou not the wand'ring clown is here,
Who doth the osier wands and rushes weave
Into all shapes: who chants gay stories too;
And who was wont to tell thee, when a boy,
Of all the bloody wars of furious Penda?
E'en now he is at work before the gate,
With heaps of pliant rushes round him strew'd;
In which birds, dogs, and children roll and nestle,
Whilst, crouching by his side, with watchful eye
The playful kitten marks each trembling rush

As he entwists his many circling bands.

Nay, men and matrons, too, around him flock,
And Ethelbert, low seated on a stone,
With arms thus cross'd, o'erlooks his curious craft.
Wilt thou not come?

Ethw. Away, I care not for it!

Ber. Nay, do not shake thy head, for thou must come.

This magic girdle will compel thy steps.

[*Throws a girdle round him playfully, and pulls it till it breaks.*

Ethw. [*Smiling coldly.*] Thou seest it cannot hold me.

[*Bertha's face changes immediately: she bursts into tears, and turns away to conceal it.*

Ethw. [*Soothing her.*] My gentle Bertha! little foolish maid!

Why fall those tears? wilt thou not look on me?

Dost thou not know I am a wayward man,
Sullen by fits, but meaning no unkindness?

Ber. O thou wert wont to make the hall rejoice;
And cheer the gloomy face of dark December!

Ethw. And will, perhaps, again. Cheer up, my love! [*Assuming a cheerful voice.*]

And plies the wandering clown his pleasing craft,
Whilst dogs and men and children round him flock?

Come, let us join them too.

[*Holding out his hand to her, whilst she smiles through her tears.*

How course those glancing drops adown thy cheeks,

Like to a whim'ring child! fie on thee, Bertha!

[*Wipes off her tears, and leads her out affectionately.* [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A narrow stone gallery or passage.

[*Voice without.*] Haste, lazy comrade, there!

Enter two servants by opposite sides, one of them carrying mats of rushes in his arms.

1st serv. Setst thou thy feet thus softly to the ground,—

As if thou hadst been paid to count thy steps?

What made thee stay so long?

2d serv. Heard you the news?

1st serv. The news?

2d serv. Ay, by the mass! sharp news indeed.

And mark me well! beforehand I have said it;

Some of those spears now hanging in the hall

Will wag i' the field ere long.

1st serv. Thou hast a marv'lous gift of prophecy.

I know it well; but let us hear thy news.

2d serv. Marry! the Britons and their restless prince,

Join'd with West Anglia's king, a goodly host,

Are now in Mercia, threat'ning all with ruin.
And over and besides, God save us all!
They are but five leagues off.

'Tis true. And over and besides again,
Our king is on his way to give them battle.
Ay, and moreover all, if the late floods
Have broken down the bridge, as it is fear'd
He must perforce pass by our castle walls,
And then thou shalt behold a goodly show!

1st serv. Who brought the tidings?

2d serv. A soldier sent on horseback, all express:
E'en now I heard him tell it to the Thane,
Who caution'd me to tell it unto none,
That Ethwald might not hear it.

1st serv. And thou in sooth obeyst his caution
well.

Now hear thou this from me; thou art a lout;
And over and besides a babbling fool;
Ay, and moreover all, I'll break thy head
If thou dost tell again, in any wise,
The smallest tittle of it.

2d serv. Marry! I can be secret as thyself!

I tell not those who blab.

1st serv. Yes, yes, thy caution is most scrupulous;
Thou'lt whisper it in Ethwald's hither ear,
And bid the further not to know of it.
Give me those trusses.

2d serv. Yes, this is made for my old master's
seat,

And this, so soft, for gentle lady Bertha. (*Giving
the mats.*)

And this, and this, and this for Ethelbert.
But see thou put a sprig of mountain-ash
Beneath it snugly. Dost thou understand?

1st serv. What is thy meaning?

2d serv. It hath a power to cross all wicked
spells;

So that a man may sit next stool to th' devil,
If he can lay but slyly such a twig
Beneath his seat, nor suffer any harm.

1st serv. I wish there were some herb of secret
power

To save from daily scath of blund'ring fools:
I know beneath whose stool it should be press'd.
Get thee along! the feast smokes in the hall.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

*A Saxon hall, with the walls hung round with armour.
MOLLO, ETHELBERT, SELRED, ETHWALD, BERTHA,
SIGURTHA, and others, are discovered sitting
round a table, on which stand goblets and flaggons
&c. after a feast.*

Eth. Nay, gentle Bertha, if thou followest him,
Shear off those lovely tresses from thy head,
And with a frowning helmet shade those eyes;
E'en with thy prowess added to his own,
Methinks he will not be surcharg'd of means
To earn his brilliant fortune in the field.

Ber. Nay, rather will I fill a little scrip
With sick-men's drugs and salves for fest'ring
wounds,

And journey by his side a trav'ling leech.

Sel. That will, indeed, no unmeet comrade be
For one whose fortune must be earn'd with blows
Borne by no substitutes.

Ethw. Well jested, Thanes!

But some, ere now, with fortune earn'd by blows
Borne by no substitutes, have placed their mates
Above the gorgeous dames of castled lords.
Cheer up, sweet Bertha!

For ev'ry drug ta'en from thy little scrip
I'll pay thee back with——

Eth. Sticks the word in his throat.

Sel. It is too great for ut'rance.

Eth. Here's to your growing honours, future
chief;

And here is to the lofty dame who shall be——

[*They all drink ironically to ETHW. and BERTH.*]

Mollo. (*seriously.*) Here is a father's wish for
thee, my son, (*To ETHW.*)

Better than all the glare of fleeting greatness.
Be thou at home the firm domestic prop
Of thine old father's house, in this as honour'd
As he who bears far hence advent'rous arms!
Nor think thee thus debar'd from warlike deeds:
Our neigh'ring chiefs are not too peaceable,
And much adventure breed in little space.

Ethw. What! shall I in their low destructive
strife

Put forth my strength, and earn with valiant
deeds

The fair renown of mighty Woggarwolfe,
The flower of all those heroes? Hateful ruffian!
He drinks men's blood and human flesh devours!
For scarce a heifer on his pasture feeds
Which hath not cost a gallant warrior's life.
I cry you mercy, father! you are kind,
But I do lack the grace to thank you for it.

[*MOLLO leans on the table and looks sad.*]

Sigur. (*to MOL.*) Good uncle, you are sad! Our
gen'rous Ethwald

Contentns not his domestic station here,
Though little willing to enrich your walls
With spoils of petty war.

Ethw. (*seeing his father sad, and assuming cheer-
fulness.*) Nay, father, if your heart is set on
spoil,

Let it be Woggarwolfe's that you shall covet,
And small persuasion may suffice to tempt me.
To plunder him will be no common gain.

We feasters love the flesh of well-run game:
And, faith! the meaneest beeves of all his herds
Have hoof'd it o'er as many weary miles,
With gadding pikemen hollaing at their heels,
As e'er the bravest antler of the woods.
His very sheep too all are noble beasts,
For which contending warriors have fought;

And thrifty dames will find their fleece enrich'd
With the productions of full many a soil.

Ber. How so, my Ethwald?

Ethw. Countest thou for nought
Furze from the upland moors, and bearded down
Torn from the thistles of the sandy plain,
The sharp-tooth'd bramble of the shaggy woods
And tufted seeds from the dark marsh? Good
sooth;

She well may triumph in no vulgar skill
Who spins a coat from it.
And then his wardrobe, too, of costly gear,
Which from the wallets of a hundred thieves,
Has been transferring for a score of years,
In endless change, it will be noble spoil!

[*A trumpet is heard without, and ETHW. starts
from his seat.*]

Ha! 'tis the trumpet's voice!

What royal leader this way shapes his route?

[*A silent pause.*]

Ye answer not, and yet ye seem to know.

Enter Servants in haste.

Good fellows, what say ye?

1st serv. The king! the king! and with five
thousand men!

2d serv. I saw his banners from the battle-
ments

Waving between the woods.

3d serv. And so did I.

His spearmen onward move in dusky lines,

Like the brown reeds that skirt the winter pool.

Sel. Well, well, there needs not all this wond'-
ring din:

He passes on, and we shall do our part.

1st serv. The foe is three leagues off.

Sel. Hold thy fool's tongue! I want no informa-
tion.

[*ETHWALD remains for a while thoughtful, then
running eagerly to the end of the hall, climbs
up and snatches from the walls a sword and
shield, with which he is about to run out.*]

Mollo (*tottering from his seat*). O go not forth, my
rash impetuous son!

Stay yet a term beneath thy father's roof,

And, were it at the cost of half my lands,

I'll send thee out accoutred like a Thane.

Ethw. No, reverend sire, these be my patrimony!
I ask of thee no more.

Ber. And wilt thou leave us?

Mollo. Ay, he'll break thy heart,
And lay me in the dust!

[*Trumpet sounds again, and ETHW. turning
hastily from them, runs out.*]

Ber. Oh! he is gone for ever!

Eth. Patience, sweet Bertha!

Sel. The castle gates are shut by my command,
He cannot now escape. Holla, good friends!

[*To those without.*]

Enter Followers.

All quickly arm yourselves, and be prepared
To follow me before the fall of eve.

Eth. Send out my scout to climb the farther hill,
And spy if that my bands are yet in sight.

[*Exeunt followers.*]

Now let us try to tame this lion's whelp.

Enter Servant in haste.

Sel. What tidings, man? Is Ethwald at the gate?

Ser. No, good my lord, nor yet within the walls.

Sel. What, have they open'd to him?

Ser. No, my lord,

Loudly he call'd, but when it was refus'd,
With glaring eyes, like an enchafed wolf,

He hid him where the lowest southern wall

Rises but little o'er the rugged rock;

There, aided by a half-projecting stone,

He scal'd its height, and holding o'er his head

His sword and shield, grasp'd in his better hand,

Swam the full moat.

Eth. (*to SEL.*) O, noble youth!

Did I not say, you might as well arrest

The fire of heav'n within its pitchy cloud

As keep him here?

[*BERTHA faints away.*]

Alas, poor maid!

[*Whilst SIGURTHA and ETH. &c. attend to
BERTHA, enter followers and retainers, and
begin to take down the armour from the walls.*]

Enter WOGGARWOLFE.

Wog. (*to SEL.*) They would have shut your gate
upon me now,

But I, commission'd on the king's affairs,
Commanded entrance. Oswal greets you, chiefs,
And gives you orders, with your followers,
To join him speedily. (*Seeing BERTHA.*)
What, swooning women here?

Sel. Ethwald is gone in spite of all our care,
And she, thou knowst, my father's niece's child,
Brought up with him from early infancy.
Is therein much affected.

Wog. (*smiling*). O, it is ever thus, I know it
well,

When striplings are concern'd! Once on a time,

A youthful chief I seiz'd in his own hall,

When, on the instant, was the floor around

With fainting maids and shrieking matrons strew'd,

As though the end of all things had been link'd

Unto my fatal grasp.

Sel. (*eagerly*). Thou didst not slay him?

Wog. (*smiling contemptuously*). Asks Selred if
I slew mine enemy?

Sel. Then, by heav'n's light, it was a ruffian's
deed!

Wog. I cry thee grace! wearest thou a virgin
sword?

Maidens turn pale when they do look on blood,

And men there be who sicken at the sight,
If men they may be call'd.

Sel. Ay, men there be,
Who sicken at the sight of crimson butchery,
Yet in the battle's heat will far out-dare
A thousand shedders of unkindled blood.

Eth. (*coming forward*). Peace, Thanes! this is no
time for angry words.

[*BERTHA giving a deep sigh, ETH. and SEL. go
to her and leave WOG., who heeds her not, but
looks at the men taking the arms from the
walls.— Observing one who hesitates between
the swords.*

Wog. Fool, choose the other blade!
That weight of steel will noble gashes make!
Nay, rightly guided in a hand like thine,
Might cleave a man down to the nether ribs.

Sig. (*to BERTHA, as she is recovering*). My gentle
child, how art thou?

Ber. And no kind hand to hold him!

Eth. Be not cast down, sweet maid; he'll soon
return;

All are not lost who join in chanceful war. [lost.

Ber. I know right well, good Thane, all are not
The native children of rude jarring war,
Full oft returning from the field, become
Beneath their shading helmets aged men:
But, ah! the kind, the playful, and the gay;
They who have gladden'd their domestic board,
And cheer'd the winter-fire, do they return?

[*Shaking her head sorrowfully.*

I grieve you all: I will no more complain.

Dear mother, lead me hence. (*To SIG.*)

(*To SEL.*) I thank you, gentle Selred, this suffices.

[*Exit BERTHA, supported by SIGURTHA.*

Sel. (*to MOLLO, who has sat for some time with his
face covered*). What, so o'ercome, my father?

Moll. I am o'ercome, my son! lend me thine
arm. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*A forest: the view of an abbey with its spires in the
back ground. Enter the King, attended by SEAGURTH
and several Thanes and followers, some of them
wounded, and their wounds bound up, as after a
battle. A flourish of trumpets: the King stretches
out his arm in the action of command; the trumpets
cease, and they all halt.*

King. Companions of this rough and bloody day,
Beneath the kindly shelter of this wood
Awhile repose, until our eager youth
Shall, from the widely spread pursuit return'd,
Rejoin our standards.
Brave scneschal, thou'rt weak with loss of blood;

Forbear attendance. Ay, and thou, good Bald-
rick;

And thou (*to another*), and all of you.

Sen. No, gracious king;
The sight of you, unhurt, doth make the blood
That in our veins is left so kindly glow,
We cannot faint. [carn,

King. Thanks, noble chiefs! dear is the gain I
Purchas'd with blood so precious. Who are those
Who hitherward in long procession move?

Sen. It is the pious brethren, as I guess,
Come forth to meet you from yon neigh'ring abbey,
And at their head the holy Hexulf comes.

Enter HEXULF and monks.

Hex. Accept our humble greetings, royal sire!
Victorious be your arms! and in the dust
Low be your foes, as in this glorious day!
Favour'd of heav'n, and of St. Alban, hail!

King. I thank your kindly zeal, my rev'rend
father;

And from these holy brethren do accept
With thanks this token of good will, not doubting
That much I am beholden to your prayers. [host

Hex. In truth, most gracious king, your armed
Has not more surely in your cause prevail'd
Than hath our joint petition, offered up
With holy fervour, most importunate.

Soon as the heav'n-rai's'd voices sweetly reach'd
The echoing arches of yon sacred roofs,
Saint Alban heard, and to your favour'd side
Courage and strength, the soul of battle, sent;
Fear and distraction to th' opposing foe.

King. Ah, then, good father, and ye pious monks,
Would that ye had begun your prayers the sooner!
For long in doubtful scales the battle hung;
And of the men who, with this morning's sun,
Buckled their harness on to follow me,
Full many a valiant warrior, on his back
Lies stiff'ning to the wind.

Hex. The wicked sprite in ev'ry armed host
Will find his friends; who doubtless for a time
May counterpoise the prayers of holy men.

There are among your troops, I question not,
Many who do our sacred rites contemn:
Many who have blasphem'd—Ay, good my lord;
And many holding baleful heresies.

Fought Ethelbert, of Sexford, in your host?

King. He did, my rev'rend father, bravely fought:
To him and valiant Selred, Mollo's son,
Belong the second honours of the day.

[*HEXULF looks abashed and is silent.*

*Enter EDWARD attended, who, after making his obei-
sance to the King, runs up eagerly to SEAGURTH.*

Edw. You are not wounded, father?

Sea. No, my boy.

Edw. Thanks to preserving goodness! Noble
Thanes,

It grieves me much to see those swathed limbs.
War wears a horrid, yet alluring face.
(*To King.*) Your friends, my lord, have done me
great despic.

Had they not long detain'd me on the way,
I should have been with you before the battle.

King. Complain not, youth; they had, in this,
commands

Too high to be disputed. And 'tis well,
For we have had a rough and bloody day.

Edw. Ha! is it so? But you have been victorious.
How went the field?

Sea. Loud rose our battle's sound, and for a while
The Mercians bravely fought; when all at once,
From some unlook'd-for cause, as yet unknown,
A powerful panic seiz'd our better wing,
Which, back recoiling, turn'd and basely fled.
Touch'd quickly with a seeming sympathy,
Our centre-force began, in relax'd strength,
To yield contended space.—So stood the field;
When on a sudden, like those warrior spirits,
Whose scatter'd locks the streamy light'ning is,
Whose spear the bolt of heaven; such as the seer
In 'tranced gaze beholds midst hurdling storms;
Rush'd forth a youth unknown, and in a pass,
Narrow and steep, took his determin'd stand.
His beck'ning hand and loud commanding voice
Constrain'd our flying soldiers from behind,
And the sharp point of his opposing spear
Met the pale rout before.

The dark returning battle thicken'd round him.
His mighty arm deeds of amazement wrought;
Rapid, resistless, terrible.

High rose each warlike bosom at the sight,
And Mercia, like a broad increasing wave,
Up swell'd into a hugely billow'd height,
O'erwhelming in its might all lesser things,
Upon the foe return'd. Selred and Ethelbert
Fell on their weaken'd flank. Confusion, then,
And rout and horrid slaughter fill'd the field:
Wide spread the keen pursuit; the day is ours;
Yet many a noble Mercian strews the plain.

Edw. (*eagerly.*) But the young hero fell not?

Sea. No, my son.

Edw. Then bless'd be heaven! there beats no
noble heart

Which shall not henceforth love him as a brother.
Would he were come unhurt from the pursuit!
O that I had beheld him in his might,
When the dark battle turn'd!

Sea. Your wish is soon fulfill'd, my eager boy;
For here, in truth, the youthful warrior comes,
And, captive by his side, the British Prince.

*Enter ETHWALD with the British Prince prisoner,
accompanied by SELRED and ETHELBERG, and
presents his prisoner to the King.*

King (*to Prince*). Prince of the Britons, clear
thy cloudy brow;

The varied fate of war the bravest prove.
And though I might complain that thy aggressions
Have burnt my towns, and filled my land with
blood,

Thy state forbids it. Here, good keneschal,
Receive your charge, and let him know no change
Unsuited to a prince. (*To ETHWALD.*)
And thou, brave warrior, whose youthful arm
Has brought unto thy king so high a gift,
Say what proud man may lift his honour'd head,
And boast he is thy father.

Ethw. A Thane, my lord, forgotten and retired;
I am the youngest son of aged Mollo,
And Ethwald is my name. [youth,

King. Youngest in years, though not in honour,
E'en though the valiant Selred is thy brother.

(*Turning to SELRED.*) And now be thou the first and
noble root,

From which a noble race shall take its growth,
Wearing thy honours proudly!

Of Mairnieth's earldom be henceforth the lord!

For well I know the council of the states

Will not refuse to ratify my grant.

And thou, brave Ethelbert, and Selred, too,

Ye well have earn'd a noble recompense,

And shall not be forgot. Come hither, Edward;

Take thou this hero's hand; and, noble Ethwald,

Thus let the kingdom's ethling join with me

In honouring thy worth.

Edw. (*who has gazed at some distance upon ETH-
WALD, springing forward eagerly.*) Give him
my hand, my lord! have you not said

That I should fold him to my burning heart?

(*Embraces ETHW.*) Most valiant Ethwald,

Fain would I speak the thoughts I bear to thee,

But they do choke and flutter in my throat,

And make me like a child. (*Passing his hand across
his eyes.*)

Ethw. (*kissing EDWARD's hand.*) I am repaid
beyond a kingdom's worth.

Edw. (*to SEA, bounding joyfully.*) Father, have
you embraced him?

Ethwald, my father is a valiant man. (*SEA embraces
ETHW., but not so eagerly as EDW.*)

King. (*to ETHW.*) Brave youth, with you, and
with your noble friends,

I shall, ere long, have further conference. (*Retires to
the bottom of the stage with HEXULF.*)

[*EDWARD, after gazing with admiration upon
ETHW., puts his hand upon his head, as if to
measure his height; then upon both his shoul-
ders, as if he were considering the breadth of
his chest; then steps some paces back and gazes
at him again.*

Edw. How tall and strong thou art! broad is thy
chest:

Stretch forth, I pray, that arm of mighty deeds.

*ETHW. smiles and stretches out his arm; EDW.
looks at it, and then at his own.*

Would I were nerv'd like thee!
(*Taking ETHW.'s sword.*) It is of weight to suit no vulgar arm.

(*Returning it.*) There, hero; graceful is the sword of war

In its bold master's grasp.

Ethw. Nay, good my lord, if you will honour me, It does become too well your noble hand To be return'd to mine. [pledge.

Edw. Ha! sayst thou so? Yes, I will keep thy Perhaps my arm—Ah, no! it will not be!

But what returning token can I give?
I have bright spears and shields and shining blades
But nought ennobled by the owner's use.

[*Takes a bracelet from his arm and fastens it round ETHWALD'S.*

King (*advancing from the botton of the stage*). My worthy chiefs and Thanes, the night wears on, The rev'rend bishop, and these pious men, Beneath their fane give hospitality,
And woo us to accept it for the night.

Sea. I thought, my lord, you meant to pass the night

With your brave soldiers in the open field.
Already they have learnt the pleasing tale.

Shall I unsay it?

King. Nay, that were unfit.
I pray you pardon me, my rev'rend father!
I cannot house with you; it were unfit.

Hex. Should not your greatness spend the night with those

To whom, in truth, you owe the victory?
We chant at midnight to St. Alban's praise:
Surely my lord regards those sacred things.

[*Whispers the King.*

King. Brave Seagurth, there are reasons of good weight

Why I should lay aside my first intent.
Let all these wounded chieftains follow me!
The rest who list may keep the open field.

(*To EDW.*) Nephew, thou must not prove a soldier's hardships,

Ere thou hast earn'd a soldier's name. Nay, nay,
It must be so.

[*Exeunt King, wounded chiefs, HEXULF, and monks, followed by EDWARD very unwillingly.*

Sea. Who loves a soldier's pillow, follow me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The outside of MOLLO'S castle. BERTHA, SIGURTHA, and others discovered on the walls, and several servants and retainers standing by the gate below.

Berth. O, will they ne'er appear? I'll look no more;

Mine eager gazing but retards their coming.

[*Retires, and immediately returns again.*
Holla, good Murdoch! (*To a servant below.*)

Thou putst thy hand above thy sunned eyes.
Dost thou desery them?

1st serv. Mcrey, gentle lady,
If you desery them not from that high perch,
How should I from my level station here?

Sig. (*to BERTH.*) Go in, my child, thou art worn out with watching.

[*BERTH. retires, and 2d servant goes at some distance from the walls and looks out another way.*

2d serv. Here comes the noble Selred.
(*All call out.*) Noble Selred!

Berth. (*returning upon the wall.*) What, Ethwald, say ye?

Sig. No, it is Selred.

Enter SELRED, with followers, and looks up to the walls, where SIGURTHA waves her hand.

Sig. Welcome, brave Selred! welcome all thy band!

How far are they behind for whom we watch?

Sel. Two little miles or less. Methinks ere this
Their van should be in sight. My messenger
Inform'd you?

Sig. Oh, he did!

Sel. Where is my father?
Sig. He rests within, spent with a fearful joy,
And silent tears steal down his furrow'd cheeks.

Sel. I must confer with him. The king intends
To stop and do him honour on his mareh,
But enters not our walls. [*Exeunt into the castle.*

SCENE III.

A chamber in the castle. Enter SIGURTHA and BERTHA, speaking as they enter.

Berth. Nay, mother, say not so: was he not wont,

If but returning from the daily chase,
To send an upward glance unto that tower?
There well he knew, or late or cold the hour,
His eye should find me.

Sig. My gentle Bertha, be not thus disturb'd.
Such busy scenes, such new unlook'd-for things
Ruffle the flowing stream of habit; men
Will then forgetful seem, though not unkind.

Berth. Thinkst thou? (*shaking her head.*)
I saw him by his sovereign stand,
And O, how graceful! every eye to him
Was turn'd, and every face smil'd honours on him!
Yet his proud station quickly did he leave
To greet his humbler friends who stood aloof.
The meanest follower of these walls, already,
Some mark of kind acknowledgment hath had—
He look'd not up—I am alone forgotten!

Sig. Be patient, child: he will not long delay
To seek thee in thy modest privacy;
Approving more to see thee here retired,
Than, boldly to the army's eye exposed,

Greeting his first approach. I, the mean while,
Intrusted am with orders from the Thane.
Which must not be neglected. [Exit.

Berth. (after walking up and down, agitated, and frequently stopping to listen). Ah, no! deceiv'd again! I need not listen!

No bounding steps approach.

[She sits down despondingly. Enter ETHWALD behind, and steals softly up to her.

Ethw. Bertha!

Berth. (starting up). My Ethwald!

[He holds out his arms to her joyfully, and she bursts into tears.

Ethw. Thou dost not grieve that I am safe return'd?

Berth. O no! I do not grieve, yet I must weep. Hast thou in truth been kind? I will not chide: I cannot do it now.

Ethw. O, fie upon thee! like a wayward child: To look upon me thus! cheer up, my love.

[He smiles upon her joyfully, and her countenance brightens. She then puts her hand upon his arm, and, stepping back a little space, surveys him with delight.

Berth. Thou man of mighty deeds! [honour! Thou, whom the brave shall love and princes Dost thou, in truth, return to me again, Mine own, my very Ethwald?

Ethw. No, that were paltry; I return to thee A thousandfold the lover thou hast known me. I have of late been careless of thee, Bertha. The hopeless calm of dull obscurity, Like the thick vapours of a stagnant pool, Oppress'd my heart and smother'd kind affections; But now th' enlivening breeze of fortune wakes My torpid soul—When did I ever fold thee To such a warm and bounding heart as this?

[Embraces her.

The king has given to me Mairnieth's earldom—
Nay, smile, my Bertha!

Berth. So I do, my Ethwald.

Ethw. The noble ethling greatly honours me With precious tokens; nay, the very soldiers Do rear their pointed weapons as I pass; As though it were to say, "there goes the man That we would cheerly follow."

Unto what end these fair beginnings point I know not—but of this I am assured, There is a course of honour lies before me, Be it with dangers, toil, or pain beset, Which I will boldly tread. Smiles not my love?

Berth. I should, in truth; but how is this? methinks

Thou ever lookst upon the things to come, I on the past. A great and honour'd man I know thou'lt be: but O, bethink thee, then, How once thou wert, within these happy walls, A little cheerful boy, with curly pate, Who led the infant Bertha by the hand,

Storing her lap with ev'ry gaudy flower;
With speckled eggs stolen from the hedgeling's nest,
And berries from the tree; ay, think on this,
And then I know thou'lt love me!

[Trumpet sounds. Catching hold of him eagerly. Hears't thou that sound? The blessed saints preserve thee!

Must thou depart so soon?

Ethw. Yes, of necessity: reasons of weight Constrain the king, and I, new in his service, Must seem to follow him with willing steps.

But go thou with me to the castle gate.

We will not part until the latest moment. [pledge.

Berth. Yet stop, I pray, thou must receive my Seest thou this woven band of many dyes, Like to a mottled snake? its shiny woof Was whiten'd in the pearly dew of eve, Beneath the silver moon; its varied warp Was dyed with potent herbs, at midnight cull'd.

It hath a wond'rous charm: the breast that wears it No change of soft affection ever knows.

Eth. (receiving it with a smile). I'll wear it, Bertha. [Trumpet sounds.

Hark! it calls me hence.

Berth. O go not yet! here is another gift, This ring, enrich'd with stone of basilisk, Whenever press'd by the kind wearer's hand, Presents the giver's image to his mind.

Wilt thou not wear it?

Ethw. (receiving it). Yes, and press it too.

Berth. And in this purse— [Taking out a purse

Ethw. What! still another charm? [Laughing. Thou simple maid!

Dost thou believe that witch'd gear like this

Hath power a lover faithful to retain,

More than thy gentle self?

Berth. Nay, laugh, but wear them.

Ethw. I will, my love, since thou wilt have it so. (Putting them in his breast.) Here are they lodged, and cursed be the hand

That plucks them forth! And now receive my pledge. It is a jewel of no vulgar worth: (Ties it on her arm.) Wear it and think of me. But yet, belike, It must be steeped in some wizard's pot, Or have some mystic rhyming mutter'd o'er it, Ere it will serve the turn.

Berth. (pressing the jewel on her arm). O no! right well I feel there is no need.

Ethw. Come, let us go: we do not part, thou knowst,

But at the castle gate. Cheer up, my Bertha!

I'll soon return, and oft return again. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

An apartment in a royal castle. Enter ETHWALD and ALWY, speaking as they enter.

Ethw. What, peace! peace, sayst thou, with these glorious arms,

In conquest red, occasion bright'ning round us,
And smiling victory, with beck'ning hand,
Pointing to future fields of nobler strife,
With richer honours crown'd? What, on the face
Of such fair prospects draw the veil of peace!
Cold blasting peace! The blackest fiend of hell
Hath not a thought more devilish!

Alwy. It is indeed a flat unpleasant tale
For a young warrior's ear: but well hast thou
Improv'd the little term of bold occasion;
Short while thou wert but Mollo's younger son,
Now art thou Mairnieth's lord.

Ethw. And what is Mairnieth's lordship! I will
own

That, to my distant view, such state appear'd
A point of fair and noble eminence;
But now—what is it now? O! it is sunk
Into a petty knoll! I am as one!
Who doth attempt some lofty mountain's height,
And having gain'd what to the utmost eye
The summit's point appear'd, astonish'd sees
Its cloudy top, majestic and enlarged,
Towering aloft, as distant as before.

Alwy. Patience, brave Ethwald; ere thy locks
be grey,
Thy helmed head shall yet in battle tower,
And fair occasion shape thee fair reward.

Ethw. Ere that my locks be grey! the world ere
now

Hath crouch'd beneath a beardless youth. But I—
I am as one who mounts to th' azure sky
On the rude billow's back, soon sunk again:
Like the loud thunder of th' upbreacking cloud,
The terror of a moment. Fate perverse!
'Till now, war's frowning spirit, rous'd, was wont
To urge with whirling lash his sable steeds,
Nor slack his furious speed till the wide land
From bound to bound beneath his axle shook:
But soon as in my hand the virgin spear
Had flesh'd its ruddy point, then is he turn'd
Like a tired braggart to his caves of sloth. (*Stamp-
ing on the ground.*)

Peace! cursed peace! Who will again unchain
The grizly dog of war?

Alwy. Meanst thou the British prince?

Ethw. (*eagerly.*) What sayst thou, Alwy?

Alwy. I said not aught.

Ethw. Nay, marry! but thou didst!

And it has rais'd a thought within my mind.
The British prince releas'd, would he not prove
A dog of war, whose yell would soon be follow'd?

Alwy. They do indeed full hard advantage take
Of his captivity, and put upon him
Conditions suited to his hapless state,
More than his princely will.

[hand

Ethw. 'Tis basely done: would that some friendly
His prison would unbar and free the thrall!
But no, no, no! I to the king resign'd him;
'Twere an unworthy deed.

Alwy.

It were most difficult;
For now they keep him in a closer hold,
And bind his hands with iron.

Ethw. Have they done this? I'm glad on't! O
I'm glad on't!

They promised nought unworthy of a prince
To put upon him—Now my hands are free!
And, were it made of living adamant,
I will unbar his door. Difficult, sayst thou?
No, this hath made it easy.

Alwy. Well softly then; we may devise a way
By which the seneschal himself will seem
The secret culprit in this act.

Ethw. No, no!
I like it not; though I must work i' the dark,
I'll not in cunningly devised light
Put on my neighbour's cloak to cause his ruin.
But let's to work apace! the storm shall rise!
My sound shall yet be heard!

Alwy. Fear not, thou shalt ere long be heard
again,
A dark'ning storm which shall not soon be laid.

Ethw. Ah, thou hast touch'd where my life's life
is cell'd!

Is there a voice of prophecy within thee?

[*Catching hold of his arm eagerly.*

I will believe there is! my stirring soul
Leapt at thy words. Such things ere now have
been:

Men oft have spok'n, unweeting, of themselves;
Yea, the wild winds of night have utter'd words,
That have unto the list'ning ear of hope
Of future greatness told, ere yet the thoughts
On any certain point had fix'd their hold.

Alwy. Thou mayst believe it: I myself, methinks,
Feel secret earnest of thy future fortune;
And please myself to think my friendly hand
May humbly serve, perhaps, to build thy greatness.

Ethw. Come to my heart, my friend! though new
in friendship,

Thou, and thou only, bearest true sympathy
With my aspiring soul. I can with thee
Unbar my mind—Methinks thou shiv'rst, Alwy.

Alwy. 'Tis very cold.

Ethw. Is it? I feel it not:

But in my chamber burns the crackling oak,
There let us go.

Alwy. If you are so inclin'd.

[*As they are going, Ethw. stops short, and
catches hold of Alwy eagerly.*

Ethw. A sudden fancy strikes me: Woggarwolfe,
That restless ruffian, might with little art
Be rous'd on Wessex to commit aggression:
Its royal chief, now leaguering with our king,
Will take the field again.

Alwy. We might attempt him instantly: but move,
In faith I'm cold!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A dark apartment in the same castle. WOGGARWOLFE is discovered asleep upon a couch of rushes, and covered with a mat. Enter ALWY and a follower, with a lad bearing a torch before them. ALWY signs with his hand, and the torch-bearer retires to a distance.

Alwy. Softly, ere we proceed; a sudden thought, Now crossing o'er my mind, disturbs me much. He who to-night commands the farther watch, Canst thou depend upon him?

Fol. Most perfectly; and, free of hostile bounds, The British prince ere this enters his way.

Alwy. I'm satisfied: now to our present purpose.

[*As they advance towards the couch, WOGGARWOLFE is heard speaking in his sleep.*

Ha! speaks he in his sleep? some dream disturbs him:

His quiv'ring limbs beneath the cov'ring move. He speaks again.

Wog. (*in his sleep.*) Swift, in your package stow those dead men's gear,

And loose their noble coursers from the stall.

Alwy. Ay, plund'ring in his sleep.

Wog. Wipe thou that blade:

Those bloody throats have drench'd it to the hilt.

Alwy. O, hear the night-thoughts of that bloody hound!

I must awake him. Ho, brave Woggarwolfe!

Wog. Hear how those women scream! we'll still them shortly.

Alwy. Ho, Woggarwolfe!

Wog. Who calls me now? cannot you master it?

[*ALWY knocks upon the ground with his stick.*

What, batt'ring on it still? Will it not yield?

Then fire the gate.

Alwy (*shaking him*). Ho, Woggarwolfe, I say!

Wog. (*starting up half awake*). Is not the castle taken?

Alwy. Yes, it is taken.

Wog. (*rubbing his eyes*). Pooh! it is but a dream.

Alwy. But dreams full oft are found of real events

The forms and shadows.

There is in very deed a castle taken,

In which your Wessex foes have left behind

Nor stuff, nor store, nor mark of living thing.

Bind on thy sword and call thy men to arms!

Thy boiling blood will bubble in thy veins,

When thou hast heard it is the tower of Boruth.

Wog. My place of strength? [West,

Fol. Yes, chief; I spoke with one new from the

Who saw the ruinous broil.

Wog. By the black fiends of hell! therein is stored

The chiefest of my wealth. Upon its walls

The armour of a hundred fallen chiefs

Did rattle to the wind.

Alwy. Now will it sound elsewhere.

Wog. (*in despair*). My noble steeds, and all my stalled kine!

O, the fell hounds! no mark of living thing?

Fol. No mark of living thing.

Wog. Ah! and my little arrow-bearing boy!

He whom I spared amidst a slaughter'd heap,

Smiling all weetless of th' uplifted stroke

Hung o'er his harmless head!

Like a tamed cub I rear'd him at my feet:

He could tell biting jests, bold ditties sing,

And quaff his foaming bumper at the board,

With all the the mock'ry of a little man.

By heav'n I'll leave alive within their walls

Nor maid, nor youth, nor infant at the breast,

If they have slain that child! blood-thirsty ruffians!

Alwy. Ay, vengeance! vengeance! rouse thee like a man!

Occasion tempts; the foe, not yet return'd,

Have left their castle careless of defence.

Call all thy followers secretly to arms:

Set out upon the instant.

Wog. By holy saints, I will! reach me, I pray!

[*Pointing to his arms lying at a little distance from him.*

Alwy (*giving them*). There, be thou speedy.

Wog. (*putting on his armour*). Curse on those loos'n'd springs, they will not catch!

Oh, all the goodly armour I have lost!

Light curses on my head! if I do leave them

Or spear, or shield, or robe, or household stuff,

Or steed within their stalls, or horn or hoof

Upon their grassy hills! (*Looking about.*) What want I now?

Mine armour-man hath ta'en away my helm—

Faith, and my target too! hell blast the buzzard!

[*Exit furiously.*

Alwy (*laughing*). Ethwald, we have fulfill'd thy bidding well,

With little cost of craft! But let us follow,

And keep him to the bent. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A small close grove, with a steep rocky bank at one end of it. Several Peasants are discovered standing upon the bank, as if looking at some distant sight.

1st peas. Good lack a day! how many living souls,

In wide confused eddying motion mix'd,

Like cross set currents on the restless face

Of winter floods!

2d peas. Where fight the Northern Mercians?

1st *peas.* On the right.
The gentle ethling, as I am inform'd,
Fights likewise on the right : heav'n spare his head !
'Tis his first battle.

3d *peas.* Hear, hear ! still louder swells that
horrid sound.

1st *peas.* Ay, many voices join in that loud din,
Which soon shall shout no more.

3d *peas.* Ay, good neighbour,
Full gloriously now looks that cover'd field,
With all those moving ranks and glitt'ring arms ;
But he who shall return by setting sun
Will see a sorry sight. *[A loud distant noise.]*

1st *peas.* Heav'n save us all ! it is the warlike yell
Of those damn'd Britons that increaseth so.
By all the holy saints our men are worsted !

[An increasing noise heard without.]
Look ! yonder look ! they turn their backs and flee.

3d *peas.* O blasting shame ! where fights brave
Ethwald now ?

He is, I fear, far in the distant wing.
Let us be gone ! we are too near them here :
The flight comes this way : hear that horrid sound !
The saints preserve us !

[The sound of the battle increases, and is heard nearer. The peasants come hastily down from the bank, and exeunt. Enter EDWARD with several followers disordered and panic-stricken.]

1st *fol. (looking round).* They cease to follow us :
this tangled grove

Has stopp'd the fell pursuit : here may we rest.

[EDWARD throws himself down at the root of a tree, and covers his face with his hands.]

2d *fol. (filling his helmet with water from a stream, and presenting it to Edw.)* My prince, this cooling water will refresh you.

Edw. (keeping his face still covered with one hand, and waving him off with the other). Away, away ! and do not speak to me !

[A deep pause, the noise of the battle is again heard coming nearer.]

1st *fol.* We must not tarry here.

(To EDW.) My lord, the farther thickets of this wood

Will prove a sure concealment : shall we move ?

Edw. (still covering his face). Let the earth gape and hide me. *(Another deep pause.)*

3d *fol. to 1st.* The sin of all this rout falls on thy head,

Thou cursed Thane ! thou and thy hireling knaves
First turn'd your backs and fled.

1st *fol. to 3d.* Thou liest, foul tongue ! it was thy kinsman there

Who first did turn ; for I was borne away,
[Pointing to 4th fol.]

Unwillingly away, by the rude stream
Of his fear-stricken bands. When, till this hour,
Did ever armed Briton see my back ?

4th *fol.* Arm'd Britons dost thou call them ? —
devils they are ! *[sprites.]*

Thou knowst right well they deal with wicked
Those horrid yells were not the cries of men ;
And fiends of hell look'd through their flashing eyes.
I fear to face the power of simple man
As little as thyself.

Enter more Fugitives.

1st *fol. (to Edw.)* Up, my good lord ! Hence
let us quickly move ;
We must not stay.

Edw. Then thrust me through and leave me.
I'll flee no more. *(Looking up wildly, then fixing his eyes wistfully upon 3d follower, and bending one knee to the ground.)*

Ebbert, thy sword is keen, thy arm is strong ;
O, quickly do't ! and I shall be with those
Who feel nor shame nor panic.

[3d fol. and several others turn their faces away and weep. Enter more fugitives.]

1st *fol.* What, is all lost ?

1st *fug.* Yes, yes ! our wing is beaten.
Seagurth alone, with a few desp'rate men,
Still sets his aged breast against the storm :
But thick the aimed weapons round him fly,
Like huntsmen's arrows round the toiled boar.

And he will soon be nothing. *[noble father !]*
Edw. (starting up). O, God ! O, living God ! my
He has no son ! — Off, ye debasing fears !
I'll tear thee forth, base heart, if thou dost let me.

[Coming forward and stretching out his arms.]
Companions, noble Mercians — Ah, false word !

I may not call you noble. Yet, perhaps,
One gen'rous spark within your bosom glows.
Sunk in disgrace still lower than ye all,
I may not urge — Who lists will follow me !

All with one voice. We will all follow thee !

Edw. Will ye, in truth ? then we'll be brave men
still. *[Brandishing his sword as he goes off.]*
My noble father !

[Exeunt, clashing their arms eagerly.]

SCENE II.

A confused noise of a battle is heard. The scene draws up and discovers the British and Mercian armies engaged. Near the front of the stage they are seen in close fight, and the ground strewd with several wounded and dead soldiers, as if they had been fighting for some time. Farther off, missile weapons and showers of arrows darken the air, and the view of the more distant battle is concealed in thick clouds of dust. The Mercians gain ground upon the Britons ; and loud cries are raised by them to encourage one another. An active Mercian falls, and their progress is stopped whilst they endeavour to bear him off.

Fallen Mercian. I'm slain, I'm slain ! tread o'er me, and push forward.

Mer. Chief. O stop not thus! to it again, brave Mercians!

[*The Mercians push on, encouraging one another with cries and clashing of arms; one of their bravest soldiers is wounded on the front of the stage and staggers backwards.*

Wounded Mer. Ay, this is death; O that my life had held

To see the end of this most noble game!

[*Falls down, but seeing the Mercians about to push the Britons off the stage, raises himself half from the ground and claps his hands exultingly.*

Well fought, brave Mercians! On, my noble Mercians!

I am in darkness now! a clod o' the earth! [*Dies.*

Britons (without). Fresh succour, Britons! courage! victory!

Carwallen and fresh succour!

[*The Britons now raise a terrible yell, and push back the Mercians, who yield ground and become spiritless and relaxed as their enemy becomes bolder. The Britons at last seize the Mercian standard, and raise another terrible yell, whilst the Mercians give way on every side.*

1st falling Mer. Horror and death! the hand of wrath is o'er us!

2d falling Mer. A fell and fearful end! a bloody trampling foe to tread out brave men's breath.

[*The Britons yell again, and the Mercians are nearly beat off the stage.*

(*Voice without.*) Ethwald! the valiant Ethwald! succour, Mercians!

(*Voice within.*) Hear ye, brave comrades? Ethwald is at hand.

Enter ETHWALD with his sword drawn.

Ethw. What, soldiers! yield ye thus, while vict'ry smiles

And bids us on to th' bent? Your northern comrades

Mock at their savage howls, and drive before them These chafed beasts of prey. Come! to it bravely!

To it, and let their mountain matrons howl,

For these will soon be silent.

Give me the standard.

Voice. They have taken it.

Ethw. Taken! no, by the spirits of the brave!

Standard of ours on Snowdon winds to float!

No! this shall fetch it back!

[*Taking off his helmet and throwing it into the midst of the enemy, then rushing upon them bare-headed and sword in hand. The Mercians clash their arms and raise a great shout: the Britons are driven off the stage; whilst many of the dying Mercians clap their hands and raise a feeble shout after their comrades. The scene closes.*

SCENE III.

An open space before a royal tent; the curtains of which are drawn up, and show a company of warriors and dames within it. On either side of the open stage soldiers are drawn up in order. Enter two petty Thanes on the front of the stage.

1st Thane. Here let us stand and see the ceremony.

Without the tent, 'tis said the king will crown
The gallant ethling with a wreath of honour,
As the chief agent in this victory
O'er stern Carwallen and his Britons gain'd.

2d Thane. Thou sayest well. Within the royal tent

They wait, as I am told, the ethling's coming,
Who is full tardy. Softly, they come forth.

* How like a ship with all her goodly sails

Spread to the sun, the haughty princess moves!

[*A flourish of trumpets. Enter from the tent the King, with ETHELBERG, EDRICK, Thanes, and attendants; and ELBURGA, with DWINA and ladies. They advance towards the front of the stage.*

King. Nay, sweet Elburga, clear thy frowning brow;

He who is absent will not long delay

His pleasing duty here.

Elb. On such a day, my lord, the brave I honour,

As those who have your royal arms maintain'd

In war's iron field, such honour meriting.

What individual chiefs, or here or absent,

May therein be concern'd, I little care;

I deign not to regard it.

King. Thou art offended, daughter, but unwisely.

Plumed with the fairest honours of the field,

Such pious grief for a brave father's death,

Bespeaks a heart such as a gentle maid

In her faith-plighted lord should joy to find.

Elb. Who best the royal honours of a prince

Maintains, best suits a royal maiden's love.

King. Elburga, thou forgetst that gentleness

Which suits thy gentle kind.

Elb. (*with much assumed stateliness.*) I hope, my lord,

I do meantime that dignity remember,

Which doth besem the daughter of a king!

King. Fie! clear thy cloudy brow! it is my will
Thou honour graciously his modest worth.

[*Elb. bows, but smiles disdainfully.*

By a well feigned flight, he was the first

Who broke the stubborn foe, op'ning the road

To victory. Here, with some public mark

Of royal favour, by thy hand receiv'd,

* Probably I have received this idea from Samson Agonistes, where Dailiah is compared to a stately ship of Tarsus "with all her bravery on, and tackle trim," &c.

I will to honour him ; for, since the battle,
A gloomy melancholy o'er him broods,
E'en far exceeding what a father's death
Should cast upon a youthful victor's triumph.
Ah ! here he comes ! look on that joyless face !

Elw. (aside to DWINA, looking scornfully to EDWARD as he approaches). Look with what slow and piteous gait he comes !

Like younger brother of a petty Thane,
Timing his footsteps to his father's dirge.

Dwina. (aside). Nay, to my fancy it is wond'rous graceful.

Elw. (contemptuously). A youth, indeed, who might with humble grace
Beneath thy window tell his piteous tale.

Enter EDWARD followed by ETHWALD and attendants.

King. Approach, my son : so will I call thee now.

Here is a face whose smiles should gild thy honours

If thou art yet awake to beauty's power.

Edw. (kissing ELBURGA'S hand respectfully). Honour'd I am indeed ; most dearly honour'd ; I feel it here (*his hand on his heart*), and should be joyful too,

If aught could gild my gloom.

[*Sighs very deeply, then suddenly recollecting himself.*]

Elburga, thou wert ever fond of glory,
And ever quick to honour valiant worth ;
Ethwald, my friend — hast thou forgotten Ethwald ?
[*Presenting ETHW. to her.*]

Elb. Could I forget the warlike Thane of Mairnieth,

I must have barr'd mine ears against all sound ;
For every voice is powerful in his praise,
And every Mercian tongue repeats his name.

[*Smiling graciously upon ETHW.*]
King (impatiently). Where go we now ? we wander from our purpose.

Edward, thy youthful ardour season'd well
With warlike craft, has crown'd my age with glory ;
Here be thy valour crown'd, it is my will,
With honour's wreath, from a fair hand receiv'd.

[*Giving the wreath to ELBURGA.*]

Edw. (earnestly). I do beseech you, uncle ! — pray receive

My grateful thanks ! the mournful cypress best
Becomes my brow ; this honour must not be.

King. Nay, lay aside unseemly diffidence ;
It must be so.

Edw. (impressively). My heart is much depress'd :

O do not add

The burden of an undeserved honour,

To bend me to the earth !

King. These warlike chieftains say it is deserv'd,

And nobly earn'd. It is with their concurrence
That now I offer thee this warrior's wreath ;
Yes, ethling, and command thee to receive it.
(*Holding up his hand.*) There, let the trumpet sound.

[*Trumpets sound.*]

Edw. (holding up his hands distractedly). Peace, peace ! nor put me to this agony !

[*Trumpets cease.*]

And am I then push'd to this very point ?

Well, then, away deceit ! too long hast thou

Like the incumbent monster of a dream

On the stretch'd sleeper's breast, depress'd my soul ;

I shake thee off, foul mate ! O, royal sire,
And you, ye valiant Mercians, hear the truth !

Ye have believ'd, that by a feigned flight,

I gain'd the first advantage o'er the foe,

And broke their battle's strength ; O would I had !

That flight, alas ! was real ; the sudden impulse

Of a weak mind, unprov'd and strongly struck

With new and horrid things, until that hour

Unknown and unimagi'd, —

Nor was it honour's voice that call'd me back ;

The call of nature saved me. Noble Seagurth,

Had I been son of any sire but thee,

I had in dark and endless shame been lost,

Nor e'er again before these valiant men

Stood in this royal presence.

In all my fortune, I am blest alone

That my brave father, rescued by these arms,

Look'd on me, smiling through the shades of death,

And knew his son. He was a noble man !

He never turn'd from danger — but his son —

(*Many voices at once.*) His son is worthy of him !

(*Repeated again with more voices.*) His son is

worthy of him !

Ethelbert (with enthusiasm). His son is worthy

Of the noblest sire that ever wielded sword !

Voices. Crown him, fair princess ! Crown the

noble Edward !

[*ELBURGA offers him the wreath, which he puts*

aside vehemently.]

Edw. Forbear ! a band of scorpions round my

brow

Would not torment me like this laurel wreath.

[*ELB. turns from him contemptuously, and gives*

the wreath to the King.]

Edw. (to King). What, good my lord ! is there not present here

A Mercian brow deserving of that wreath ?

Shall he, who did with an uncover'd head

Your battle fight, still wear his brows unbound ?

Do us not this disgrace !

King (fretfully). Thou dost forget the royal dignity :

Take it away. (*Giving it to an officer.*)

[*A confused murmuring amongst the soldiers.*]

(*Aside to the seneschal, alarmed.*) What noise is that ?

Sen. (aside to King). Your troops, my sire, are much dissatisfied,
For that their favourite chief by you is deem'd
Unworthy of the wreath.

King (aside). What, is it so? call back mine officer. (*Taking the wreath again, and giving it to ELB.*)

This wreath was meant for one of royal line,
But every noble Mercian, great in arms,
Is equal to a prince.

Crown the most valiant Ethwald.

Elb. (crowning ETHW. with great assumed majesty). Long may thy laurels flourish on thy brow,

Most noble chief!

[*ETHW. takes the wreath and presses it to his lips, bowing to ELB., then to the King.*]

Ethw. They who beneath the royal banner fight,
Unto the fortunes of their royal chief

Their success owe. Honour'd, indeed, am I

That the brave ethling hath so favour'd me,

And that I may, most humbly at your feet,

My royal sire, this martial garland lay.

[*He, kneeling, lays the wreath at the King's feet; the King raises him up and embraces him; the soldiers clash their arms and call out.*]

Sold. Long live the king! and long live noble Ethwald!

[*This is several times repeated. Execut King, EDWARD, ELBURGA, &c. &c.; ELBURGA looking graciously to ETHWALD as she goes off. Manent ETHWALD and ETHELBERT.*]

Eth. (repeating indignantly as they go off). Long live the king, and long live noble Ethwald!

Fie on the stupid clowns, that did not join

The gen'rous Edward's name!

(*To ETHW., who is standing looking earnestly after the princess.*) What dost thou gaze on?

Ethw. The princess look'd behind her as she went.

Eth. And what is that to thee?

[*Walks silently across the stage once or twice gloomy and dissatisfied, then turning short upon ETHW.*]

When wert thou last to see the lovely Bertha?

Ethw. (hesitating). I cannot reckon it unto the day—

Some moons ago.

Eth. Some moons! the moon in her wide course shines not

Upon a maid more lovely.

Ethw. I know it well.

Eth. Thou dost.

Ethw. (after a pause, looking attentively to ETH., who stands muttering to himself). Methinks thou holdest converse with thyself.

Eth. (speaking aloud, as if he continued to talk to himself). She steps upon the flowery bosom'd earth,

As though it were a foot-cloth fitly placed
Beneath the tread of her majestic step;
And looks upon the human countenance,
Whereon her Maker hath the signs impress'd
Of all that He within the soul hath stored
Of great and noble, gen'rous and benign,
As on a molten plate, made to reflect
Her grandeur and perfections.

Ethw. Of whom speakest thou?

Eth. Not of the gentle Bertha. [*Exit.*]

Ethw. What may he mean? He mark'd, with much displeasure,

The soldiers shout my name, and now my favour
With Mercia's princess frets him. What of this?
Ha! hath his active mind outrun mine own
In shaping future consequences? Yes,
It must be so, a curtain is withdrawn,
And to mine eye a goodly prospect shown,
Extending—No, I must not look upon it.

[*Exit hastily.*]

SCENE IV.

An open space, with arms, garments, and other spoils of the Britons heaped up on every side of the stage. Enter Soldiers, and range themselves in order; then enter ETHELBERT and a Soldier, talking as they enter.

Eth. Ethwald among his soldiers, dost thou say,
Divides his spoil?

Sol. He does, most bountifully;
Nor to himself more than a soldier's share
Retains, he is so gen'rous and so noble.

Eth. I thank thee, friend. [*Soldier retires.*]
(*After a pause.*) I like not this: behind those heaps
I'll stand,

And mark the manner of this distribution. [*Retires.*]

Enter ALWY and a petty Thane.

Alwy. Brave warriors! ye are come at his desire,

Who for each humble soldier, bold in arms,
That has beneath his orders fought, still bears
A brother's heart. You see these goodly spoils:
He gives them not unto the cloister'd priests:
His soldiers pray for him. [*Soldiers shout.*]

Thane (to ALWY). What is thy meaning?

Alwy. Knowest thou not the king has now bestow'd
The chiefest portion of his British spoil
On Alban's abbey?

Enter ETHWALD.

(*Soldiers shouting very loud.*) Long live brave Ethwald!
health to noble Ethwald! [*hearts!*]

Ethw. Thanks for these kindly greetings, valiant
[*Soldiers shout again very loud.*]

In truth I stand before you, brave companions,

Somewhat asham'd ; for with my wishes match'd,
These hands are poor and empty.

[*Loud acclamations.*]

I thank you all again ; for well I see
You have respect unto the dear good will
That must enrich these heaps of homely stuff.

Soldiers. Long live our gen'rous leader !

Ethw. (*giving a soldier a helmet filled with lots*).

Here, take the lots and deal them fairly round.

Heaven send to all of you, my valiant friends,
A portion to your liking. This rough heap

[*Pointing to the arms.*]

Will give at least to each some warlike trophy,
Which henceforth, hung upon his humble walls,
Shall tell his sons and grandsons yet to come
In what proud fields, and with what gallant mates
Their father fought. And I, methinks, well pleas'd,
Resting, as heretofore I oft have done,
My wand'ring steps beneath your friendly roofs,
Shall, looking up, the friendly token spy,
And in my host a fellow soldier hail.

Soldiers (*with loud acclamations*). God bless you,
noble chief ! unto the death

We'll follow to you, brave leader !

Ethw. And if to you I hold not, valiant Mercians,
No noble chief am I. This motley gear,

[*Pointing to the spoils.*]

Would it were all composed of precious things,
That to his gentle wife or favour'd maid,
Each soldier might have borne some goodly gift !
But tell them, British matrons cross the woof
With coarser hands than theirs.

1st sol. Saint Alban bless his noble countenance !
'Twas fashion'd for bestowing.

2d sol. Heav'n store his halls with wealth !

Ethw. (*going familiarly amongst the soldiers as the
lots are drawing*). Well, Ogar, hast thou
drawn ? good luck to thee.

And thou, good Baldwin, too ? Yet fie upon it !

The heaviest weapon of the British host

Lacks weight of metal for thy sinewy arm. —

Ha ! health to thee, mine old and honest host !

I'm glad to see thee with thine arm unbound.

And ruddy too ! thy dame should give me thanks :

I send thee home to her a younger man

Than I receiv'd thee.

(*To the soldier with the lots who is passing him.*)

Nay, stay thee, friend, I pray, nor pass me o'er,

We all must share alike : hold out thy cap.

[*Smiling as he draws.*]

The knave would leave me out.

[*Loud acclamations, the soldiers surrounding him
and clashing their arms.*]

Enter SELRED and Followers.

Sel. (*to sol.*) Ha ! whence comes all this uproar ?

Sol. Know you not ?

Your noble brother 'midst his soldiers shares
His British spoils.

Sel. The grateful knaves ! is all their joy for this ?

[*To his followers.*]

Well, go and add to it my portion also ;

'Twill make them roar the louder. Do it quickly.

[*Exit.*]

Soldiers (*looking after SEL.*). Heaven bless him
too, plain, honest, careless soul !

He gives as though he gave not. [*Loud acclamations.*]

Long live brave Ethwald, and the noble Selred !

Ethw. (*aside to ALWY, displeas'd*). How came he
here ?

Alwy. I cannot tell.

Ethw. (*to sol.*) We are confined within this nar-
row space :

Go range yourselves at large on yon green sward,
And there we'll spread the lots.

[*Exeunt ; the soldiers arranging themselves as
they go.*]

SCENE V.

*An apartment in a royal castle. Enter ETHELBERT,
and leans his back upon a pillar near the front of
the stage, as if deeply engaged in gloomy thoughts ;
afterwards enters ETHWALD by the opposite side,
at the bottom of the stage, and approaches ETH.
slowly, observing him attentively as he advances.*

Ethw. Thou art disturbed, Ethelbert.

Eth. I am.

Ethw. Thine eyes roll strangely, as though thou
beheldst

Some dreadful thing : —

On what lookst thou ?

Eth. Upon my country's ruin.

The land is full of blood : her savage birds

O'er human carcases do scream and batten :

The silent hamlet smokes not ; in the field

The aged grandsire turns the joyless soil :

Dark spirits are abroad, and gentle worth

Within the narrow house of death is laid,

An early tenant.

Ethw. Thou'rt beside thyself !

Thinkst thou that I, with these good arms, will
stand

And suffer all this wreck ?

Eth. Ha ! sayst thou so ? Alas, it is thyself

Who rul'st the tempest ! [*Shaking his head solemnly.*]

Ethw. If that I bear the spirit of a man,

Thou falsely seest ! Thinkst thou I am a beast ;

A fanged wolf, reft of all kindly sense,

That I should do such deeds ?

I am a man aspiring to be great,

But loathing cruelty : who wears a sword

That will protect and not destroy the feeble.

[*Putting his hand vehemently upon his sword.*]

Eth. Ha ! art thou roused ? blessings on thy wrath !

I'll trust thee still. But see, the ethling comes,

And on his face he wears a smile of joy.

Enter EDWARD, advancing gaily to ETHWALD.

Edw. A boon, a boon, great Mairnieth's Thane,
I crave.

Eth. You come not with a suppliant's face, my lord.

Edw. Not much cast down for lack of confidence
My suit to gain. That envious braggart there,
The chief of Bournoth, says, no Mercian arm,
Of man now living, can his grandsire's sword
In warlike combat wield : and, in good sooth !
I forfeit forty of my fattest kine
If Ethwald's arm does not the feat achieve.

(To ETHW.) What sayst thou, friend ? Methinks
thou'rt grave and silent :

Hast thou so soon thy noble trade forgot ?
Have at it then ! I'll rouse thy spirit up :
I'll soldier thee again.

*[Drawing his sword playfully upon ETHWALD,
who defends himself in like manner.]*

Fie on't ! that was a wicked northern push :
It tells of thine old sports in Mollo's walls.

[Pauses and fights again.]

To it again ! How listless thou art grown !
Where is thy manhood gone ?

Ethw. Fear not, my lord, enough remains behind
To win your forty kine.

Edw. I'll take thy word for't now : in faith, I'm
tired !

I've been too eager in the morning's chace
To fight your noonday battles.

*[Putting the point of his sword to the ground, and
leaning familiarly upon ETHWALD.]*

My arm, I fear, would make but little gain
With Bournoth's sword. By arms and brave men's
love !

I could not brook to see that wordy braggart
Perching his paltry sire above thy pitch ;
It rais'd my fiend within. When I am great,
I'll build a tower upon the very spot

Where thou didst first the British army stay,
And shame the grandsires of those mighty Thaness
Six ages deep. Lean I too hard upon thee ?

Ethw. No, nothing hard : most pleasant and
most kindly.

Take your full rest, my lord.

Edw. In truth, I do : methinks it does me good
To rest upon thy brave and valiant breast.

Eth. *(stepping before them with great animation.)*
Well said, most noble Edward !

The bosom of the brave is that on which
Rests many a head : but most of all, I trow,
Th' exposed head of princely youth thereon
Rests gracefully.

*[Steps back some paces, and looks at them with
delight.]*

Edw. You look upon us, Thane, with eager eyes
And looks of meaning.

Eth. Pardon me, I pray !

My fancy oftentimes will wildly play,
And strong conceits possess me.
Indulge my passing freak : I am a man
Upon whose grizzled head the work of time
Hath been by care perform'd, and, with the young,
Claiming the priv'lege of a man in years.

*[Taking the hands of EDW. and ETHW. and
joining them together.]*

This is a lovely sight ! indulge my fancy :
And on this sword, it is a brave man's sword,
Swear that you will unto each other prove,
As prince and subject, true.

Edw. No, no, good Thane !
As friends, true friends ! that doth the whole in-
clude.

I kiss the honour'd blade. *(Kissing the sword held
out by ETH.)*

Eth. *(presenting the sword to ETHW.)* And what
says noble Ethwald ?

Ethw. All that the brave should say. *(Kissing it
also.)*

Eth. *(triumphantly.)* Now, Mercia, thou art strong !
give me your hands ;
Faith, I must lay them both upon my breast !

[Pressing both their hands to his breast.]
This is a lovely sight !

Ethw. *(softened.)* You weep, good Ethelbert.

Eth. *(brushing off his tears with his hand.)* Yes,
yes ! such tears as doth the warm shower'd
earth

Show to the kindly sun.

Edw. *(to ETH., gently clapping his shoulder.)* I
love this well : thou like a woman weepst,
And fittest like a man. But look, I pray !

There comes my arms-man with the braggart's
sword :

Let us essay it yonder. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*An apartment in a royal castle. ETHWALD is dis-
covered sitting in deep meditation by the side of a
couch, with a lamp burning by him on a high stand :
the rest of the stage entirely dark.*

Ethw. Why am I haunted with these thoughts ?
What boots it

That from their weak and priest-beridden king
The soldiers turn distasteful, and on me
In mutter'd wishes call ? What boots all this ?
Occasion fairly smiles, but I am shackled ;
Elsewhere I needs must turn my climbing thoughts,
But where ? The youthful see around them spread
A boundless field of undetermin'd things,
Towering in tempting greatness :
But, to the closer scan of men matured,

These fade away, and in the actual state
Of times and circumstances each perceives
A path which doth to his advancement lead,
And only one; as to the dazzled eye
Of the night rev'ler, o'er his emptied bowl,
The multiplied and many whirling lights
Do shrink at last into one single torch,
Shedding a steady ray. I see my path:
But what is that to me? my steps are chain'd,
Amongst the mighty great, the earth's high lords,
There is no place for me! I must lie down
In the dark tomb with those, whose passing bright-
ness

Shines for a while, but leaves no ray behind.

[*Throws himself half upon the couch and groans heavily.*]

Enter Boy.

Boy. My lord, my lord! (*Ethw. lifts up his head, and looks sternly at him.*)

Are you unwell, my lord?

Ethw. What dost thou want?

Boy. I could not sleep: and as I list'ning lay
To the drear wind that whistles through these towers,
Methought I heard you groan like one in pain.

Ethw. Away, and go to sleep: I want thee not:
I say, begone (*sternly*). [*Exit boy.*]

[*He pauses awhile, then sighs very deeply.*]

He hangs upon me like a dead man's grasp
On the wreck'd swimmer's neck—his boyish love
Was not my seeking; it was fasten'd on me,
And now it hath become an iron band
To fetter down my powers. O that I were
Amidst the warlike and ungentle cast
To strive uncumber'd! What have I to do

With soft affection? (*Softened.*) Yet it needs must

His gen'rous love:—his brave ungrudging love:

His manly gentle love—O that he had
Mine equal friend been born, who in my rise
Had fair advancement found, and by my side
The next in honour stood!

He drags me to the earth! I needs must lay
My head i' the dust.—Dull hopeless privacy!

From it my soul recoils: unto my nature

It is the death of death, horrid and hateful.

(*Starting up eagerly.*) No, in the tossed bark,
Commander of a rude tumultuous crew,

On the wild ocean would I rather lie;

Or in the mined caverns of the earth

Untamed bands of lawless men control,

By crime and dire necessity enleagu'd:

Yea, in the dread turmoil of midnight storms,

If such there be, lead on the sable hosts

Of restless sprites, than say to mortal man

"Thou art my master."

Enter Boy.

What, here again?

Boy. O pardon me, my lord! I am in fear;

Strange sounds do howl and hurtle round my bed;
I cannot rest.

Ethw. Begone, thou wakeful pest! I say, be-
gone!

[*Exit boy.*
Ethw. walks several times across the stage and then pauses.]

Yet in my mind one ever-present thought

Rises omnipotent o'er all the rest,

And says, "Thou shalt be great."

What may this mean? before me is no way.

What deep endued seer will draw this veil

Of dark futurity? Of such I've heard,

But when the troubled seek for them, they are not.

Re-enter Boy.

(*Stamping with his foot.*) What! here a third time?

Boy (*falling at his feet*). O, my noble master!

If you should slay me I must come to you;

For in my chamber fearful things there be,

That sound i' the dark; O, do not chide me back.

Ethw. Strange sound within thy chamber, foolish
wight!

Boy (*starting*). Good mercy, list!

Ethw. It is some night-bird screaming on the
tower.

Boy. Ay, so belike it seemeth, but I know—

Ethw. What dost thou know?

Boy. It is no bird, my lord.

Ethw. What wouldst thou say?

Boy (*clasping his hands together, and staring earnestly in Ethw.'s face*). At dead of night,
from the dark Druid's cave

Up rise unhallow'd sprites, and o'er the earth

Hold for the term their wicked rule. Aloft,

Some mounted on the heavy sailing cloud,

Of pour down noisome streams or biting hail

On the benighted hind, and from his home,

With wayward eddying blasts, still beat him back.

Some on the waters shriek like drowning men,

And, when the pitying passenger springs forth,

To lend his aid, the dark flood swallows him.

Some on lone marshes shine like moving lights;

And some on towers and castle turrets perch'd;

Do scream like nightly birds, to scare the good,

Or arouse the murderer to his bloody work.

Ethw. The Druid's cave, sayst thou? What cave
is that?

Where is it? Who hath seen it? What scar'd fool
Hath fill'd thine ears with all these horrid things?

Boy. It is a cavern vast and terrible,

Under the ground full deep; perhaps, my lord,

Beneath our very feet, here as we stand;

For few do know the spot and centre of it,

Though many mouths it has and entries dark.

Some are like hollow pits bor'd through the earth,

O'er which the list'ning herdsman bends his ear,

And hears afar their lakes of molten fire

Swelt'ring and boiling like a mighty pot.

Some like strait passes through the rifted rocks,

From which oft issue shrieks, and whistling gusts,
And wailings dismal. Nay, some, as they say,
Deep hollow'd underneath the river's bed,
Which show their narrow op'nings through the fern
And tangling briars, like dank and noisome holes
Wherein foul adders breed. But not far hence
The chiefest mouth of all, 'midst beetling rocks
And groves of blasted oaks, gapes terrible.

Ethw. So near? but who are they who dwell
within?

Boy. The female high Arch Druid therein holds*,
With many Druids tending on her will,
(Old, as they say, some hundred years or more)
Her court, where horrid spells bind to her rule
Spirits of earth and air.

Ethw. Ay, so they tell thee,
But who is he that has held converse with her?

Boy. Cranock, the bloody prince, did visit her,
And she did show to him the bloody end
Whereto he soon should come; for all she knows
That is, or has been, or shall come to pass. [be,

Ethw. Yes, in times past such intercourse might
But who has seen them now?

Boy. Thane Ethelbert.

Ethw. (starting). What saidst thou, Ethelbert?

Boy. Yes, truly; oft he goes to visit them
What time the moon rides in her middle course.

Ethw. Art thou assured of this?

Boy. A youth who saw him issue from the cave;
*Twas he who told it me.

Ethw. Mysterious man!
(After a pause.) Where sleeps the Thane?

Boy. If walls and doors may hold him,
He sleeps not distant, in the southern tower.

Ethw. Take thou that lamp, and go before me
then.

Boy. Where?

Ethw. To the southern tower. Art thou afraid?

Boy. No, my good lord, but keep you close
behind.

[*Exeunt; Boy bearing the lamp, and looking
often behind to see that ETHW. is near him.*

SCENE II.

A small gallery or passage with a door in front, which
is opened, and enter ETHWALD, and ETHELBERT
with a lamp in his hand.

Eth. Then, by the morrow's midnight moon, we
meet

At the Arch Sister's cave: till then, farewell!

Ethw. Farewell! I will be punctual. [*Exit.*

Eth. (looking after him for some time before he
speaks). It ever is the mark'd propensity

* It is natural to suppose that the diviners or fortune-tellers
of this period should, in their superstitions and pretensions,
very much resemble the ancient Druidesses who were so
much revered amongst the Britons as oracles and prophet-
esses, and that they should, amongst the vulgar, still retain
the name of their great predecessors. In Henry's History of

Of restless and aspiring minds to look
Into the stretch of dark futurity.
But be it so: it now may turn to good.

[*Exit, returning back again into the same cham-
ber from which he came.*

SCENE III.

A wide arched cave, rude but grand, seen by a sombre
light; a small furnace burning near the front of
the stage. Enter ETHWALD and ETHELBERT,
who pause and look round for some time without
speaking.

Ethw. Gloomy, and void, and silent!

Eth. Hush!

Ethw. What hearest thou?

Eth. Their hollow sounding steps. Lo! seest
thou not?

[*Pointing to the further end of the stage, where,
from an obscure recess, enter three Mystics
robed in white, and ranged on one side of the
stage, point to ETHWALD: whilst from another
obscure recess enter three Mystic Sisters, and
ranged on the opposite side point to ETHWALD:
then from a mid recess enters the Arch Sister
robed also in white, but more majestic than
the others, and a train of Mystics and Mystic
Sisters behind her. She advances half-way
up the stage, then stops short, and points also
to ETHWALD.*

(All the Mystics, &c. speaking at once.) Who art
thou?

Arch Sist. I know thee who thou art; the hand
of Mercia:
The hand that lifts itself above the head.
I know thee who thou art.

Ethw. Then haply ye do know my errand too.

Arch Sist. I do; but turn thee back upon thy
steps,
And tempt thy fate no farther.

Ethw. From the chaf'd shore turn back the swel-
ling tide!

I came to know my fate, and I will know it.

1st Mystic. Must we call up from the deep centre's
womb

The spirits of the night and their dread lord?

1st Myst. S. Must we do that which makes the
entombed dead

From coffins start?

Ethw. Raise the whole host of darkness an ye will,
But I must be obey'd.

[*The Arch Sister shrieks, and, throwing her
mantle over her face, turns to go away.*

Britain, vol. i. p. 181., it will be found that the superstitious
practices of the Druids continued long after their religion was
abolished, and resisted for a long time the light of Christi-
anity; and that even so late as the reign of Canute, it was
necessary to make laws against it.

Ethw. If there be power in mortal arm to hold
you,
Ye stir not hence until I am obey'd.

1st Myst. And how compellest thou ?

Ethw. With this good sword.

1st Myst. Swords here are children's wands of no
avail :

There, warrior, is thy weapon.

Ethw. Where, Mystic ? say.

1st Myst. (*pointing to the furnace*). Behold within
that fire

A bar of burning iron ! pluck it forth.

Ethw. (*resolutely*). I will.

[*Goes to the furnace, and putting in his hand,
pulls out what seems a red hot bar of iron.*]

Arch Sist. (*throwing off her mantle*). Thou hast
subdued me ; thou shalt be obey'd.

Ethw. (*casting away the bar*). Away, thou paltry
terror !

Arch Sist. (*to ETHW.*) We now begin our rites :
be firm, be silent.

[*She stretches forth her hand with a command-
ing air, and the Mystics and Mystic Sisters
begin their incantations at the bottom of the
stage, moving round in several mazy circles
one within another. Fire is at last seen flash-
ing from the midst of the inner circle, and
immediately they all begin a hollow muttering
sound, which becomes louder and louder, till at
length it is accompanied with dismal sounds
from without, and distant music, solemn and
wild.*]

Ethw. (*grasping ETHELBERT'S hand*). What dis-
mial sounds are these ?

'Tis like a wild responsive harmony,

Tun'd to the answering yells of damned souls.

What follows this ? Some horrid thing ! Thou
smilest :

Nay, press thy hand, I pray thee, on my breast ;

There wilt thou find no fear,

Eth. Hush ! hear that distant noise.

Ethw. 'Tis thunder in the bowels of the earth,
Heard from afar.

[*A subterraneous noise like thunder is heard at
a distance, becoming louder as it approaches.
Upon hearing this, the Mystics suddenly leave
off their rites ; the music ceases, and they,
opening their circles, range themselves on either
side of the stage, leaving the Arch Sister alone
in the middle.*]

Arch Sist. (*holding up her hand*). Mystics, and
Mystic Maids, and leagued bands !

The master spirit comes : prepare.

(*All repeat after her*). Prepare.

1st Mystic. Hark ! through the darken'd realms
below,

Through the fiery regions glow :

Through the massy mountain's core,

Through the mines of living ore ;

Through the yawning caverns wide,
Through the solid and the void ;
Through the dank and through the dry,
Through th' unseem of mortal eye :

Upon the earthquake's secret course, afar

I hear the sounding of thy car :

Sulphureous vapours load the rising gale ;

We know thy coming ; mighty master, hail !

(*They all repeat.*) Mighty master, hail !

[*The stage darkens by degrees, and a thick*

vapour begins to ascend at the bottom of the

stage.

2d Mystic. Hark, hark ! what murmurs fill the
dome !

Who are they who with thee come ?

Those who, in their upward flight,

Rouse the tempests of the night :

Those who ride in flood and fire ;

Those who rock the tumbling spire :

Those who, on the bloody plain,

Shriek with the voices of the slain :

Those who through the darkness glare,

And the sleepless murd'rer scare ;

Those who take their surly rest

On the troubled dreamer's breast :

Those who make their nightly den

In the guilty haunts of men :

Through the heavy air I hear

Their hollow trooping onward bear :

The torch's shrinking flame is dim and pale :

I know thy coming ; mighty master, hail !

(*All repeat again.*) Mighty master, hail !

[*The stage becomes still darker, and a thicker*

vapour ascends.

3d Mystic. Lo ! the mystic volumes rise !

Wherein are lapt from mortal eyes

Horrid deeds as yet unthought,

Bloody battles yet unfought :

The sudden fall and deadly wound

Of the tyrant yet uncrown'd ;

And his line of many eyes

Who yet within the cradle lies.

Moving forms, whose stilly bed

Long hath been among the dead ;

Moving forms, whose living morn

Breaks with the nations yet unborn,

In mystic vision walk the horrid pale :

We own thy presence ; mighty master, hail !

(*All.*) Mighty master, hail !

*Enter from the further end of the stage crowds of
terrible spectres, dimly seen through the vapour,
which now spreads itself over the whole stage. All
the Mystics and Mystic Sisters bow themselves
very low, and the Arch Sister, standing alone
in the middle, bows to all the different sides of the
cave.*

Ethw. (*to 1st Mystic*). To every side the mystic
mistress bows,

What meaneth this? mine eye no form perceives :
Where is your mighty chief?

1st *Mystic*. Above, around you, and beneath.

Ethw. Has he no form to vision sensible?

1st *Mystic*. In the night's noon, in the winter's
noon, in the lustre's noon :

Of times twice ten within the century's round

Is he before our leagued bands confess'd

In dread appearance :

But in what form or in what circumstance

May not be told ; he dies who utters it.

[*ETHW. shrinks at this, and seems somewhat appalled. The Arch Sister, after tossing about her arms, and writhing her body in a violent agitation, fixes her eyes, like one waked from a dream, steadfastly upon ETHW.; then going suddenly up to him, grasps him by the hand with energy.*

Arch Sist. Thou who wouldst pierce the deep
and awful shade

Of dark futurity, to know the state

Of after greatness waiting on thy will,

For in thy power acceptance or rejection

Is freely put, lift up thine eyes and say,

What seest thou yonder?

[*Pointing to a dark arched opening in the roof of the cave, where an illuminated crown and sceptre appear.*

Ethw. (starting). Ha! e'en the inward vision of
my soul

In actual form pourtray'd!

[*His eyes brightening wonderfully.*

Sayst thou it shall be mine?

Arch Sist. As thou shalt choose.

Ethw. I ask of thee no more.

[*Stands gazing upon the appearance till it fades away.*

So soon extinguish'd? Hath this too a meaning?

It says, perhaps, my greatness shall be short.

Arch Sist. I speak to thee no further than I
may,

Therefore be satisfied.

Ethw. And I am satisfied. Dread mystic maid,

Receive my thanks.

Arch Sist. Nay, Ethwald, our commission ends
not here,

Stay and behold what follows.

[*The stage becomes suddenly dark, and most terrible shrieks, and groans, and dismal lamentations, are heard from the farther end of the cave.*

Ethw. What horrid sounds are these?

Arch Sist. The varied voice of woe, of Mercia's
woe :

Of those who shall, beneath thine iron hand,

The cup of mis'ry drink. There, dost thou hear
The dungeon'd captives' sighs, the shrilly shrieks
Of childless mothers and distracted maids,
Mix'd with the heavy groans of dying men!
The widow's wailings, too, and infant's cries—

[*ETHW. stops his ears in horror.*

Ay, stop thine ears ; it is a horrid sound.

Ethw. Forefend that e'er again I hear the like!

What didst thou say? O, thou didst foully say!

Do I not know my nature? heav'n and earth

As soon shall change—

(*A voice above.*) Swear not!

(*A voice beneath.*) Swear not!

(*A voice on the same level, but distant.*) Swear
not!

Arch Sist. Now, once again, and our commis-
sion ends.

Look yonder, and behold that shadowy form.

[*Pointing to an arched recess, across which bursts a strong light, and discovers a crowned phantom, covered with wounds, and representing by its gestures one in agony. ETHW. looks and shrinks back.*

What dost thou see?

Ethw. A miserable man : his breast is pierced
With many wounds, and yet his gestures seem
The agony of a distracted mind,
More than of pain.

Arch Sist. But wears he not a crown?

Ethw. Why does it look so fix'dly on me thus?
What are its woes to me?

Arch Sist. They are thy own.

Knowst thou no traces of that alter'd form,
Nor seest that crowned phantom is thyself?

Ethw. (shudders, then after a pause). I may be
doom'd to meet a tyrant's end,

But not to be a tyrant.

Did all the powers of hell attest the doom,

I would belie it. Know I not my nature?

By every dreaded power and hallow'd thing—

(*Voice over the stage.*) Swear not!

(*Voice under the stage.*) Swear not!

(*Distant voice off the stage.*) Swear not!

[*Thundering noise is heard under ground. The stage becomes instantly quite dark, and Mystics and Spirits, &c. disappear, ETHW. and ETH. remaining alone.*

Eth. (after a pause). How art thou?

Ethw. Is it thy voice? O, let me feel thy grasp!

Mine ears ring strangely, and my head doth feel

As though I were bereaved of my wits.

Are they all gone? Where is thy hand, I pray?

We've had a fearful bout!

Eth. Thy touch is cold as death : let us ascend
And breathe the upper air.* [*Exeunt.*

* I will not take upon me to say that, if I had never read Shakspeare's Macbeth, I should have thought of bringing Ethwald into a cavern under ground to inquire his destiny, though I believe this desire to look into futurity (particularly

in a superstitious age) is a very constant attendant on ambition; but I hope the reader will not find in the above scene any offensive use made of the works of that great master.

SCENE IV.

A forest. Enter ETHWALD with a bow in his hand, and a Boy carrying his arrows.

Ethw. (looking off the stage). Ha! Alwy, soon return'd! and with him comes My faithful Ongar.

Enter ALWY and ONGAR with bows also, as if in quest of sport, by the opposite side.

Thou comest, Alwy, with a busy face.
(*To boy.*) Go, Boy; I shot mine arrow o'er those elms,

Thou'lt find it far beyond. [*Exit boy.*
Now, friend, what tidings?

Alwy. Within the tufted centre of the wood
The friendly chiefs are met, thus, like ourselves
As careless rambles guised, all to a man
Fix'd in your cause. Their followers too are firm;
For, much disgusted with the monkish face
Their feeble monarch wears, a warlike leader,
Far, far inferior to the noble Ethwald,
May move them as he lists.

Ethw. That time and circumstances on me call
Imperiously, I am well assured. [*part*
Good Ongar, what sayst thou? how thrives thy
Of this important task!

Ong. Well as your heart could wish. At the
next council,
Held in the royal chamber, my good kinsman
Commands the guard, and will not bar our way.

Ethw. May I depend on this?
Ong. You may, my lord. [*service,*

Ethw. Thanks to thee, Ongar! this is noble
And shall be nobly thank'd. There is, good Alwy,
Another point; hast thou unto the chiefs
Yet touch'd upon it?

Alwy. Yes, and they all agree 'tis most expedient
That with Elburga's hand, since weaker minds
Are blindly wedded to the royal line,
Your right be strengthen'd.

Ethw. And this they deem expedient?
Alwy. You sigh, my lord; she is, indeed, less
gentle—

Ethw. Regard it not, it is a passing thought,
And it will have its sigh, and pass away.

[*Turning away for a little space, and then
coming forward again.*

What means hast thou devised, that for a term
Selred and Ethelbert may be remov'd?
For faithful to the royal line they are,
And will not sverve: their presence here were
dang'rous:

We must employ them in some distant strife.
Alwy. I have devis'd a plan, but for the means
Brave Ongar here stands pledged. Woggarwolfe,
Who once before unweetingly has served us,
Will do the same again.

Ethw. How so? 'tis said that since his last affray,
With the keen torment of his wounds subdu'd,
On sick bed laid, by the transforming power
Of artful monks, he has become most saintly.

Alwy. Well, but we trust his saintship ne'erthe-
less

May still be lu'd to do a sinner's work.
To burn the castle of a hateful heretic
Will make amends for all his bloody deeds:
You catch the plan: nay, Hexulf and his priests
Will be our helpmates here. Smile not; good
Ongar

Has pledged his word for this.
Ethw. And I will trust to it. This will, indeed,
Draw off the Thanes in haste. But who is near?
Skulking behind yon thicket stands a man:
Seest thou? [*Pointing off the stage.*

Alwy. Go to him, Ongar, scan him well,
And if his face betrays a list'ner's guilt—
Thou hast thy dagger there?

Ong. Yes, trust me well.
Ethw. Nay, Ongar, be not rash in shedding blood!
Let not one drop be spilt that may be spar'd.
Secure him if he wear a list'ner's face:
We are too strong for stern and ruthless caution.

[*Exit ONGAR.*
I'm glad he is withdrawn a little space,
Ere we proceed to join the leagued chiefs.
Hast thou agreed with Cutbert? Is he sure?

Alwy. Sure. 'Tis agreed when next the ethling
hunts,

To lead him in the feigned quest of game
From his attendants; there, in ambush laid,
Cutbert and his adherents seize upon him,
And will conduct him with the evening's close
To Arrick's rugged tower. All is prepar'd.

Ethw. But hast thou charged him well that this
be done

With all becoming care and gentleness,
That nothing may his noble nature gall
More than the hard necessity compels?

Alwy. Do not mistrust us so! your brow is dark:
At Edward's name your changing countenance
Is ever clouded. [*Ethw. turns from him agitated.*
You are disturb'd, my lord.

Ethw. I am disturb'd. (*Turning round and grasp-
ing ALWY by the hand.*)

I'll tell thee, Alwy—yes, I am disturb'd—
No gleam of glory through my prospect breaks,
But still his image, 'thwart the brightness cast,
Shades it to night.

Alwy. It will be always so: but wherefore should
it?

Glory is ever bought by those who earn it
With loss of many lives most dear and precious.
So is it destin'd. Let that be to him
Which in the crowded breach or busy field
All meet regardless from a foeman's hand.
Do the still chamber, and the muffled tread,

And th' unscen stroke that doth th' infliction deal,
Alter its nature ?

Ethw. (*pushing ALWY away from him vehemently, and putting up both his hands to his head.*)
Forbear! forbear! I shut mine eyes, mine ears;

All entrance bar that may into my mind
Th' abhorred thing convey. Have I not said,
Thou shalt not dare in word, in look, in gesture,
In slightest indication of a thought,
Hold with my mind such base communication ?
By my sword's strength! did I not surely think
From this bold seizure of the sovereign pow'r,
A pow'r for which I must full dearly pay,
So says the destiny that o'er me hangs,
To shield his weakness and restore again
In room of Mercia's crown a nobler sway,
Won by my sword, I would as lief—Northum-
berland

Invites my arms, and soon will be subdu'd ;
Of this full sure, a good amends may be
To noble Edward made.

Alwy (*who during the last part of ETHWALD's speech has been smiling behind his back malignantly.*) O yes, full surely :
And wand'ring harpers shall in hall and bower
Sing of the marvellous deed.

Ethw. (*turning short upon him, and perceiving his smile.*) Thou smil'st methinks.

Full well I read the meaning of that look :
'Tis a fiend's smile, and it will prove a false one.

[*Turning away angrily, whilst ALWY walks to the bottom of the stage.*]

(*Aside, looking suspiciously after him.*) Have I
offended him ? he is an agent
Most needful to me. (*Aloud, advancing to him.*)
Good Alwy, anxious minds will often chide—
(*Aside, stopping short.*) He hears me not, or is it
but a feint ?

Alwy (*looking off the stage.*) Your arrow-boy
returns.

Ethw. (*aside, nodding to himself.*) No, 'tis a free
and unoffended voice ;

I'm wrong. This is a bird whose fleshed beak
The prey too strongly scents to fly away :
I'll spare my courtesies. (*Aloud.*) What sayst thou,
Alwy ?

Alwy (*pointing.*) Your arrow-boy.

Ethw. I'm glad he is return'd.

Re-enter Boy.

Boy. Nowhere, my lord, can I the arrow find.
Ethw. Well, boy, it matters not ; let us move
on. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A narrow gallery in an abbey or cloister, with several doors opening into it. Enter HEXULF and ONGAR and two monks.

Hex. Fear not, brave Ongar, we, upon thy hint,
Will quickly act ; for here our eager wishes
Are with the church's good most closely join'd.

1st monk. This is the time when he should walk
abroad.

(*Listening.*) I hear him at his door.

Hex. Leave us, good Ongar.

Ong. To your good skill I do commit it then ;
Having but only you, most rev'rend father,
To take my part against this wizard Thane.

1st monk (*still listening.*) Begone, he issues forth.

[*Exit ONGAR.*]

[*One of the doors opens slowly, and enters WOGGARWOLFE, wrapped in a cloak, and his head bound.*]

Hex. Good morrow, valiant Thane, whose pious
gifts

Have won heav'n's grace to renovate thy strength,
And grant thee longer life, how goes thy health ?

Wog. I thank you, rev'rend father, greatly
mended. [*save,*]

1st monk. The prayers of holy men have power to
E'en on the very borders of the tomb,
The humbled soul who doth with gifts enrich
The holy church.

2d monk. Didst thou not feel within thee

A peaceful calm, a cheering confidence,
Soon as thy pious offering was accepted ?

Wog. (*hesitating.*) Yes, rev'rend fathers,—I have
thought indeed—

Perhaps you meant it so—that since that time
The devil has not scar'd me in my dreams
So oft as he was wont, when sore with wounds
I first was laid upon my bed of pain.

Hex. Ay, that is much ; but noble Woggarwolfe,
Thinkest thou not the church doth merit well
Some stable gift, some fix'd inheritance ?

Thou hast those lands that are so nearly join'd
Unto Saint Alban's abbey. [*lands ?*]

Wog. (*much surprised.*) My lands! give up my
1st monk. What are thy lands

Compar'd to that which they will purchase for thee ?

2d monk. To lay thy coffin'd body in the ground,
Rob'd in the garb of holy men, and bless'd ?

1st monk. To have thy tomb beneath the shading
arch

Of sacred roof, where nought profane may enter ;
While midnight spirits stand and yell without,
But o'er the sacred threshold dare not trespass.

Wog. (*with a rueful countenance.*) What, do you
think I shall be dead so soon ?

Hex. Life is uncertain ; but how glorious, Thane,
To look beyond this wicked world of strife,

And for thyself a lofty seat provide
With saints and holy men, and angel bands!

Wog. Nay, father, I am not so highly bent;
Do but secure me from the horrid fangs
Of the terrific fiend: I am not proud;
That will suffice me.

Hex. Nay, herein thy humility we praise not,
And much I fear, at such a humble pitch,
He who so lately scar'd thee in thy dreams
May reach thee still.

1st monk. O think of this!

Hex. Dreadful it is, thou knowst,
To see him in thy dreams; but when awake,
Naked, and all uncloth'd of flesh and blood,
As thou at last must be; how wilt thou bear
To see him yelling o'er thee as his prey;
Bearing aloft his dark and hideous form;
Grinding his horrid jaws and darting on thee
His eyes of vivid fire?

[*The monks sign themselves with great marks of
fear, and WOGGARWOLFE looks terrified.*

Ah! thinkst thou, Thane,

That many gifts, ay, half of all thou'rt worth,
Would dearly purchase safety from such terrors?

Wog. (*in a quick perturbed voice.*) I have the
plunder of two neighb'ring chiefs,

Whom I surprised within thy towers and slew;
I'll give you all—if that suffices not,
I'll fall upon a third, ay, though it were
My next of kin, nor spare of all his goods
One fragment for myself. O, holy fathers!
I humbly crave saintly protection of you.

Hex. Nay, Woggarwolfe, on shrines of holy
saints

No gift ere works with efficacious power
By force and violence gain'd; unless, indeed,
It be the spoil of some unsaintry Thane,
Some faithless wizard or foul heretic.

Thou hast a neighbour, impious Ethelbert;
His towers to burn and consecrate his spoils,
O'er all thy sins would cast a sacred robe,
On which nor fiend nor devil durst fix a fang.
But now thou lackest strength for such a work,
And mayst be dead ere thou hast time to do it:
Therefore I counsel thee, give up thy lands.

Wog. O, no! I'm strong enough: my men are
strong.

Give us your rev'rend blessing o'er our heads,
And we'll set out forthwith.

Hex. Then nothing doubt that on your worthy
zeal

Will fall the blessing. Let us onward move.
Where are thy followers?

[*Ereunt: HEX. talking busily to WOG., and the
monks smiling to one another as they go out.*

SCENE VI.

*The royal apartment: the King is discovered with
HEXULF, the seneschal, and several friends or
councillors, seated round a council table.*

King (*as if continuing to speak*). It may be so:
youth finds no obstacle,
But I am old.

Full many a storm on this grey head has beaten;
And now, on my high station do I stand,
Like the tired watchman in his air-rock'd tower,
Who looketh for the hour of his release.
I'm sick of worldly broils, and fain would rest
With those who war no more. One gleam of
light

Did sweetly cheer the ev'ning of my day:
Edward, my son! he was the kindest prop
That age did ever rest on—he is gone,
What should I fight for now?

Sen. For thine own honour, for the weal of
Mercia,

With weapons in our hands, and strong in men,
Who to the royal standard soon will flock,
If summon'd by thy firm and gen'ral orders.
Shall these men be our masters? Heaven fore-
fend!

Five thousand warriors might disperse the foe,
Even with that devil Ethwald at their head;
And shall we think of granting to those rebels
Their insolent demands?

King. Good seneschal, if that you think our
strength

Permits us still in open field to strive
With hope of good, I am not yet so old
But I can brace these stiffen'd limbs in iron,
And do a soldier's service. (*To 2d coun.*) Thane
of Mordath,

Thy visage light'neth not upon these hopes;
What are thy thoughts?

2d coun. E'en that these hopes will bring us to
a state

Reft of all hope.

The rebel chiefs but seek their own enrichment,
Not Ethwald's exaltation, good my lord;
Bribe them, and treat for peace. Lack you the
means?

The church, for whose enriching you have rais'd
This storm, can well supply it; and most surely
Will do it cheerfully. [*Turning to HEXULF.*

Hex. No, by the holy mass! that were to bring
The curse of heav'n upon our impious heads.
To spoil the holy church is sacrilege:
And to advise such spoil in any wise
Is sacrilegious and abominable.

1st coun. I am as faithful to the holy church
As thou art, angry priest. I do defy thee—

Sen. What, have ye no respect unto the king?
I do command you, peace. Who now intrudes?

Enter a Servant in great terror.

Serv. The rebel force! the castle is surprised!
They are at hand—they have o'erpow'rd the guard.
2d coun. Pray God thou liest! I think it cannot
be. [*They all rise up alarmed.*]

Serv. It is as true as I do tread this spot.

Enter a Soldier wounded.

King (to sol.) Ha! what sayst thou? thou
bearest for thy words
A rueful witness.

Sol. Take arms, and save the king, if it be possible.
The rebel chieftains have the gate surprised,
And gain'd, below, the entrance of this tower.
They struggled for the pass; sharp was the broil;
This speaks for me, that I have borne my part.

[*Falls down exhausted.*]

Hex. (to King). Retire, my lord, into the higher
chamber.

Your arm can give but small assistance here.
Until this horrid visit be o'erpast,
You may conceal yourself.

King. No, father, never shall the king of Mercia
Be, from his hiding-place, like a mean man
Pull'd forth. But, noble friends, it seems not wise
That this necessity should reach to you.
These rebels seek my life, and with that life
They will be satisfied. In my defence,
Thus taken as we are, all stand were useless;
Therefore, if now you will obey your king,
His last command, retire and save your lives
For some more useful end. Finding me here,
They will no farther search: retire, my friends.

2d coun. What, leave our king to face his foes
alone!

King. No, not alone; my friend, the seneschal,
Will stay with me. We have been young together,
And the same storms in our rough day of life
Have beat upon us: be it now God's will,
We will lay down our aged heads together
In the still rest, and bid good night to strife.
Have I said well, my friend?

[*Holding out his hand to the seneschal.*]

*Sen. (kissing his hand with great warmth, and
putting one knee to the ground).* O my lov'd
master! many a bounteous favour
Has shower'd upon me from your royal hand,
But ne'er before was I so proudly honour'd.

[*Rising up with assumed grace.*]

Retire, young men, for now I must be proud;
Retire, your master will confront the foe
As may become a king.

(*All calling out at once.*) No, no! we will not
leave him.

[*They all range themselves, drawing their swords,
round the King, and the old seneschal stands,
by pre-eminence, close to his master's side.*]

2d coun. Here is a wall through which they first
must force

A bloody way, ere on his royal head
One silver hair be scath'd.

Enter ETHWALD, ALWY, and the Conspirators.

Alwy. Now vengeance for injustice and oppres-
sion!

2d coun. On your own heads, then, be it,
miscreant chiefs!

[*They fight round the King; his party defend
him bravely, till many more conspirators enter,
and it is overpowered.*]

*Ethw. (aside, angrily, to ALWY, on still seeing the
King, standing in the midst, unhurt, and with
great dignity, the seneschal by his side, and
no one offering to attack him).* Hast thou
forgot? Where are thy chosen men?

Is there no hand to do the needful work?
This is but children's play. (*To some of his party.*)
Come, let us search, that in the neighb'ring cham-
ber

No lurking foe escape. [*Exit with some followers.*]

*Alwy (giving a sign to his followers, and going
up insolently to the King).* Oswald, resign thy
sword.

Sen. First take thou mine, thou base, ignoble
traitor!

[*Giving ALWY a blow with his sword; upon
which ALWY and his followers fall upon the
King and the seneschal, and surrounding
them on every side, kill them, with many wounds,
the crowd gathering so close round them, that
their fall cannot be seen.*]

*Re-enter ETHWALD, and the crowd opening on each
side shows the dead bodies of the King and the
Seneschal.*

Ethw. (affecting surprise). What sight is this?

Ah! ye have gone too far. Who did this deed?

Alwy. My followers, much enraged at slight
offence,

Did fall upon him.

Ethw. All have their end decreed, and this,
alas!

Has been his fated hour.

Come, chiefs and valiant friends, why stand we
here

Looking on that which cannot be repair'd?

All honour shall be paid unto the dead.

And, were this deed of any single hand

The willing crime, he should have vengeance too

But let us now our task of night fulfil:

Much have we still to do ere morning dawn.

[*Exeunt ETHW. and followers, and the scene
closes.*]

SCENE VII.

A royal apartment: Enter ELBURGA, with her hair scattered upon her shoulders, and with the action of one in violent grief, followed by DWINA, who seems to be soothing her.

Elb. Cease, cease! thy foolish kindness soothes me not;

My morning is o'ercast; my glory sunk;
Leave me alone to wring my hands and weep.

Dwi. O no, my princely mistress! grieve not thus!

Over our heads the blackest clouds do pass
And brighter follow them.

Elb. No, no, my sky is night! I was a princess,
Almost a queen: in gorgeous pomp beheld,
The public gaze was ever turn'd on me;
Proud was the highest Thane or haughtiest dame
To do my bidding, ev'ry count'nance watch'd
Each changeful glance of my commanding eye,
To read its meaning: now my state is chang'd:
Scoffing and insult and degrading pity
Abide the daughter of a murder'd king.
Heaven's vengeance light upon them all! Begone!
I hate the very light for looking on me!
Begone! and soothe me not!

Dwi. Forgive me, princess; do not thus despair;
King Oswald's daughter many friends will find.

Elb. Friends! hold thy peace!—Oh it doth rend my heart!

I have been wont to talk of subjects, vassals,
Dependants, servants, slaves, but not of friends.
Where shall I hide my head?

Dwi. Surely, dear mistress, with Saint Cuthbert's nuns,

Whose convent by your father's gifts is rich,
You will protection find. There quiet rest,
And holy converse of those pious maids,
After a while will pour into your mind
Soft consolation.

[*Putting her hands on ELBURGA'S soothingly.*

Elb. (*pushing her away.*) Out upon thee, fool!
Go, speak thy comforts

To spirits tame and abject as thyself:
They make me mad; they make me thus to tear
My scatter'd locks and strew them to the winds.

[*Tearing her hair distractedly.*

Enter a Servant.

(*To ser.*) What brings thee here?

Ser. Ethwald, the king, is at the gate, and asks
To be admitted to your presence, princess.

Elb. (*becoming suddenly calm.*) What, Ethwald,
sayst thou? sayst thou truly so?

Ser. Yes, truly, princess.

Elb. Ethwald, that Thane whom thou dost call
the king?

Ser. Yes, he whom all the states and chiefs of
Mercia

Do call the king.

Elb. He enters not. Tell him I am unwell,
And will not be disturb'd. [*Exit ser.*
What seeks he here? Fie, poorly fainting soul!
Rouse! rouse thee up! To all the world beside
Subdued and humbled would I rather be
Than in the eyes of this proud man.

Re-enter Servant.

What sayst thou?

Is he departed?

Ser. No, he will not depart, but bids me say
The entrance he has begg'd he now commands.
I hear his steps behind me.

Enter ETHWALD. ELBURGA turns away from him proudly.

Ethw. Elburga, turn and look upon a friend.

Elb. (*turning round haughtily, and looking on him with an assumed expression of anger and scornful contempt.*) Usurping rebel, who hast
slain thy master;

Take thou a look that well beseems thy worth,
And hie thee hence, false traitor!

Ethw. Yes, I will hie me hence, and with me
lead

A fair and beauteous subject to my will;
That will which may not be gainsaid. For now
High heaven, that hath decreed thy father's fall,
Hath also me appointed king of Mercia,
With right as fair as his: which I'll maintain
And by the proudest in this lordly realm
Will be obey'd, even by thy lofty self.

Elb. Put shackles on my limbs and o'er my
head

Let your barr'd dungeons low'r; then mayst thou
say,

"Walk not abroad," and so it needs must be:
But thinkest thou to subdue, bold as thou art,
The lofty spirit of king Oswald's daughter?
Go, bind the wild winds in thy hollow shield,
And bid them rage no more: they will obey thee.

Ethw. Yes, proud Elburga, I will shackle thee.
But on the throne of Mercia shalt thou sit,
Not in the dungeon's gloom.

Ay, and albeit the wild winds refuse
To be subjected to my royal will,
The lofty spirit of king Oswald's daughter
I will subdue. (*Taking her hand.*)

Elb. (*throwing him off from her vehemently.*) Off
with those bloody hands that slew my father!
Thy touch is horrid to me! 'tis a fiend's grasp:
Out from my presence! bloody Thane of Mair-
nieth!

Ethw. Ay! frown on me, Elburga; proudly
frown:

I knew thy haughty spirit, and I lov'd it,
 Even when I saw thee first in gorgeous state ;
 When, bearing high thy stately form, thou stoodst
 Like a proud queen, and on the gazing crowd,
 Somewhat offended with a late neglect,
 Dartedst thy looks of anger and disdain.
 High Thanes and dames shrank from thine eye,
 whilst I,

Like one who from the mountain's summit sees,
 Beneath him far the harmless lightning play,
 With smiling admiration mark'd thee well,
 And own'd a kindred soul. Each angry flash
 Of thy dark eye was loveliness to me.
 But know, proud maid, my spirit outmasters thine,
 And heedeth not the anger nor the power
 Of living thing.

Elb. Bold and amazing man !

Ethw. And bold should be the man who weds
 Elburga.

Elb. Away ! it cannot be, it shall not be !
 My soul doth rise against thee, bloody chief,
 And bids thy power defiance.

Ethw. Then art thou mine in truth, for never
 yet

Did hostile thing confront me unsubdued ;
 Defy me and thou'rt conquer'd.

Elb. Thou most audacious chief ! it shall not be.

Ethw. It shall, it must be, maiden, I have sworn
 it ;

And here repeat it on thatauteous hand
 Which to no power but with my life I'll yield

[Grasping her hand firmly, which she struggles
 to free.

Frown not, Elburga ! 'tis in vain to strive ;
 My spirit outmasters thine.

Elb. Sayst thou to me thou didst not slay my
 father ?

Sayst thou those hands are guiltless of his death ?

Ethw. Thinkst thou I'll plead, and say I have
 not slain

A weak old man, whose inoffensive mind,
 And strong desire to quit the warring world
 For quiet religious rest, could be, in truth,
 No hindrance to my greatness ? were this fitting
 In Mercia's king, and proud Elburga's lord ?

Elb. (turning away.) Elburga's lord ? Thou art
 presumptuous, prince :

Go hence, and brave me not. [side,
Ethw. I will go hence forthwith ; and, by my

The fair selected partner of my throne
 I'll lead, where the assembled chiefs of Mercia

Wait to receive from me their future queen.

Elb. Distract me not !

Ethw. Resistance is distraction.

Who ever yet my fixed purpose cross'd ?
 Did Ethwald ever yield ? Come, queen of Mercia !

This firm grasp shall conduct thee to a throne :

[Taking her hand, which she feebly resists.

Come forth, the frowning, haughty bride of Ethwald.

Elb. Wonderful man !
 If hell or fortune fight for thee I know not,
 Nothing withstands thy power.

[*Exeunt: ETHW. leading off ELB. in triumph,
 and DWINA following, with her hands and
 eyes raised to heaven in astonishment.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*An arched passage from a gateway in the royal castle.
 The sound of warlike music without. Enter ETH-
 ELBERT and SELRED with their followers, as if just
 come from a long march : enter, by the opposite side,
 ALWY, upon which they halt, the foremost of the
 followers but just appearing under the gateway.*

Alwy. Welcome, most valiant chieftains ! Fame
 reports

That crown'd with full success ye are return'd.

Eth. Good sooth, we boast but little of our arms ;
 Though Woggarwolfe, our base ignoble spoiler,
 Wounded and sorely shent, we've left behind,
 Again in cloister'd walls with ghostly men,
 Winding his soul, with many a heavy groan,
 Into a saintly frame ! God speed the work !
 We are but just in time to save our halls.

Sel. It is a shame that such a ruffian thief
 Should thus employ the arms of warlike Thanes.

Alwy. In truth it is, but now there reigns in
 Mercia

A warlike king, who better knows to deal
 With valiant men. The messenger inform'd you ?

Sel. He did ; yet, be it own'd, to call him
 king

Sounds strangely in our ears. How died king
 Oswal ?

Eth. (to SEL.) Patience, my friend ! good time
 will show thee all.

Yet pray inform us, Alwy, ere we part,
 Where is young Edward ? in these late commo-
 tions

What part had he ?

Alwy. Would to the holy saints I could inform
 you !

Reports there are, incongruous and absurd —
 Some say, in hunting from his followers stray'd,
 Passing at dusk of eve a high-sworn stream,
 Therein he perish'd ; others do maintain
 That, loathing greatness, he conceals himself
 In some lone cave : but as I bear a heart
 True to King Ethwald and the public weal,
 I know of him no more.

Sel. Thou liest !

Eth. (pulling back SEL.) Peace, art thou mad ?

Alwy (pretending not to hear.) What said brave
 Selred ?

Eth. A hasty exclamation of no meaning.

Alwy. I must away, and bear the welcome tidings

Of your arrival to the royal ear.

Eth. But stop, before thou goest I fain would know

How fared Elburga in the passing storm?

Where has she refuge found?

Alwy. Within these walls; she is the queen of Mercia.

Eth. I am indebted to thee. [*Exit ALWY.*

Sel. (*staring with surprise upon* *ETHELBERT*).

What dost thou think of this? Did we hear truly?

To the usurper of her father's crown,
And, if our fears be true, his murd'rer too!
To him! O most unnatural!

Eth. Ay, so it is. As one, who ventures forth
After an earthquake's awful visitation,
The country round in strange unwonted guise
Beholds; here swelling heights and herby knolls,
Where smok'd the cottage and the white flocks
browz'd,

Sunk into turbid pools; there rifted rocks,
With all their shaggy woods upon their sides,
In the low bosom of the flowery vale
Resting uncouthly—even so does he,
Who looks abroad after the storms of state,
Strange changes see; unnatural and strange.

Sel. It makes my spirit boil—the gentle Edward!
So gently brave!

Eth. Yes, there is cause of grief
And indignation too: but Ethwald reigns,
How'er he gain'd his height, and he possesses
The qualities that suit his lofty station.
With them I fear he has his passions also,
Hostile to public good: be it our part
To use the influence we still retain
O'er his ambitious mind for Mercia's weal!
This is our duty now.

Sel. I'll take thy counsel.
(*To the soldiers.*) Follow, weary comrades.

[*Exeunt ETH. and SEL. and their followers,*
marching across the stage.

SCENE II.

A royal apartment. *ELBURGA, as queen, discovered sitting on a chair of state, with DWINA, ladies, and officers of state attending.*

Elb. We've waited long: how goes the day?
knowst thou? (*To 1st officer.*)

1st off. As comes the light across this arched roof
From those high windows, it should wear, methinks,
Upon noon-day.

Elb. And the procession to the royal chapel
Should at this hour begin. The king, perchance,
Is with affairs detain'd: go thou and see.

[*Exit 1st officer.*

I am impatient now.

[*Voice heard without.*

What voice is that?

First SONG without.

Hark! the cock crows, and the wind blows,
Away, my love, away!

Quick, don thy weeds and tell thy beads,
For soon it will be day.

1st lady. 'Tis sadly wild.

Dwi. 'Tis sad, but wondrous sweet.

Who may it be? List, list! she sings again.

Second SONG without.

Where layst thou thy careless head?
On the cold heath is my bed,
Where the moor-cock shuts his wing,
And the brown snake weaves his ring.
Safe and fearless will I be,
The coiled adder stings not me.

Elb. (*rising, displeas'd, from her seat.*) Call those
who wait without. What may this mean?

Enter an Attendant.

Whose voice is that which in a day of joy
Such plaintive music makes?

Atten. Pardon, my royal dame! be not offended!
'Tis a poor maid bereaved of her mind.
Rent are her robes, her scatter'd locks unbound,
Like one who long through rugged ways hath
stray'd,

Beat with the surly blast; but never yet,
Though all so sorely shent, did I behold
A fairer maid. She aims at no despite:
She's wild, but gentle.

Dwi. O hark again!

Third SONG without.

* Once upon my cheek
He said the roses grew,
But now they're wash'd away
With the cold ev'ning dew.

For I wander through the night,
When all but me take rest,
And the moon's soft beams fall piteously
Upon my troubled breast.

[*A pause.*

Fourth SONG.

Ah, maiden! bear the biting smart,
Nor thus thy loss deplore;
The Thane's fair daughter has his heart,
He will return no more.

* For this third song, which is the only literary assistance either in verse or prose that I have ever received, I am indebted to the pen of a friend.

1st lady. 'Tis strangely melancholy. [times
Dwi. 'Tis like the mournful sounds which often-
The midnight watcher, in his lonely tower,
Hears with the wailing blast most sweetly mingled.

Elb. (to attendant). Go thou and lead her hither.
Atten. I will, great queen.—But here she comes
unbidden.

Enter BERTHA, with a wild unsettled air, and her
hair scattered upon her shoulders. The ladies
gather about her with curiosity.

1st lady. How fair she is!

2d lady. Her eyes of lovely blue,
Gentle, but restless. Dost thou see that glance?

[To 1st lady.
I fear to look upon her.

Dwi. Fie, fie upon it! press not near her thus;
She seems offended: I will speak to her.
(To BERTHA.) Sweet lady, art thou sad?

[BERTHA looks steadfastly at her, then drops her
head upon her breast, and makes no answer.
We would be kind to thee.

[BERTH. then looks more gently on her, but is
still silent.

1st lady. Dost thou not speak, thou who canst sing
so well?

Dwi. Who taught thee those sweet notes?

Berth. The night was dark: I met spirits on
my way:

They sang me sweet songs, but they were sorrowful.
Dwi. Ah, woe is me! and dost thou wander
then,

In the dark night alone, no one to tend thee?

Berth. When the moon's dark, I follow the
night-bird's cry,

And it doth guide my way.—But he'll return,
So do they tell me, when sweet violets blow,
And summer comes again.

Dwi. And who is he? [pass:

Berth. List, and the winds will tell thee as they
The stilly air will whisper it. But softly,
Tell it to none again. They must not know

How stern he is, for he was gentle once. [thee!

Dwi. A cruel heart had he who could forsake
Ber. (putting her hand eagerly on DWINA'S mouth).
Hush, hush! we'll not offend him. He is great,
And must not be offended.

Elb. (coming near her). What, sayst thou he is
great?

Rent are thy weeds, and thin thy ruffled robe:
Why didst thou leave thy home thus unprotected?

Ber. (turning hastily upon her). I saw his banner
streaming in the air,

And I did follow it.

Elb. His banner in the air! What is thy love?

Berth. (looking fiercely at her). They say he is a
king.

Elb. (smiling). Poor maid! 'tis ever thus with
such as she;

They still believe themselves of some high state,
And mimic greatness.

Berth. Thou art a fair dame and a gay—but go;
Take off thine eyes from me; I love thee not.

[Shrinks from ELBURGA, walking backwards,
and looking frowningly at her; then beckoning
to DWINA, she speaks in her ear.

They say a royal dame has won his faith,
Stately and proud. But in a gloomy dream
I heard it first, confused and terrible:
And oftimes, since, the fiend of night repeats it,
As on my pressed breast he sits and groans.
I'll not believe it.

Dwi. What is thy name, sweet lady?

Berth. (rubbing her hand across her forehead as if
trying to recollect). I had a name that kind
friends call'd me by;

And with a blessing did the holy man
Bestow it on me. But I've wander'd far
Through wood and wilds, and strangely on my
head

The numbing winds have beat, and I have lost it.
Be not offended with me—

For, lady, thou art gentle, and I fear thee.

[Bowing submissively to DWINA.

Enter ETHELBERT.

Eth. (to DWINA, after looking at BERTHA). What
maid is that so haggard and so wild?

Dwi. A wand'ring maniac, but so fair and gentle
Thou needs must speak to her.

Eth. (going up to BERTHA). Fair lady, wilt thou
suffer—gracious heaven!

What see I here! the sweet and gentle Bertha!

Ah, has it come to this! Alas, alas!
Sweet maiden, dost thou know me?

Berth. (after looking earnestly at him). I know
thee well enough. They call thee mad;

Thy wild and raving words oft made the ears
Of holy men to tingle.

Eth. She somewhat glances at the truth. Alas!
I've seen her gay and blooming as the rose,
And cheerful, too, as song of early lark,
I've seen her prattle on her nurse's lap,
Innocent bud! and now I see her thus. [Weeps.

Berth. Ah! dost thou weep? are they unkind to
thee? [Shaking her head.

Yes, yes! from out the herd, like a mark'd deer,
They drive the poor distraught. The storms of
heaven

Beat on him: gaping hinds stare at his woe;
And no one stops to bid heav'n speed his way.

Eth. (flourish of trumpets). Sweet maid, retire.

Berth. Nay, nay! I will not go: there be without
Those who will frown upon me.

Eth. (endeavouring to lead her off). I pray thee
be entreated!

[DWINA takes hold of her also to lead her off,
but she breaks from them furiously.

Berth. Ye shall not force me! Wist ye who I am?

The whirlwind in its strength contends with me,
And I o'ermaster it.

Eth. Stand round her then, I pray you, gentle ladies!

The king must not behold her.

[*The ladies gather round BERTHA, and conceal her.*]

Enter ETHWALD, followed by Thanes and Attendants.

Ethw. (after returning the obeisance of the assembly). This gay and fair attendance on our person,

And on our queen, most honour'd lords and dames,
We much regard; and could my heart express—

[*BERTHA, hearing his voice, shrieks out.*]

What cry is that?

Dwi. Regard it not: it is a wand'ring maid,
Distracted in her mind, who is in search,
As she conceits it, of some faithless lover.

She sings sweet songs of wildest harmony,
And at the queen's command we led her in.

Ethw. Seeking her love! distracted in her mind!
Have any of my followers wrong'd her? Speak!

If so it be, by righteous heaven I swear!

The man, whoe'er he be, shall dearly rue it.

[*BERTHA shrieks again, and, breaking through the crowd, runs up to ETHWALD. He starts back, and covers his eyes with one hand, whilst she, catching hold of the other, presses it to her breast.*]

Berth. I've found thee now, and let the black fiend growl,

I will not part with thee. I've follow'd thee
Through crag and moor and wild. I've heard thy voice

Sound from the dark hill's side, and follow'd thee.

I've seen thee on the gath'ring twilight clouds,

Ride with the stately spirits of the storm.

But thou lookst sternly on me.

O be not angry! I will kneel to thee;

For thou art glorious now, as I am told,

And must have worship. (*Kneeling, and bowing her head meekly to the ground.*)

Ethw. (turning away). O God! O God! Where art thou, Ethelbert?

Thou mightst have saved me this.

[*Looking round, and seeing that ETHELBERT weeps, he also becomes softened, and turns to BERTHA with great emotion.*]

Berth. They say she's fair and glorious: woe is me!

I am but form'd as simple maidens are.

But scorn me not; I have a powerful spell,

A Druid gave it me, which on mine arm

When once enclasp'd, will make me fair as she;

So thou wilt turn to me.

Ethw. O Ethelbert! I pray thee pity me!

This sight doth move me, e'en to agony.

Remove her hence; but O deal gently with her!

[*ETHELBERT endeavours again to lead her off, and the ladies crowd about her. She is then carried out, and is heard to scream as they are carrying her.*]

Ethw. (in great disorder). Come, come away! we do but linger here.

[*ELBURGA, who, since ETHWALD'S entering, has remained in the background, but agitated with passions, now advances angrily to him.*]

Elb. So thou hast known this maid?

Ethw. Fie! speak not to me now.

Elb. Away, away!

Thou hast lodg'd softer passions in thy breast

Than I have reckon'd on.

Ethw. (shaking her off). Fie! turn thy face aside,
and shade thine eyes!

That no soft passion in thy bosom lives,
Is thy opprobrium, woman, and thy shame.

Elb. There are within my breast such thoughts, I trust,

As suit my lofty state.

Ethw. (aside to *ELB.*) Go, heartless pageant, go,
Lead on thy senseless show, and move me not
To do thee some despite.

(*Aloud to the ladies.*) Move on, fair dames.

[*To ELB., who seems unwilling to go.*]

The king commands it.

[*Exeunt ELBURGA and ladies.*]

1st off. (to *ETHW.*, who stands with his eyes fixed on the ground). Please you, my lord, but if you move not also,

The ceremony will, in sooth, appear

As marr'd and cut in twain.

Ethw. What sayst thou, marshal?

1st off. Please you, my lord, to move?

Ethw. Ay, thou sayst well: in the soul's agony

A meaner man might turn aside and weep.

[*Ei' t ETHW. with part of his train, the others ranging themselves in order to follow him. A great confusion and noise is then heard without, and a voice calling out "The king is wounded." The crowd press back again in disorder, and presently re-enter ETHW. supported.*]

1st off. My lord, how is it with you? [*man*]

Ethw. I fear but ill, my friend. Where is the
That gave me this fell stroke?

1st off. I cannot tell: they have surrounded him.

Enter 2d Officer.

2d off. He is secured.

Ethw. Is it a Mercian hand?

2d off. It is, my lord, but of no high degree.

It is the frantic stroke of a poor groom,

Who did his late lord love; and, for that crime,

Last night, with wife and children weeping round him,

Was by your soldiers turn'd into the cold,
Houseless and bare.

Ethw. Curse on their ruffian zeal!
Torment him not, but let him die in peace.
Would I might say—, I'm very faint, my friends:
Support me hence, I pray you!

[*Exeunt, ETHW. supported.*]

SCENE III.

A royal apartment: an open door in front, showing an inner chamber, in which is discovered ETHWALD lying upon a couch, and surrounded with the Thanes and Officers of his court, SELRED and ETHELBERT standing on each side of him.

Sel. (after *Ethw.* has said something to him in a low voice). He is too much inclosed and longs for air:

He'll breathe more freely in the outer chamber,
Let us remove him.

[*They lift him in his couch, and bring him forward to the front of the stage.*]

1st off. How are you now, my lord?

Ethw. Somewhat exhausted: and albeit, good Thanes,

I greatly am indebted to your love,
For a short space I fain would be alone.

1st off. Farewell! God send your highness rest!
meantime

We'll pray for your recovery.

2d off. And heaven will hear our prayers.

Omnes. Amen, amen! [weal

Ethw. Pray heaven to order all things for the
Of my good realm, and I shall be well pleased
To live or die. Adieu!

[*Exeunt all but ETHW., SELRED, and ETHELBERT. After a pause, in which ETHW. seems agitated and uneasy.*]

My dearest *Selred*, think it not unkind,
But go thou too. [Exit *SELRED.*]

[*Raising himself on the couch, and taking both the hands of ETHELBERT, which he presses in his, looking up in his face expressively for some time before he speaks.*]

I am oppress'd. To them, even in this state,
I still must be a king: to you, my friend,
Let me put off all seeming and constraint, [not,
And be a poor weak man. (*A pause.*) Thou speakest
Thy face is sad and solemn. Well I see
Thou lookst upon me as a dying wretch—
There is no hope.

Eth. Much will it profit thee
To be prepared as though there were no hope;
For if thou liv'st thou'lt live a better man,
And if thou diest, may heav'n accept it of thee!

Ethw. O that it would! But, my good *Ethelbert*,

To be thus seized in my high career,

With all my views of glory op'ning round me—
The Western state e'en now invites mine arms.
And half Northumberland, in little time,
Had been to *Mercia* join'd. [matters!

Eth. Nay, think not now, I pray thee, of these
They soix uncouthly with the pious thoughts
That do become your state.

Ethw. I know it well;
But they do press so closely on my heart—
O I did think to be remember'd long!

Like those grand visitations of the earth,
That on its alter'd face for ages leave
The traces of their might. Alas, alas!

I am a powerful, but a passing storm,
That soon shall be forgotten!

Eth. I do beseech thee think of better things!

Ethw. Thou seest I weep.—Before thee I may weep.

[*Dropping his head upon his breast, and groaning deeply.*]

Long have I toil'd and stain'd my hands in blood
To gain pre-eminence; and now, alas!
Newly arrived at this towering height,
With all my schemes of glory rip'ning round me,
I close mine eyes in darkness, and am nothing.

Eth. What, nothing sayst thou?
Ethw. O no, *Ethelbert!*

I look beyond this world, and look with dread,
Where all for me is fearful and unknown.
Death I have daily braved in fields of fight,
And, when a boy, oft on the air-hung bough
I've fearless trod, beneath me roaring far
The deep swoln floods, with every erring step
Instant destruction. Had I perish'd then—
Would that I had, since it is come to this!

[*Raising up his hands vehemently to heaven.*]

Eth. Be not so vehement: this will endanger
The little chance thou still mayst have for life.
The God we fear is merciful.

Ethw. Ay, He is merciful; but may it reach—
O listen to me!—Oswal I have murder'd,
And Edward, brave and gentle—ay, this bites
With a fell tooth!—I vilely have enthral'd;
Of all his rights deprived. The loving *Bertha*:
Too well thou knowst what I have been to her—
Ah! thinkest thou a thousand robed priests
Can pray down mercy on a soul so foul?

Eth. The inward sighs of humble penitence
Rise to the ear of heav'n, when pealed hymns
Are scatter'd with the sounds of common air;
If I indeed may speak unto a king
Of low humility.

Ethw. Thy words bite keenly, friend. O king
Grant me but longer life, and thou shalt see
What brave amends I'll make for past offences.
Thou thinkest hardly of me; ne'ertheless,
Rough as my warrior's life has been, good thoughts
Have sometimes harbour'd here.

[*Putting his hand on his heart.*]

If I had lived,
It was my full intent that, in my power,
My people should have found prosperity :
I would have proved to them a gen'rous lord.
If I had lived—Ah ! thinkst thou, Ethelbert,
There is indeed no hope ?

Eth. I may not flatter you.

Ethw. (holding up his clasped hands). Then heaven
have mercy on a guilty soul !

Good Ethelbert, full well thou knowst that I
No coward am : from power of mortal thing
I never shrank. O might I still contend [blade !
With spear and helm, and shield and brandish'd
But I must go where spear and helm and shield
Avail not :

Where the skill'd warrior, cased in iron, stands
Defenceless as the poor uncrusted worm.

Some do conceit that disembodied spirits
Have in them more capacity of woe
Than flesh and blood maintain. I feel appall'd :
Yes, Thane of Sexford, I do say appall'd.
For, ah ! thou knowst not in how short a space
The soul of man within him may be changed.

Eth. I know it all too well. But be more calm ;
Thou hast a task to do, and short perhaps
May be the time allow'd thee. True repentance
With reparation of offences past

Is ever yok'd. Declare it as thy will
That Edward do succeed unto his rights :
And for poor Bertha, she shall be my charge ;
I'll tend and cheer her in my quiet home.

Ethw. Thou dost prevent my boon : heaven bless
thee for it !

I give thee power to do whate'er thou thinkst
I living should have done. 'Tis all I can,
And gracious heaven accept it at my hands !

Eth. Amen, my friend ! I'll faithfully fulfil
The important trust—Ha ! how thy visage changes !
Thy mind's exertion has outrun thy strength.
He faints away. Help ! who attends without ?

Enter SELRED with Attendants.

Support the king : whether a sudden faint
Or death be now upon him, trow I not,
But quickly call the queen.

Sel. Alas, my brother !

[*Assisting ETH. to raise ETHW.'s head.*

Eth. Raise him gently, Selred.

For, if that life within him still remain,
It may revive him.

Sel. Ah, see how changed he is ! Alas, my
brother !

Pride of my father's house, is this thy end ?

Enter ELBURGA, Nobles, &c.

Elb. Let me approach unto my royal lord.
Good Ethelbert, thou long hast known thy king,
Look'd he e'er thus before ? [*Looking on ETHW.*

Eth. No, royal dame ; and yet 'tis but a faint ;
See, he revives again.

Ethw. (opening his eyes). Who are about me now ?

Eth. The queen and nobles.

Sel. And Selred, too, is here, my dearest Eth-
wald !

Ethw. (holding out his hand to SEL.) Ay, noble
brother, thou wert ever kind.

Faintness returns again ; stand round, my friends,
And hear my dying words. It is my will

That Ethelbert shall, after my decease,
With the concurrence of the nation's council,

The kingdom settle as may best appear
To his experienced wisdom, and retain

Until that settlement the kingly power.
Faintness returns again ; I say no more.

Art thou displeas'd, my Selred ?

Sel. (kneeling and kissing his hand). No, brother,
let your dying will bereave me

E'en of my father's lands, and with my sword
I will maintain it.

Ethw. Thou art a gen'rous brother ; fare thee
well !

Elb. What, is the queen, indeed, so poor a thing
In Mercia's state that she should be o'erpass'd,
Unhonour'd and unmention'd ?

Ethw. (to ELB., waving his hand faintly). Be at
peace !

Thou shalt have all things that become thy state.
[*To attendants.*] Lower my head, I pray you.

1st off. He faints again.

2d off. He will not hold it long :
The kingdom will be torn with dire contentions.

And the Northumbrian soon will raise his head.

Ethw. (raising himself eagerly with great vehemence). Northumberland ! Oh I did purpose
soon,

With three five thousand of my chosen men,
To have compass'd his proud towers.

Death, death ! thou art at hand, and all is ended !

[*Groans, and falls back upon the couch.*

1st off. This is a faint from which I fear, brave
Thanes,

He will awake no more.

2d off. Sayst thou ? go nearer and observe the
face.

1st off. If that mine eyes did ever death behold,
This is a dead man's visage.

2d off. Let us retire. My good lord Ethelbert,
You shall not find me backward in your service.

1st off. Nor me.

Omnes. Nor any of us.

Eth. I thank you, Thanes ! 'Tis fit you should
retire ;

But Selred and myself, and, of your number,
Two chosen by yourselves, will watch the body.

[*To DWINA, who supports ELBURGA, and seems
soothing her.*

Ay, gentle Dwina, soothe your royal mistress,

And lead her hence.

[*After looking steadfastly on the body.*
Think ye, indeed, that death hath dealt his blow?

1st off. Ah, yes, my lord! that countenance is death!

[*SELRED kneels by the body, and hides his head.*
Eth. Then peace be to his spirit!

A brave and daring soul is gone to rest.

Thus powerful death th' ambitious man arrests,
In midst of all his great and towering hopes,
With heart high swoln; as the omnipotent frost
Seizes the rough enchafed northern deep,
And all its mighty billows, heav'd aloft,
Boldly commixing with the clouds of heaven,
Are fix'd to rage no more.

[*The curtain drops.*]

E T H W A L D :

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PART SECOND.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

ETHWALD.
ETHELBERT.
SELRED.
EDWARD.
ALWY.
HEREULF.
HEXULF.
ONGAR.

Thanes, soldiers, &c. &c.

WOMEN.

ELEURGA.
DWINA.

Ladies, attendants, &c. &c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A gloomy apartment in an old Saxon castle, with small grated windows very high from the ground. EDWARD is discovered, sitting by a table, and tracing figures with chalk upon it, which he frequently rubs out again; at last, throwing away the chalk, he fixes his eyes upon the ground, and continues for some time in a melancholy musing posture. Enters to him the Keeper, carrying something in his hand.

Edu. What brings thee now? it surely cannot be
The time of food: my prison hours are wont
To fly more heavily.

Keep. It is not food: I bring wherewith, my lord,

To stop a rent in these old walls, that oft
Hath griev'd me, when I've thought of you
O' nights;

Through it the cold wind visits you.

Edu. And let it enter! it shall not be stopp'd.

Who visits me besides the winds of heaven?

Who mourns with me but the sad sighing wind?

Who bringeth to mine ear the mimick'd tones

Of voices once below'd, and sounds long past,

But the light-wing'd and many voiced wind?

Who fans the prisoner's lean and fever'd cheek,

As kindly as the monarch's wreathed brows,

But the free piteous wind?

I will not have it stopp'd.

Keep. My lord, the winter now creeps on apace:

Hoar frost this morning on our shelter'd fields

Lay thick, and glanced to the up-risen sun,

Which scarce had power to melt it.

Edu. Glanced to th' up-risen sun! Ay, such fair
morns,

When ev'ry bush doth put its glory on,

Like to a gemmed bride! Your rustics, now,

And early hinds, will set their clouted feet

Through silver webs, so bright and finely wrought

As royal dames ne'er fashion'd, yet plod on

Their careless way, unheeding.

Alas, how many glorious things there be

To look upon! Wear not the forests, now,

Their latest coat of richly varied dyes?

Keep. Yes, good my lord, the cold chill year
advances;

Therefore, I pray you, let me close that wall.

Edu. I tell thee no, man; if the north air bite,

Bring me a cloak. — Where is thy dog to-day?

Keep. Indeed I wonder that he came not with me

As he is wont.

Edw. Bring him, I pray thee, when thou com'st again.

He wags his tail and looks up to my face

With the assured kindness of one

Who has not injur'd me. How goes your sport?

Keep. Nobly, my lord; and much it pleases me

To see your mind again so sooth'd and calm.

Edw. I thank thee: knowst thou not that man is form'd

For varied states; to top the throne of power,

Or in a toad's hole squat, shut from the light?

He can bear all things; yet, if thou hast grace,

Lead me for once into the open air

To see the woods, and fields, and country round,

In the fair light of heaven.

Keep. I must not do it; I am sworn to this;

But all indulgence suited to this state

Of close confinement, gladly will I grant.

Edw. A faithful servant to a wicked lord,

Who'er he be, art thou. Is Oswald dead?

Or does some powerful Thane his power usurp?

[*A pause.*]

Thou wilt not answer me. [*A horn heard without.*]

Keep. Ha! who is at the gate that sounds so boldly?

I'll mount this tower and see.

[*Exit hastily, and EDWARD takes his seat again as before.*]

Keep. (*without, calling down from the tower.*) It is a company of armed men,

Bearing a royal ensign.

Edw. (*starting from his seat.*) Then let me rise and brace my spirits up!

They bring me death or freedom!

Re-enter Keeper from the tower.

(*Eagerly to him.*) What thinkst thou of it?

Keep. I'll to the gate, and meet them instantly.

[*Exit crossing over the stage hastily.*]

Edw. (*alone.*) An it be death they'll do it speedily, And there's the end of all. Ah, liberty!

An it be thou, enlarger of man's self!—

My heart doth strangely beat as though it were.

I hear their steps already: they come quickly:

Ah! how step they who joyful tidings bear!

Keep. (*calling without to EDW. before they enter.*)

My lord, my lord! you're a free man again!

Edw. Am I? great God of heaven, how good Thou art!

Enter two Thanes, conducted by the Keeper.

Edw. (*accosting them.*) Brave men, ye come upon a blessed errand,

And let me bless you.

1st Th. With joy unto ourselves we bring, my lord,

Your full enlargement from the highest power, That Mercia now obeys.

Edw. Not from king Oswal?

2d Th. No, most noble ethling;

From the Lord Regent Ethelbert we come.

Edw. Mine uncle, then, is dead.

2d Th. E'en so, my lord.

Edw. Ah! good and gentle, and to me most kind! (*Weeps, hiding his face.*)

Died he peacefully?

1st Th. He is at peace.

Edw. Ye are reserv'd with me.

But ye are wise perhaps; time will declare it.

Give me your hands; ye are my loving friends.

And you, good guardian of this castle, too,

You have not been to me a surly keeper.

[*Taking the Thanes warmly by the hand, and afterwards the keeper.*]

[*A second horn sounds without very loud.*]

1st Th. Ha! at our heels another messenger

So quickly sent! [*Exit keep.*]

2d Th. What may this mean?

Edw. Nay, wait not for him here.

Let us go forth from these inclosing walls,

And meet him in the light and open day.

1st Th. 'Tis one, I hope, sent to confirm our errand:

How came he on so quickly?

Edw. Thou hopest, Thane? Oh! then thou doubtest too.

[*Pauses and looks earnestly in their faces.*]

Enter ONGAR, conducted by the keeper.

1st Th. (*to ONGAR.*) Thine errand?

Ongar. That thou shalt know, and the authority Which warrants it. You here are come, grave

Thanes,

Upon the word of a scarce-named regent,

To set this pris'n'er free; but I am come

With the sign'd will of Ethwald to forbid it;

And here I do retain him. (*Laying hold of EDW.*)

1st Th. Loose thy unhallow'd grasp, thou base deceiver!

Nor face us out with a most wicked tale.

We left the king at his extremity,

And long ere this he must have breath'd his last.

Ongar. Art thou in league with death to know so well

When he perforce must come to sick men's beds?

King Ethwald lives, and will live longer too

Than traitors wish for. Look upon these orders;

Knowest thou not his sign? (*Showing his warrant.*)

(*Both Thanes, after reading it.*) 'Tis wonderful!

Ongar. Is it so wonderful

A wounded man, fainting with loss of blood

And rack'd with pain, should seem so near his end,

And yet recover?

2d Th. Ethwald then lives?

Ongar. Ay, and long live the king !

Edw. What words are these ?

I am as one who in a misty dream,
Listens to things wild and fantastical,
Which no congruity nor kindred bear
To preconceiv'd impressions.

King Ethwald, said ye ? and is Ethwald king ?

1st Th. He did succeed your uncle.

Edw. And by his orders am I here detain'd ?

1st Th. Even so, my lord.

Edw. It cannot be. (*Turning to 2d Th.*) Thou sayst not so, good Thane ?

2d Th. I do believe it.

Edw. Nay, nay, ye are deceiv'd.

(*Turning to ONGAR.*) What sayst thou ?

Was I by Ethwald's orders here imprison'd ?

Ongar. Yes, yes ; who else had power or will to do it ?

Edw. (*holding his clasped hands*). Then hope farewell !

My gleam is dark ; my rest is in the dust !

O that an enemy had done this wrong !

But Ethwald, thou, who to my heart wert press'd

As dearest brother never was by him

Who shar'd his mother's breast ! Thou in whose fame

I gloried — I who spoke not of my own ! —

When shouting crowds proclaim'd thy honour'd name,

I ever join'd with an ungrudging heart :

Yea, such true kindred feeling bore I to him,

E'en at his praise I wept. I pray you, sirs !

(*Bursting into tears.*) This hath o'ercome me.

Ongar (*to Thanes*). Why do you tarry here ?

You've seen my warrant.

Depart with me and leave the prisoner.

1st Th. What, shall we leave him in this piteous state,

Lone and uncomforted ?

Ongar. It must be so, there is no time to lose.

Come, follow me ; my men are at the gate.

[*As they are all about to depart, EDWARD, starting furiously forward to the door, flies upon ONGAR, and seizes him by the throat.*]

Edw. What ! leave me here, fiend ! Am I not a man,

Created free to breathe the circling air,

And range the boundless earth as thy base self,

Or thy more treach'rous lord ? thou tyrant's slave !

[*As he struggles with him, ONGAR calls loudly, and immediately the apartment is filled with armed men, who separate them.*]

Ongar (*to his followers*). Remove that madman to the inner chamber.

Keeper, attend your duty. (*To the Thanes.*) Follow me. [*Exeunt ONGAR and Thanes, &c.*]

Keep. (*to EDW., as some remaining armed men are leading him off by the opposite side.*)

Alas ! alas ! my lord, to see you thus,

In closer bondage ! Pray ! good soldiers, pray !

Let him in this apartment still remain :

He'll be secure ; I'll pledge my life —

Edw. No, no !

Let them enchain me in a pitchy gulph !

'Twere better than this den of weariness,

Which my soul loathes. What care I now for ease ? [*Exeunt, Edw. led off by the men.*]

SCENE II.

An apartment in the royal castle. Enter ETHELBERT meeting with SELRED, who enters at the same time from a door at the bottom of the stage.

Eth. How didst thou leave the king ?

Sel. Recovering strength with every passing hour.

His spirits too, that were so weak and gloomy,
From frequent fainting and the loss of blood,
Now buoyant rise, and much assist the cure
Which all regard as wonderful.

Eth. It has deceiv'd us, yet I've heard of such.

Sel. Thou lookest sadly on it : how is this ?

With little cost of thought I could explain

In any man but thee that cloudy brow ;

But well I know thou didst not prize the power

With which thou wert invested.

Eth. Selred, this hasty gloom will prove too short

To work in Ethwald's mind the change we look'd for.

And yet he promis'd well.

Sel. Ay, and will well perform ; mistrust him not.

I must confess, nature has form'd his mind

Too restless and aspiring : and of late,

Having such mighty objects in his grasp,

He has too reckless been of others' rights.

But, now that all is gain'd, mistrust him not :

He'll prove a noble king ; a good one too.

Eth. Thou art his brother.

Sel. And thou his friend.

Eth. I stand reprov'd before thee.

A friend, indeed, should gentler thoughts maintain,

And so I will endeavour.

Sel. Give me thy valiant hand ; full well I know
The heart which it pertains to.

Eth. I hear him, now, within his chamber stir.

Sel. Thou'lt move him best alone. God speed thy zeal !

I'll stand by thee the while and mark his eye.

[*ETH. remains on the front of the stage whilst ETHWALD enters behind him from the door at the bottom of the stage, leaning upon an attendant.*]

Ethw. (*to SEL. as he goes up to ETH.*) How, Ethelbert, our friend, so deep in thought ?

(To the attendant.) Leave me awhile methinks a brother's arm
Will be a kindlier staff.

[Exit attendant, and he leans upon SEL.

How, Ethelbert, my friend!
What vision from the nether world of sprites
Now rises to thine eyes, thus on the ground
So fix'd and sternly bent?

Eth. Pardon, my lord! my mind should now be turn'd

To cheerful thoughts, seeing you thus restor'd.
How fares it with you?

Ethw. E'en as with one, on a rude mountain's side,

Who suddenly in seeming gloom enclos'd
Of drizzly night, athwart the wearing mist
Sees the veil'd sun break forth in heav'n's wide arch,

And showing still a lengthen'd day before him.

As with a traveller in a gloomy path,
Whose close o'er-shaded end did scare his fancy
With forms of hidden ill; who, wending on
With fearful steps, before his eyes beholds
On the sudden burst a fair and wide expanse
Of open country, rich in promis'd good.
As one o'erwhelm'd in the battle's shock,
Who, all oppress'd and number'd with the slain,
Smother'd and lost, with sudden impulse strengthen'd,
Shakes the foul load of dead men from his back,
And finds himself again standing erect,
Unmair'd and vigorous. As one who stood —
But it may tire thee with such ample scope
To tell indeed how it doth fare with me.

Eth. You truly are from a dark gloom restor'd
To cheerful day; and, if the passing shade
Has well impress'd your mind, there lies before you

A prospect fair indeed. Ay, fairer far
Than that the gloom obscured.

Ethw. How sayst thou?

Eth. Did not that seeming cloud of death obscure

To your keen forecast eye tumultuous scenes
Of war and strife, and conquest yet to come,
Bought with your people's blood? but now, my
Ethwald,

Your chasten'd mind, so rich in good resolves,
Hath stretch'd before it future prospect fair,
Such as a god might please.

Ethw. How so, good Ethelbert?

Eth. And dost thou not perceive? O see before thee

Thy native land, freed from the ills of war,
And hard oppressive power, a land of peace!
Where yellow fields unspoil'd, and pastures green,
Mottled with herds and flocks, who crop secure
Their native herbage, nor have ever known
A stranger's stall, smile gladly.
See through its tufted alleys to heav'n's roof

The curling smoke of quiet dwellings rise:
Whose humble masters, with forgotten spear
Hung on the webbed wall, and cheerful face
In harvest fields embrown'd, do gaily talk
Over their evening meal, and bless king Ethwald,
The valiant yet the peaceful, whose wise rule,
Firm and rever'd, has brought them better days,
Than e'er their fathers knew.

Ethw. A scene, indeed, fair and desirable;
But, ah, how much confin'd! Were it not work
A god befitting, with exerted strength,
By one great effort to enlarge its bounds,
And spread the blessing wide?

Eth. (starting back from him). Ha! there it is!
that serpent bites thee still!

O spurn it, strangle it! let it rise no more!

Sel. (laying his hand affectionately on ETHWALD'S breast). My dearest brother, let not such wild thoughts

Again possess your mind!

Ethw. Go to! go to! (To SEL.) But, Ethelbert,
thou'rt mad. (Turning angrily to ETH.)

Eth. Not mad, my royal friend, but something griev'd

To see your restless mind still bent on that,
Which will to you no real glory bring,
And to your hapless people many woes.

Ethw. Thou greatly errest from my meaning,
friend.

As truly as thyself I do regard

My people's weal, and will employ the power
Heav'n trusts me with, for that important end.

But were it not ignoble to confine
In narrow bounds the blessed power of blessing,
Lest, for a little space, the face of war
Should frown upon us? He who will not give
Some portion of his ease, his blood, his wealth,
For others' good, is a poor frozen ehurl.

Eth. Well, then again a simple warrior be,
And thine own ease, and blood, and treasure give:
But whilst thou art a king, and wouldst bestow

On people not thine own the blessed gift
Of gentle rule, earn'd by the public force
Of thine own subjects, thou dost give away
That over which thou hast no right. Frown not:
I will assert it, crown'd and royal lord,
Though to your ears full rude the sound may be.

Ethw. Chaf'd Thane, be more restrain'd. Thou knowest well,

That, as a warlike chieftain, never yet
The meanest of my soldiers grasp'd his spear
To follow me constrain'd; and as a king,
Thinkst thou I'll be less noble?

Sel. Indeed, good Ethelbert, thou art too warm;
Thou dealest hardly with him. [man,

Eth. I know, though peace dilates the heart of
And makes his stores increase, his count'nance smile,
He is by nature form'd, like savage beasts,
To take delight in war.

'Tis a strong passion in his bosom lodg'd,
 For ends most wise, curb'd and restrain'd to be ;
 And they who for their own designs do take
 Advantage of his nature, act, in truth,
 Like cruel hinds who spirit the poor cock
 To rend and tear his fellow.
 O thou ! whom I so often in my arms,
 A bold and gen'rous boy have fondly press'd,
 And now do proudly call my sov'reign lord,
 Be not a cruel master ! O be gentle !
 Spare Mercian blood ! Goodness and power make
 Most meet companions. The great Lord of all,
 Before whose awful presence, short while since,
 Thou didst expect to stand, almighty is,
 Thou also most merciful :

And the bless'd Being He to earth did send
 To teach our soften'd hearts to call him Father,
 Most meekly did confine His heavenly power
 Unto the task assign'd Him. Think of this.
 O ! dost thou listen to me ?

Ethw. (moved and softened). Yes, good Ethelbert.
 Be thou more calm : we will consider of it.
 We should desire our people's good, and peace
 Makes them to flourish. We confess all this ;
 But circumstance oft takes away the power
 Of acting on it. Still our Western neighbours
 Are turbulent and bold ; and, for the time,
 Though somewhat humbled, they again may rise
 And forc us to the field.

Sel. No, fear it not ! they are inclin'd to peace ;
 Tidings I've learnt, sent by a trusty messenger,
 Who from Caernarvon is with wondrous speed
 But just arriv'd : their valiant prince is dead.
 A sudden death has snatch'd him in his prime ;
 And a weak infant, under tutorage
 Of three contending chiefs of little weight,
 Now rules the state, who, thou mayst well perceive,
 Can give thee no disturbance.

Ethw. (eagerly, with his eyes lightening up, and his whole frame agitated). A trusty messenger
 has told thee this ?

O send him to me quickly ! still fair fortune
 Offers her favours freely. Send him quickly !
 Ere yet aware of my returning health,
 Five thousand men might without risk be led
 E'en to their castle walls.

Eth. What, meanst thou this ?
 Uprous'd again unto this dev'lish pitch ?
 Oh, it is horrid !

Ethw. (in great heat). Be restrained, Thane.
Eth. Be thou restrained, king. See how thou art,
 Thus feebly tott'ring on those wasted limbs ?
 And wouldst thou spoil the weak ? (*Observing*
ETHW. who staggers from being agitated beyond
his strength.)

Ethw. (pushing away SELRED, who supports him).
 I do not want thine aid : I'm well and
 vig'rous ;
 My heart beats strongly, and my blood is warm ;

Though there are those who spy my weakness out
 To shackle me withal. Ho, thou without !

[*Enter his attendant, and ETHW., taking hold of him, walks across the stage ; then turning about to SEL. and ETH.*

Brother, send quickly for your trusty messenger ;
 And so, good day. Good morning, Thane of
 Sexford. (*Looking sternly to ETHELBERT.*)

Eth. Good morning, Mercia's king.

[*Exeunt by opposite sides, frowningly.*

SCENE III.

A grand apartment, with a chair of state. Enter
HEXULF and ALWY, engaged in close conversa-
tion.

Alwy (continuing to speak). Distrust it not ;
 The very honours and high exaltation
 Of Ethelbert, that did your zealous ire
 So much provoke, are now the very tools
 With which we'll work his ruin.

Hex. But still proceed with caution ; gain the
 queen ;

For she, from ev'ry hue of circumstance,
 Must be his enemy.

Alwy. I have done that already,
 By counterfeiting Ethwald's signature
 Whilst in that still and deathlike state he lay,
 To hinder Ethelbert's rash treach'rous haste
 From setting Edward free, I have done that
 For which, though Ethwald thanks me, I must needs,
 On bended knee, for courtly pardon sue.
 The queen I have address'd with humble suit
 My cause to plead with her great lord, and she
 Will her magnificent and high protection
 Give to our party, e'en if on her mind
 No other motive press'd.

Hex. I doubt it not, and yet I fear her spirit,
 Proud and aspiring, will desire to rule
 More than befits our purpose.

Alwy. Fear it not.
 It is the show and worship of high state
 That she delights in, more than real power :
 She has more joy in stretching forth her hand
 And saying, " I command," than, in good truth,
 Seeing her will obey'd.

Enter Queen, with DWINA and Attendants.

Hex. Saint Alban bless you, high and royal
 dame !

We are not here, in an intruding spirit,
 Before your royal presence.

Queen. I thank you, good lord bishop, with your
 friend.

And nothing doubt of your respect and duty.

Alwy. Thanks, gracious queen ! This good and
 holy man

Thus far supports me in your royal favour,

Which is the only rock that I would cling to,
Willing to give me friendly countenance. [need

Queen. You have done well, good Alwy, and have
Of thanks more than of pardon; nevertheless,
If any trouble light on thee for this,
A royal hand shall be stretch'd forth to save you,
Whom none in Mercia, whosoe'er they be,
Will venture to oppose. I will protect thee,
And have already much inclin'd the king
To favour thee.

Alwy (kneeling and kissing her hand). Receive my
humble thanks, most honour'd queen.

My conscience tells me I have merited,
Of you and of the king, no stern rebuke;
But that dark cunning Thane has many wiles
To warp men's minds e'en from their proper good.
He has attempted, or report speaks falsely,
To lure King Ethwald to resign his crown.
What may he not attempt! it makes me shrink!
He trusts his treasons to no mortal men:
Fiends meet him in his hall at dead of night,
And are his counsellors.

Queen (holding up her hands). Protect us, heaven!
Hex. Saint Alban will protect you, gracious
queen.

Trust me, his love for pious Oswal's daughter
Will guard you in the hour of danger. Hark!
The king approaches. [Flourish of trumpets.

Queen. Yes, at this hour he will receive in state
The bold address of those seditious Thanes,
Clam'ring for peace, when fair occasion smiles,
And beckons him to arm and follow her.

Hex. We know it well; of whom Thane Ethel-
bert,

In secret is the chief, although young Hereulf
By him is tutor'd in the spokesman's office.

*Enter ETHWALD, attended by many Thanes and
Officers of the Court, &c.*

Queen (presenting ALWY to ETHW.). My lord, a
humble culprit at your feet,
Supported by my favour, craves forgiveness.

[ALWY kneels, and ETHW. raises him graciously.
Ethw. I grant his suit, supported by the favour
Of that warm sense I wear within my breast
Of his well-meaning zeal. (Looking contemptuously
at the Queen, who turns haughtily away.)

But wherefore, Alwy,
Didst thou not boldly come to me at first
And tell thy fault? Might not thy former services
Out-balance well a greater crime than this?

Alwy. I so, indeed, had done, but a shrewd
Thane,

Of mind revengeful, and most penetrating,
Teaches us caution in whate'er regards
His dealings with the state. I fear the man.

Ethw. And wherefore dost thou fear him?

Alwy (mysteriously). He has a cloudy brow, a
stubborn gait;

His dark soul is shut up from mortal man,
And deeply broods upon its own conceits
Of right and wrong.

Hex. He has a soul black with foul atheism
And heresies abominable. Nay,
He has a tongue of such persuasive art,
That all men listen to him.

Queen (eagerly). More than men:
Dark spirits meet him at the midnight hour,
And horrid converse hold.

Ethw. No, more I pray you! Ethelbert I know.
Queen. Indeed, indeed, my lord, you know him
not!

Ethw. Be silent, wife! (Turning to HEX. and AL.)
My tried and faithful Alwy,
And pious Hexulf, in my private closet
We further will discourse on things of moment,
At more convenient time.

The leagued Thanes advance. Retire, Elburga:
Thou hast my leave. I gave thee no command
To join thy presence to this stern solemnity.
Soft female grace adorns the festive hall,
And sheds a brighter lustre on high days
Of pageant state; but in an hour like this,
Destin'd for gravest audienc' 'tis unmeet.

Queen. What, is the queen an empty bauble, then,
To gild thy state withal? [dames,

Ethw. The queens of Mercia, first of Mercian
Still fair example give of meek obedience
To their good lords. This is their privilege.

[Seeing that she delays to go.
It is my will. A good day to your highness.

Queen (aside as she goes off). Be silent, wife!
this Mollo's son doth say
Unto the royal offspring of a king.

[Exit Queen, frowning angrily, and followed by
DWINA and attendants. The Thanes, who
entered with ETHWALD, and during his con-
versation with ALWY, &c. had retired to the
bottom of the stage, now come forward.

Ethw. Now wait we for those grave and sluggish
chiefs,

Who would this kingdom, fam'd for warlike Thanes,
Change into mere provision-land to feed
A dull unwarlike race.

Alwy. Ay, and our castles,
Whose lofty walls are darken'd with the spoils
Of glorious war, to barns and pinning folds,
Where our brave hands, instead of sword and spear,
The pruning knife and shepherd's staff must grasp.

Hex. True; sinking you, in such base toils un-
skill'd,

Beneath the wiser carl. This is their wish,
But heav'n and our good saint will bring to nought
Their wicked machinations.

Enter an Officer of the castle.

Off. Th' assembled Thanes, my lord, attend
without.

Ethw. Well, let them enter. [*Exit off.*]
 Our seat beneath us will not shake, I trust,
 Being so fenced round. (*Taking his seat, and bowing courteously with a smiling countenance to the Chiefs, &c. who range themselves near him.*)

Enter several Thanes, with HERULF at their head, and presently after followed by ETHELBERT.

Her. (*stretching out his hand with respectful dignity*). Our king and sire, in true and humble duty

We come before you, earnestly entreating
 Your royal ear to our united voice.

Ethw. Mine ear is ever open'd to the words
 Of faithful duty.

Her. We are all men, who in th' embattled field
 Have by your side the front of danger braved,
 With greater lack of prudence than of daring;
 And have opposed our rough and scarred breasts
 To the fell push of war, with liberality
 Not yielding to the bravest of your Thanes,
 The sons of warlike sires. But we are men,
 Who in our cheerful halls have also been
 Lords of the daily feast; where, round our boards,
 The hoary headed warrior, from the toil
 Of arms releas'd, with the cheer'd stranger smiled:
 Who in the humble dwellings of our hinds
 Have seen a numerous and hardy race,
 Eating the bread of labour cheerfully,
 Dealt to them with no hard nor churlish hand.
 We, therefore, stand with graceful boldness forth
 The advocates of those who wish for peace.
 Worn with our rude and long continued wars,
 Our native land wears now the alter'd face
 Of an uncultur'd wild. To her fair fields,
 With weeds and thriftless docks now shagged o'er,
 The aged grandsire, bent and past his toil,
 Who in the sunny nook had plac'd his seat,
 And thought to toil no more, leads joyless forth
 His widow'd daughters and their orphan train,
 The master of a silent, cheerless band.
 The half-grown stripling, urged before his time
 To manhood's labour, steps, with feeble limbs
 And sallow cheek, around his unroof'd cot.
 The mother on her last remaining son
 With fearful bodings looks. The cheerful sound
 Of whistling ploughmen, and the reaper's song,
 And the flail's lusty stroke is heard no more.
 The youth and manhood of our land are laid
 In the cold earth, and shall we think of war?
 O, valiant Ethwald! listen to the calls
 Of gentle pity, in the brave most graceful,
 Nor, for the lust of more extended sway,
 Shed the last blood of Mercia. War is honourable
 In those who do their native rights maintain;
 In those whose swords an iron barrier are
 Between the lawless spoiler and the weak:
 But is in those who draw th' offensive blade

For added power or gain, sordid and despicable,
 As meanest office of the worldly churl. [*command*

Ethw. Chiefs and assembled Thanes, I much
 The love you bear unto your native land.
 Shame to the son nurs'd on her gen'rous breast
 Who loves her not! and be assured that I,
 Her reared child, her soldier, and her king,
 In true and warm affection yield to none
 Of all who have upon her turfy lap
 Their infant gambols held. To you her weal
 Is gain and pleasure; glory 'tis to me.
 To you her misery is loss and sorrow;
 To me disgrace and shame. Of this be satisfied;
 I feel her sacred claims, which these high ensigns
 Have fastened on me, and I will fulfil them:
 But for the course and manner of performance,
 Be that unto the royal wisdom left,
 Strengthen'd by those appointed by the state
 To aid and counsel it. Ye have our leave,
 With all respect and favour to retire.

Her. We will retire, King Ethwald, as becomes
 Free, independent Thanes, who do of right
 Approach or quit at will the royal presence,
 And lacking no permission.

Alwy. What, all so valiant in this princely hall,
 Ye who would shrink from the fair field of war,
 Where soldiers should be bold?

Her. (*laying his hand on his sword*). Thou liest,
 mean boastful hireling of thy lord,
 And shalt be punish'd for it.

1st Th. (*of ETHWALD's side*). And dar'st thou
 threaten, mouth of bold sedition?
 We will maintain his words.

[*Draws his sword, and all the Thanes on the King's side do the same. HERULF and the Thanes of his side also draw their swords.*

1st Th. (*of HERULF's side*). Come on, base
 dealers in your country's blood.

1st Th. (*of ETHWALD's side*). Have at ye, rebel
 cowards!

Ethw. (*rising from his seat, and standing between the two parties in a commanding posture*). I do command you: peace and silence, chiefs!
 He who with word or threat'ning gesture dares
 The presence of his king again to outrage,
 I put without the covert of the law,
 And on the instant punish.

[*They all put up their swords, and ETHWALD, after looking round him for some moments with commanding sternness, walks off majestically, followed by his Thanes.*

Eth. (*casting up his eyes to heaven as he turns to follow HERULF and his party*). Ah, Mercia,
 Mercia! on red fields of carnage
 Bleed thy remaining sons, and carrion birds
 Tear the cold limbs that should have turn'd thy soil.
 [*Exeunt the two different parties by opposite sides.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A small cavern, in which is discovered a wizard, sitting by a fire of embers, baking his scanty meal of parched corn, and counting out some money from a bag; a book and other things belonging to his art are strewd near him on the ground.

Wiz. (alone). Thanks to the restless soul of Mollo's son!

Well thrives my trade. Here, the last hoarded coin
Of the spare widow, trembling for the fate
Of her remaining son, and the gay jewel
Of fearful maid, who steals by fall of eve,
With muffled face, to learn her warrior's doom,
Lie in strange fellowship; so doth misfortune
Make strange acquaintance meet.

Enter a Scout.

Brother, thou com'st in haste; what news, I pray?

Scout. Put up thy book, and bag, and wizard's wand:

This is no time for witchery and wiles.
Thy cave, I trow, will soon be fill'd with those,
Who are by present ills too roughly shent
To look through vision'd spells on those to come.

Wiz. What thou wouldst tell me, tell in plainer words.

Scout. Well, plainly then, Ethwald, who thought full surely

The British, in their weak-divided state,
To the first onset of his arms would yield
Their ill-defended towers, has found them strength-
en'd

With aid from Wessex, and unwillingly
Led back with cautious skill the Mercian troops;
Meaning to tempt the foe, as it is thought,
To follow him into our open plains,
Where they must needs with least advantage fight.

Wiz. Who told thee this?

Scout. Mine eyes have seen them. Scarcely three miles off,

The armies, at this moment, are engaged
In bloody battle. On my way I met
A crowd of helpless women, from their homes
Who fly with terror, each upon her back
Bearing some helpless babe or valued piece
Of household goods snatch'd up in haste. I hear
Their crowding steps e'en now within your cave:
They follow close behind.

Enter a crowd of women, young and old, some leading children and carrying infants on their backs or in their arms, others carrying bundles and pieces of household stuff.

Wiz. Who are ye, wretched women,
Who, all so pale and haggard, bear along

Those hapless infants, and those seeming wrecks,
From desolation saved? What do you want?

1st wom. Nought but the friendly shelter of your cave,

For now or house, or home, or blazing hearth,
Good wizard, we have none.

Wiz. And are the armies then so near your dwellings?

1st wom. Ay, round them, in them the loud battle clangs.

Within our very walls fierce spearmen push,
And weapon'd warriors cross their clashing blades.

2d wom. Ah, woe is me! our warm and cheerful hearths,

And rushed floors, whereon our children play'd,
Are now the bloody lair of dying men.

Old wom. Ah, woe is me! those yellow thatched roofs,

Which I have seen these sixty years and ten,
Smoking so sweetly 'midst our tufted thorns,
And the turf'd graves whercin our fathers sleep!

Young wom. Ah, woe is me! my little helpless babes!

Now must some mossy rock or shading tree
Be your cold home, and the wild haws your food.

No cheerful blazing fire and seething pot
Shall now, returning from his daily toil,
Your father cheer! if that, if that indeed
Ye have a father still. [*Bursting into tears.*]

3d wom. Alack, alack! of all my goodly stuff
I've saved but only this! my winter's webs,
And all the stores that I so dearly saved!
I thought to have them to my dying day!

Enter a young man leading in an idiot.

Young wom. (running up to him). Ah, my dear Swithick! art thou safe indeed?

Why didst thou leave me?

Young man. To save our idiot brother, seest thou here?

I could not leave him in that pitiless broil.

Young wom. Well hast thou done! poor helpless Balderkin!

We've fed thee long, unweeting of our care,
And in our little dwelling still thou'st held
The warmest nook; and wheresoe'er we be,
So shalt thou still, albeit thou knowst it not.

Enter man carrying an old man on his back.

Young man. And see here, too, our neighbour Edwin comes,

Bearing his bed-rid father on his back.

Come in, good man. How dost thou, aged neighbour?

Cheer up again! thou shalt be shelter'd still;
The wizard has receiv'd us.

Wiz. True, good folks;
I wish my means were better for your sakes.
But we are crowded here; that winding passage

Leads us into an inner cave full wide,
Where we may take our room and freely breathe;
Come, let us enter there.

[*Exeunt, all following the wizard into the inner cave.*]

SCENE II.

A field of battle strewed with slain, and some people seen upon the background searching amongst the dead bodies. Enter HEREULF and ETHELBERT.

Her. (stopping short, and holding up his hands).

Good mercy! see at what a bloody price
Ethwald this doubtful victory has purchased,
That, in the lofty height to which he climbs,
Will be a little step of small advantage.

Eth. (not attending to him, and after gazing for some time on the field). So thus ye lie, who,
with the morning sun,

Rose cheerily, and girt your armour on
With all the vigour, and capacity,
And comeliness of strong and youthful men.

Ye also, taken in your manhood's wane,
With grizzled pates, from mates, whose wither'd
hands

For some good thirty years had smooth'd your couch:
Alas! and ye whose fair and early growth
Did give you the similitude of men
Ere your fond mothers ceas'd to tend you still,
As nurslings of their care, ye lie together!
Alas! alas! and many now there be,
Smiling and crowing on their mother's breast,
Twining, with all their little infant ways,
Around her hopeful heart, who shall like these,
Be laid i' the dust.

Her. Ay, so it needs must be, since Mollo's son
Thinks Mercia all too strait for his proud sway.
But here come those who search among the dead
For their lost friends; retire, and let us mark them.
[*They withdraw to one side.*]

Enter two Ceorls, meeting a third, who enters by the opposite side.

1st Ceorl (to 3d). Thou hast been o'er the
field?

3d Ceorl. I have, good friend.

2d Ceorl. Thou hast seen a rueful sight.

3d Ceorl. Yes, I have seen that which no other
sight

Can from my fancy wear. Oh! there be some
Whose writhed features, fix'd in all the strength
Of grappling agony, do stare upon you,
With their dead eyes half open'd.—
And there be some, struck through with bristling
darts,

Whose clenched hands have torn the pebbles up;
Whose gnashing teeth have ground the very sand.
Nay; some I've seen among those bloody heaps,
Defaced and 'reft e'en of the form of men,

Who in convulsive motion yet retain
Some shreds of life more horrible than death;
I've heard their groans, oh, oh!

[*A voice from the ground.*] Baldwick!

3d Ceorl. What voice is that? it comes from
some one near.

1st Ceorl. See, yon stretch'd body moves its
bloody hand:

It must be he.

[*Voice again.*] Baldwick!

3d Ceorl (going up to the body from whence the voice came). Who art thou, wretched man?
I know thee not.

Voice. Ah, but thou dost! I have sat by thy fire,
And heard thy merry tales, and shared thy meal.

3d Ceorl. Good holy saints! and art thou Athel-
bald?

Woe! Is me to see thee in such case!
What shall I do for thee?

Voice. If thou hast any love or mercy in thee,
Turn me on my face that I may die;
For lying thus, seest thou this flooded gash?
The glutting blood so bolsters up my life
I cannot die.

3d Ceorl. I will, good Athelbald. Alack the day!
That I should do for thee so sad a service!

[*Turns the soldier on his face.*]

Voice. I thank thee, friend, farewell! [*Dies.*]

3d Ceorl. Farewell! farewell! a merry soul thou
wert,

And sweet thy ploughman's whistle in our fields.

2d Ceorl (starting with horror). Good heaven
forefend! it moves!

1st Ceorl. What dost thou see?

2d Ceorl. Look on that bloody corse, so smear'd
and mangled,

That it has lost all form of what it was;

It moves! it moves! there is life in it still.

1st Ceorl. Methought it spoke, but faint and low
the sound.

3d Ceorl. Ha! didst thou hear a voice? we'll go
to it.

Who art thou? Oh! who art thou?

[*To a fallen warrior, who makes signs to him to pull something from his breast.*]

Yes, from thy breast; I understand the sign.

[*Pulling out a band or kerchief from his breast.*]
It is some maiden's pledge.

Fallen warrior (making signs). Upon mine arm,
I pray thee, on mine arm.

3d Ceorl. I'll do it, but thy wounds are past all
binding.

Warrior. She who will search for me doth know
this sign.

3d Ceorl. Alack, alack: he thinks of some sad
maid!

A rueful sight she'll see! He moves again:
Heaven grant him peace! I'd give a goodly sum
To see thee dead, poor wretch!

Enter a woman, wailing and wringing her hands.

2d *Ceorl*. Ha! who comes wailing here?

3d *Ceorl*. Some wretched mother who has lost her son:

I met her searching midst the farther dead,
And heard her piteous moan.

Mother. I rear'd him like a little playful kid,
And ever by my side, where'er I went,
He blithely trotted. And full soon, I ween,
His little arms did strain their growing strength
To bear my burden. Ay, and long before
He had unto a stripling's height attain'd,
He ever would my widow's cause maintain
With all the steady boldness of a man.

I was no widow then.

2d *Ceorl*. Be comforted, good mother.

Mother. What sayst thou to me? Knowst thou where he lies?

If thou hast kindness in thee, tell me truly;
For dead or living still he is mine all,
And let me have him.

3d *Ceorl* (*aside to 2d*). Lead her away, good friend; I know her now.

Her boy is lying with the farther dead,
Like a fell'd sapling: lead her from the field.

[*Exeunt mother and 2d Ceorl.*]

1st *Ceorl*. But who comes now, with such distracted gait,

Tossing her snowy arms unto the wind,
And gazing wildly o'er each mangled corpse?

En'er a young woman, searching distractedly amongst the dead.

Young wom. No, no! thou art not here! thou art not here!

Yet, if thou be like these, I shall not know thee.
Oh! if they have so gash'd thee o'er with wounds,
And marr'd thy comely form! I'll not believe it.
Until these very eyes have seen thee dead,
These very hands have press'd on thy cold heart,
I'll not believe it. [love,

3d *Ceorl*. Ah, gentle maiden! many a maiden's
And many a goodly man lies on this field. [him.

Young wom. I know, too true it is, but none like
Liest thou, indeed, amongst those grisly heaps?
O thou! who ever wert of all most fair!
If heav'n hath suffer'd this, amen, amen!
Whilst I have strength to crawl upon the earth,
I'll search thee out, and be where'er thou art,
Thy mated love, e'en with the grisly dead.

[*Searching again amongst the dead, she perceives the band round the arm of the fallen warrior, and uttering a loud shriek, falls senseless upon the ground. The Ceorls run to her assistance, with ETH. and HER. who come forward from the place they had withdrawn to: HER. clenches his hand, and mutters curses upon MOLLO's son, as he crosses the stage. The scene closes.*]

SCENE III.

A castle not far from the field of battle. Enter ETHWALD and ALWY, talking as they enter.

Ethw. (*calling angrily to some one off the stage*).

And see they do not linger on the road,
With laggard steps; I will brook no delay.
(*To ALWY.*) Why, even my very messengers, of late

Slothful and sleepy-footed have become:
They too must cross my will.

[*Throws himself upon a seat and sits for some time silent and gloomy.*]

Alwy. Your highness seems disturb'd.
What though your arms, amidst those British hills,
Have not, as they were wont, victorious prov'd,
And home retreating, even on your own soil,
You've fought a doubtful battle: luckless turns
Will often cross the lot of greatest kings;
Let it not so o'ercome your noble spirit;

Ethw. Thinkest thou it o'ercomes me?

[*Rising up proudly.*]

Thou judgest poorly. I am form'd to yield
To no opposed pressure, nor my purpose
With crossing chance or circumstance to change.

I in my march, to this attained height
Have moved still with an advancing step,
Direct and onward;

But now the mountain's side more rugged grows,
And he who would the cloudy summit gain,
Must oft into its cragged rents descend
The higher but to mount.

Alwy. Or rather say, my lord, that having gain'd

Its cloudy summit, there you must contend
With the rude tempests that do beat upon it.

Ethw. (*smiling contemptuously*). Is this thy fancy?

Are thy thoughts of Ethwald

So poorly limited, that thou dost think
He has already gain'd his grandeur's height?
Know that the lofty point which oft appears,
To him who stands beneath, the mountain's top,
Is to the daring climber who hath reach'd it
Only a breathing place, from whence he sees
Its real summit, bright and heav'n-illum'd,
Towering majestic, grand, above him far,
As is the lofty spot on which he stands
To the dull plain below.

The British once subdued, Northumberland,
Thou seest well, could not withstand our arms.

It too must fall; and with such added strength,
What might not be achiev'd? Ay, by this arm!
All that the mind suggests, even England's crown,
United and entire. Thou gazest on me.

I know full well the state is much exhausted
Of men and means; and those curs'd Mercian
women

To cross my purposes, with hag-like spite,

Do nought but females bear. But I will onward.
Still conscious of its lofty destination,
My spirit swells, and will not be subdued.

Alwy. I, chidden, bow, and yield with admiration

Unto the noble grandeur of your thoughts.
But lowering clouds arise; events are adverse;
Subdue your secret enemies at home,
And reign securely o'er the ample realm
You have so bravely won.

Ethw. What! have I through the iron fields of war

Proudly before th' admiring gaze of men,
Unto this point with giant steps held on,
Now to become a dwarf? Have I this crown
In bloody battles won, mocking at death,
To wear it now as those to whom it comes
By dull and leaden-paced inheritance;
As the dead shepherd's scrip and knotted crook
Go to his milk-fed son? Like those dull images,
On whose calm, tamed brows, the faint impres-

sion
Of far preceding heroes faintly rests,
As the weak colours of a fading rainbow
On a spent cloud!

I'd rather in the centre of the earth
Inclosed be, to dig my upward way
To the far distant light, than stay me thus,
And, looking round upon my bounded state,
Say, this is all. No; lower as it may,
I'll to the bold aspirings of my mind
Still steady prove, whilst that around my standard
Harness doth clatter, or a falchion gleam.

Alwy. What boot the bold aspirings of the great,

When secret foes beneath his footsteps work
Their treach'rous mine?

Ethw. Ay, thou before hast hinted of such foes.
Alwy. Fear for your safety, king, may make me err:

But these combined chiefs, it is full plain,
Under the mask of zeal for public good,
Do court with many wiles your people's hearts;
Breathing into their ears the praise of peace,
Yea, and of peaceful kings. The thrall'd Edward,
Whose prison-tower stands distant from this castle
But scarce a league—

Ethw. (*starting*). Is it so near us?

Alwy. It is, my lord.
Nor is he so forgotten in the land,
But that he still serves their dark purpose well.

An easy gentle prince—so brave, yet peaceful—
With such impressions clogg'd your soldiers fight,
And therefore 'tis that with a feeble foe
Ethwald fights doubtful battles.

Ethw. Thou art convinced of this?

Alwy. Most perfectly.

Ethw. I too have had such thoughts, and have repress'd them.

Alwy. Did not those base petitioners for peace
Withhold their gather'd forces, till beset
On ev'ry side they saw your little army,
Already much diminish'd? then came they,
Like heaven-commission'd saviours, to your aid,
And drew unto themselves the praise of all.
This plainly speaks, your glory with disgrace
They fain would dash, to set their idol up;
For well they think, beneath the gentle Edward
To lord it proudly, and his gen'rous nature
Has won their love and pity. Ethelbert.
Now that such fair occasion offers to them,
The prisoner's escape may well effect:
He lacks not means.

Ethw. (*after a thoughtful pause*). Didst thou not say, that castle's foggy air,
And walls with dampness coated, to young blood
Are hostile and creative of disease?
In close confinement he has been full long;
Is there no change upon him?

Alwy. Some hardy natures will resist all change.

[*A long pause, in which ETHWALD seems thoughtful and disturbed.*]

Ethw. (*abruptly*). Once in the roving fantasies of night,

Methought I slew him.

Alwy. Dreams, as some think, oft show us things to come.

[*Another long pause, in which ETHWALD seems greatly disturbed, and stands fixed to one spot, till catching ALWY'S eye fastened steadfastly upon his, he turns from him abruptly, and walks to the bottom of the stage with hasty strides. Going afterwards to the door, he turns suddenly round to ALWY just as he is about to go out.*]

Ethw. What Thane was he, who, in a cavern'd vault,

His next of kin so long imprison'd kept,
Whilst on his lands he liv'd?

Alwy. Yes, Ruthal's Thane he was; but dearly he

The dark contrivance rued; fortune at last
The weary thrall reliev'd, and ruin'd him.

Ethw. (*agitated*). Go where thy duty calls thee;
I will in:

My head feels strangely; I have need of rest

[*Exit.*]

Alwy (*looking after him with a malicious satisfaction*). Ay, dark perturbed thoughts will be thy rest.

I see the busy workings of thy mind.
The gentle Edward has not long to mourn
His earthly thralldom. I have done my task,
And soon shall be secure; for while he lives,
And Ethelbert, who hates my artful rise,
I live in jeopardy.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV

A small dark passage. Enter ETHWALD with a lamp in his hand: enter at the same time, by the opposite side, a domestic officer; they both start back on seeing one another.

Ethw. Who art thou?

Off. Baldwin, my lord. But mercy on my sight,

Your face is strangely alter'd. At this hour

Awake, and wandering thus!—Have you seen aught?

Ethw. No, nothing. Knowst thou which is Alwy's chamber?

I would not wake my grooms.

Off. It is that farther door; I'll lead you to it.

[Pointing off the stage.]

Ethw. No, friend, I'll go myself. Good rest to thee. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE V.

A small dark chamber, with a low couch near the front of the stage, on which ALWY is discovered asleep. Enter ETHWALD with a haggard countenance, bearing a lamp.

Ethw. He sleeps—I hear him breathe—he soundly sleeps,

Seems not this circumstance to check my purpose, And bid me still to pause? *(Setting down the lamp.)*

But wherefore pause?

This deed must be, or, like a scared thief

Who starts and trembles o'er his grasped store,

At ev'ry breezy whisper of the night,

I now must wear this crown, which I have bought

With brave men's blood, in fields of battle shed.

Ah! would that all it cost had there been shed!

This deed must be; for, like a haggard ghost

His image haunts me wheresoe'er I move,

And will not let me rest.

His love hath been to me my bosom's sting;

His gen'rous trust hath gnaw'd me like a worm.

Oh! would a swelt'ring snake had wreath'd my neck

When first his arms embraced me!

He is by fortune made my bane, my curse,

And, were he gentle as the breast of love,

I needs must crush him.

Prison'd or free, where'er he breathes, lives one

Whom Ethwald fears. Alas! this thing must be,

From th' imaged form of which I still have shrunk,

And started back as from my fancy's fiend.

The dark and silent cope of night is o'er us,

When vision'd horrors, through perturbed sleep,

Harden to deeds of blood the dreamer's breast;

When from the nether world fell demons rise

To guide with lurid flames the murd'rer's way.

I'll wake him now; should morning dawn upon me,

My soul again might from its purpose swerve.

(In a loud energetic voice.) Alwy, awake! sleepest thou? sleepest thou, Alwy?

(ALWY wakes.) Nay, rouse thyself, and be thou fully waking.

What I would say must have thy mind's full bent; Must not be spoken to a drowsy ear.

Alwy (rising quickly). I fully am awake; I hear, I see,

As in the noon of day.

Ethw. Nay, but thou dost not.

Thy garish eye looks wildly on the light,

Like a strange visitor.

Alwy. So do the eyes of one pent in the dark,

When sudden light breaks on them, though he slept not.

But why, my lord, at this untimely hour,

Are you awake, and come to seek me here?

Ethw. Alwy, I cannot sleep: my mind is toss'd

With many warring thoughts. I am push'd on

To do the very act from which my soul

Has still held back: fate doth compel me to it.

Alwy. Being your fate, who may its power resist?

Ethw. E'en call it so, for it, in truth, must be.

Knowst thou one who would do a ruthless deed,

And do it pitifully?

Alwy. He who will do it surest, does it best!

And he who surely strikes, strikes quickly too,

And therefore pitifully strikes. I know

A brawny ruffian, whose firm clenched gripe

No struggles can unlock; whose lifted dagger,

True to its aim, gives not a second stroke!

Ethw. (covering his face hastily). Oh! must it needs be so?

(Catching ALWY eagerly by the arm.) But hark thee well!

I will have no foul butchery done upon him.

Alwy. It shall be done, e'en to the smallest tittle, As you yourself shall order.

Ethw. Nay, nay! do thou contrive the fashion of it,

I've done enough.

Alwy. But, good my lord! cast it not from you thus:

There must be warrant and authority

For such a deed, and strong protection too.

Ethw. Well, well, thou hast it all: thou hast my word.

Alwy. Ay, but the murder'd corpse must be inspected,

That no deceit be fear'd, nor after doubts;

Nor bold impostors rising in the North,

Protected by your treach'rous Thanes, and plum'd,

To scare you afterwards with Edward's name.

Ethw. Have not thine eyes on bloody death oft look'd?

Do it thyself.

Alwy. If you, my lord, will put this trust in me, Swear that when after-rumours shall arise, As like there may, your faith will be unshaken.

Ethw. Yes; I will truly trust thee—
(*Vehemently, after a short pause.*) No, I will not! I'll trust to no man's vision but mine own. Is the moon dark to-night?

Alwy. It is, an please you.

Ethw. And will be so to-morrow?

Alwy. Yes, my lord.

Ethw. When all is still in sleep—I hear a noise.

Alwy. Regard it not, it is the whisp'ring winds Along those pillar'd walls.

Ethw. It is a strange sound, though. Come to my chamber,

I will not here remain: come to my chamber, And do not leave me till the morning break.

I am a wretched man! [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

SCENE I.

A gloomy vaulted apartment in an old castle, with no windows to it, and a feeble light burning in one corner. Enter EDWARD from a dark recess near the bottom of the stage, with slow pensive steps, frequently stopping as he advances, and remaining for some time in a thoughtful posture.

Ethw. Doth the bright sun from the high arch of heaven

In all his beauteous robes of flecker'd clouds,
And ruddy vapours, and deep glowing flames,
And softly varied shades, look gloriously?
Do the green woods dance to the wind; the lakes
Cast up their sparkling waters to the light?
Do the sweet hamlets in their bushy dells
Send winding up to heaven their curling smoke
On the soft morning air?

Do the flocks bleat, and the wild creatures bound
In antic happiness, and mazy birds
Wing the mid air in lightly skimming bands?
Ay, all this is; all this men do behold;
The poorest man. Even in this lonely vault,
My dark and narrow world, oft do I hear
The crowing of the cock so near my walls,
And sadly think how small a space divides me
From all this fair creation.

From the wide spreading bounds of beauteous nature,

I am alone shut out; I am forgotten.
Peace, peace! He who regards the poorest worm
Still cares for me, albeit He shends me sorely.
This hath its end. Perhaps, small as these walls,
A bound unseen divides my dreary state
From a more beauteous world; that world of souls,
Fear'd and desir'd by all: a veil unseen

Which soon shall be withdrawn.

[*Casts up his eyes to heaven, and turning, walks silently to the bottom of the stage, then advancing again to the front.*]

The air feels chill; methinks it should be night.
I'll lay me down: perchance kind sleep will come,
And open to my view an inward world
Of garish fantasies, from which nor walls,
Nor bars, nor tyrant's power, can shut me out.

[*He wraps himself in a cloak and lies down. Enter a ruffian, stealing up softly to him as supposing him asleep. EDWARD, hearing him, uncovers his face, and then starts up immediately.*]

Ethw. What art thou?

Or man or sprite? Thou lookest wondrous stern,
What dost thou want? Com'st thou to murder me?
Ruff. Yes, I am come to do mine office on thee;
Thy life is wretched, and my stroke is sure.

Ethw. Thou sayest true; y'et, wretched as it is,
It is my life, and I will grapple for it.

Ruff. Full vainly wilt thou strive, for thinkest thou
We enter walls like these with changeling hearts,
To leave our work undone?

Ethw. We, sayest thou?

There are more of you then?

Ruff. Ay, ay, there are enow to make it sure;
But, if thou wilt be quiet, I'll do't myself.
Mine arm is strong; I'll give no second stroke;
And all escape is hopeless. [*neck*]

Ethw. What, thinkest thou I'll calmly stretch my
Until thou butch'rest me?
No, by good heaven! I'll grapple with thee still,
And die with my blood hot!

[*Putting himself in a posture of defence.*]

Ruff. Well, since thou'lt have it so, thou soon
shalt see

If that my mates be lovelier than myself. [*Exit.*]
Ethw. O that I still in some dark cell could rest,
And wait the death of nature!

[*Looking wildly round upon the roof and walls of the vault.*]

Nor stone, nor club, nor beam to serve my need!
Out from the walls, ye flints, and fill my grasp!
Nought! nought! Is there not yet within this nook
Some bar or harden'd brand that I may clutch?

[*Exit hastily into the dark recess, and is followed immediately by two ruffians, who enter by the opposite side, and cross the stage after him.*]

SCENE II.

An apartment adjoining to the former, with a door leading to it at the bottom of the stage. Enter ALWY with a stern anxious face, and listens at the door; then enter, by the opposite side, ETHWALD with a very haggard countenance.

Ethw. Dost thou hear aught?

Alwy. No, nothing.

Ethw. But thou dost :
Is it not done ?

Alwy. I hope it is, my lord.

Ethw. Thou doubtst, then. — It is long past the hour

That should have lapp'd it. Hark ! I hear a noise.

[*A noise heard within of people struggling.*]

Alwy. They are dealing with him now. They struggle hard.

Ethw. (*turning away with horror, and putting his hands upon his ears*). Ha ! are we then so near it ? This is horrid !

[*After a pause.*]

Is it not done yet ? Dost thou hear them still ?

Alwy. I hear them still : they struggle harder now.

[*The noise within heard more distinctly.*]

Ethw. By hell's dark host, thy fiends are weak of arm,

And cannot do their task ! He will break forth,

With all the bloody work half done upon him !

[*Running furiously to the door, and then shuddering, and turning away from it.*]

No, no, I cannot go ! do thou go in,

And give thy strength. Let him be still'd i' the instant. [*A noise heard within of one falling.*]

Alwy. There's no need now : did you not hear him fall ? [*A groan heard within.*]

And that groan too ? List, list ! The deed is done.

[*They both retire from the door, and ETHW. leaning his back against the wall, looks steadfastly towards it in silent expectation, whilst it is seen to open slowly a little way, then shut, then open again, without any one appearing.*]

Ethw. What may this mean ? This pause is horrible !

Will they or enter quickly or forbear ?

Enter 1st ruffian, with his hands and clothes bloody, and all his hair and dress in disorder, like one who has been struggling hard. Enter soon after him 2d ruffian in a similar plight.

Alwy (*eagerly*). Ye've done it : is he dead ?

1st ruff. He is still'd now ; but with such horrid strength

He grappled with us ! we have had fell work.

Alwy. Then let us see the body.

1st ruff. Yes, enter if it please ye.

Alwy. Be pleased, my lord. (*To ETHW.*)

Ethw. Pray thee be satisfied : I cannot go.

Alwy (*to the ruffians*). Bring ye the body hither.

[*Exeunt ruffians.*]

[*A silent pause. — Re-enter ruffians bearing the body, and laying it down before ETHW.*]

Look here, my lord, and be well satisfied :

It is his very face, though somewhat changed

With long confinement in these sickly damps,

And the convulsive throes of violent death.

Ethw. (*first shrinking from it with horror, then commanding himself, and looking upon it for some time steadfastly*). Yes, changed indeed ! and yet I know it well.

Ah ! changed indeed ! Much he must needs have suffer'd

In his lone prison-house. Thou bruised flower !

And hast thou struggled all so bravely too

For thy most wretched life ? Base, bloody work !

Remove it from my sight. [*Turning hastily from it.*]

Alwy. What farther orders would you give these men ?

Ethw. Away ! speak to me not ! thou'st made me curs'd !

Would all the realm of Mercia I had lost,

Ere it had come to this !

Once in the battle's heat I sav'd his life.

And he did bless me for it.

[*Beating his forehead distractedly.*]

Alwy. Nay, good my lord, be not so keenly moved.

Where shall we lay the body ?

Ethw. Thou and those fiends do with it as ye will :

It is a damned work ! [*Exit hastily.*]

Alwy (*to 1st ruf.*). Come thou with me.

(*To 2d ruf.*) We will return anon ;

Meanwhile remain thou here and watch the corpse.

[*Exeunt ALWY and 1st ruf.*]

2d ruf. (*alone*). Watch it ! I would not watch it here alone

For all my ruffian's hire.

[*Throws a coarse cloth over the body, and exit hastily.*]

SCENE III.

A Saxon hall in the former castle. Enter ELB. and DWINA, talking earnestly as they enter.

Elb. But didst thou truly question ev'ry groom, And the stern keeper of that postern gate ?

Dwi. I have, but no one knew that he was absent. 'Twas dark night when the king went forth, and

Alwy

Alone was with him. This is all I know.

Elb. Thus secretly, at night ! Sexford's castle

Is not far distant. — That distracted maid —

If this be so, by the true royal blood

That fills my veins, I'll be reveng'd ! What meant thou ?

[*Seeing DWINA shake her head piteously.*]

Dwi. Alas ! you need not fear ; far distant stand

The towers of Ethelbert ; and that poor maid

With the quiet dead has found at last her rest.

Elb. And is't not well ? Why dost thou shake thy head,

As though thou toldst sad news ? — Yet what avails it ?

I ne'ertheless must be a humble mate,

With scarcely e'en the semblance of a queen,
And bow my head whilst Mollo's son doth say,
"Be silent, wife."—Shall I endure all this?
O Edward! gentle ethling! thou who once
Widst bear the title of my future lord,
Wouldst thou have used me thus? I'll not en-
dure it.

Dwi. Yet be more patient.

Elb. Be patient, sayst thou? Go to, for I hate thee,

When thou so calmly talkst. Though seemingly,
I oft before his keen commanding eye
Submissive am, thinkst thou I am subdued?
No, by my royal race! I'll not endure it:
I will unto the bishop with my wrongs;
Rever'd and holy men shall do me right:
And here he comes unsent for; this my hope
Calls a good omen.

Enter HEXULF.

Good and holy father,

I crave your blessing.

Hex. Thou hast it, royal daughter. Art thou well?

Thou seemst disorder'd.

Elb. Yes, rev'rend father, I am sorely gall'd
Beneath a heavy and ignoble yoke;
My crowned head is in subjection bow'd,
Like meanest household dame; and thinkst thou
That it becomes the daughter of a king,
The chief descendant of your royal race,
To bear all this, and say that she is well?

Hex. My daughter, your great lord indeed is form'd

Of soul more stern than was the gentle Edward,
On whom your maiden fancy first was taught
To dwell with sanguine hope.

Elb. O holy Hexulf! thou hast nam'd a name
Which to my conscience gives such secret pangs:
Oh! I have done such wrong to that sweet youth,
My heart bleeds at the cruel thought. I would—
Yea, there is nothing that I would not do
In reparation of the wrong I've done him.
Speak, my good father, if thou aught canst say:
Edward, 'tis said, has many powerful friends
In secret still devoted to his cause,
And not far distant stands his dreary tower.
O speak to me!—Thou turnst away thy head
Disturb'd and frowningly: hast thou no counsel
For a soul-smitten and distracted woman?

[*Laying her clasped hands earnestly on his shoulder, as he turns from her much displeas'd.*]

Hex. Daughter, forbear! you are indeed distracted.

Ethwald, by right of holy bands your lord,
Is in his seat too firmly fix'd; and Edward
Is only by some restless Thanes desired,
Under the influence of that dark wizard,

That heretic who still ensnares the young.
Be wise then, I beseech you, and in peace
Live in the meek subjection of a wife.

Elb. (*stepping back from him with haughty contempt.*) And so, meek, holy man, this is your counsel,

Breath'd from the gentle spirit of your state.
I've seen the chafings of your saintly ire
Restrain'd with less concern for sober duty,
When aught pertaining to your priestly rights
Was therein touch'd.

Dwi. Hush! Ethelbert approaches with his friends:

They come, methinks, at an unwonted hour.
Hex. That artful heretic regards not times;
His spells still show to him the hour best suiting
His wicked purposes.

Dwi. Heaven save us all! methinks at his approach

The air grows chill around us, and a hue
Of strange unnatural paleness spreads o'er all.

Elb. (*to Dwi.*) Peace, fool! thy fancy still o'er-
tops thy wit.

Enter SELRED, ETHELBERT, and HEREULF.

Elb. In your high presence, gracious dame, we are

Thus early visitors, upon our way
To crave admittance to the royal chamber.
Is the king stirring yet? Forgive my boldness.

Elb. Good Ethelbert, thou dost me no offence;
And you, Lord Selred, and brave Hereulf too,
I bid good morrow to you all. The king
Is not within his chamber: unattended
Of all but Alwy, at the close of night
He did go forth, and is not yet return'd.

Sel. This much amazes me: the moon was dark,
And cold and rudely blew the northern blast.

Dwi. (*listening.*) Hark! footsteps sound along
the secret passage:

Look to yon door, for something moves the bolt.
The king alone that sacred entry treads.

Enter ETHWALD *from a small secret door, followed by* ALWY, *and starts back upon seeing* ETHELBERT, &c.

Ethw. (*recovering from his confusion.*) A good and early morrow to you all:
I little thought—you are astir betimes.

Eth. The same to you, my lord, with loving duty.

Sel. And you too, royal brother, you are moving
At an unwonted hour. But you are pale!
A ghastly hollow look is in your eyes!
What sudden stratagem of nightly war
Has call'd you forth at such untimely season?
The night was dark and cold, the north wind
blew,

And if that I can read that alter'd brow,
You come not back unseath'd.

Ethw. (confused). No, I am well.—The blast
has beat against me,

And tossing boughs my tangled pathway cross'd :
In sooth I've held contention with the night.

Sel. Yea, in good sooth, thou lookest too like one
Who has contention held with damned sprites.
Hast thou not cross'd that glen where, as 'tis said,
The restless ghost of a dead murd'rer stalks ?
Thou sludd'rest and art pale ! O, thou hast seen it :
Thou hast indeed the haggard face of one
Who has seen fearful things.

Ethw. Thou'rt wild and fanciful : I have seen
nothing :

I am forespent and faint ; rest will restore me.
Much good be to you all ! (*Going.*)

Eth. (preventing him). Nay, on your royal pa-
tience, gracious king,

We must a moment's trespass make, to plead
For one, upon whose brave but gentle soul
The night of thralldom hangs.—

Ethw. (shrinking back). I know—I know thy
meaning—speak it not.

It cannot be—there was a time—'tis past.

Sel. O say not so ; the time for blessed mercy
Is ever present. For the gentle Edward,
We'll pledge our lives, and give such hostages
As shall secure your peace.

Eth. Turn not away ;

We plead for one whose meek and gen'rous soul
Most un aspiring is, and full of truth ;
For one who lov'd you, Ethwald ; one by nature
Form'd for the placid love of all his kind ;
One who did ever in your growing fame
Take most unenvious joy. Such is our thrall :
Yea, and the boon that we do crave for him
Is but the free use of his cramped limbs,
And leave to breathe, beneath the cope of heaven,
The wholesome air ; to see the cheering sun ;
To be again reckon'd with living men.

[*Kneeling and clasping his knees.*]

Ethw. Let go, dark Thane ; thou rackest me
with thy words ;

They are vain sounds :—the wind has wail'd as
thou dost,

And pled as sadly too. But that must be
What needs must be. Reckon'd with living men !
Would that indeed—O would that this could be !
The term of all is fix'd.—Good night to you—
I—I should say good morning, but this light
Glares strangely on mine eyes.

[*Breaking from ETH.*]

Sel. (following him). My dearest brother, by a
brother's love !

Ethw. (putting him away with great agitation). My
heart no kindred holds with human thing.

[*Exit quickly, in great perturbation, followed by
ALWY.*]

Sel. and *Hereulf* (*looking expressively at each
other, and then at ETHELBERT*). Good Ethel-
bert, what ails thee ?

Her. Thy fix'd look has a dreadful meaning in it.
Eth. Let us begone.

Sel. No, do not yield it so. I still will plead
The gentle Edward's cause : his frowns I fear not.

Eth. Come, come ; there is no cause ;
Edward is free.

Sel. How so ? thou speakest it with a woeful voice.
Eth. Is not the disembodied spirit free ?

Sel. Ha ! thinkst thou that ?—No, no ; it can-
not be.

*Her. (stumping on the ground, and grasping his
sword).* I'll glut my sword with the foul
murd'rer's blood,
If such foul deed hath been.

Eth. Hush, hush, intemperate boy ! Let us be-
gone. [*Exeunt ETH., SEL., and HER.*]

Elb. (to DWI). Heardst thou how they conceive
it ?

Dwi. Ay, merey ! and it is a fearful thought !
It glanc'd e'en o'er my mind before they spoke.

Elb. Thou'rt silent, rev'rend father ; are thy
thoughts
Of such dark hue ? (*With solemn earnestness to HEX.*)

Hex. Heaven's will be done in all things ! erring
man

Bows silently. Good health attend your greatness.

Elb. Nay, go not yet, good Hexulf : in my closet
I much desire some converse with thee. Thou,
Belike, hast misconceiv'd what I have utter'd
In unadvised passion, thinking surely
It bore some meaning 'gainst my lord the king.

Hex. No, gracious daughter, I indeed receiv'd it
As words of passion. You are mov'd, I see :
But let not this dismay you : if the king
Has done the deed suspicion fastens on him,
We o'er his mind shall hold the surer sway.
A restless penitent will docile prove
To priestly counsel : this will be our gain.
But in your closet we'll discourse of this.
Heaven's will be done in all things ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

*The King's chamber. Enter ETHWALD with a
thoughtful miserable look, and stands silently, mutter-
ing to himself, when ALWY enters in haste, followed
by an Officer.*

Alwy. Pardon, my lord ; we bring you pressing
tidings.

Ethw. (angrily). Shall I ne'er rest in peace in
mine own chamber ?

Ha ! that peace were there !—You bring
me tidings ;

And from what quarter come they ?

Alwy. From Utherbald, who holds your wes-
tern fortress.

Ethw. He doth not yield, I hope, unto the foe.
It is my strongest hold, and may defy
The strength of Wessex and of Britain join'd.

Off. True, king, but famine all things will subdue.

Ethw. He has surrender'd, then : by heaven and
hell
I'll have his head for this !

Alwy. No, royal Ethwald,
It is not yet so bad ; but this brave man,
Commission'd by himself, will tell you all.

Ethw. Speak, warrior : then he holds the fortress
still ?

Off. He does, my lord, but much he lives in
fear,

He shall not hold it long, unless your highness
Will give your warrant to release the prisoners ;
Those ill designing Mercians whom your wisdom
Under his guard has placed.

He bade me say the step is dangerous ;
But, if it is not done, those idle mouths,
Consuming much, will starve him and his men
Into compliance with the foe's demand.

What is your sov'reign will ? for on the instant
I must return.

Ethw. Tell him this is no time for foolish hazard.
Let them be put to death.

Off. (*shrinking back*.) Must I return with this ?
All put to death ?

Ethw. Yes, I have said : didst thou not hear my
words ?

Off. I heard, in truth, but mine ears strangely
rung.

Good saints there are, my lord, within our walls,
Close pris'ners kept, of war-bred men alone,
Of whom, I trow, there scarcely is a man
Who has not some fair stripling by his side
Sharing the father's bonds, threescore and ten ;
And must they all —

Ethw. I understand thee, fool.
Let them all die ! have I not said it ? Go :
Linger not here, but bear thy message quickly.

[*Exit officer sorrowfully.*]
(*Angrily to ALWY.*) What ! thou lookest on me too,
as if, forsooth,

Thou wert amaz'd at this. Perceiv'st thou not
How hardly I'm beset to keep the power
I have so dearly bought ? Shall this impede me ?
Let infants shrink ! I have seen blood enough ;
And what have I to do with mercy now ?

[*Stalking gloomily away, then returning.*]
Selred and Eithelbert, and fiery Hereulf,
Are to their castles sullenly retired,
With many other warlike Thanes. The storm
Is gathering round me, but we'll brave it nobly.

Alwy. The discontented chiefs, as I'm inform'd
By faithful spies, are in the halls of Hereulf
Assembled, brooding o'er their secret treason.

Ethw. Are they ? Then let us send a chosen band,
And seize them unprepared. A nightly march

Will bring them near his castle. Let us then
Immediate orders give ; the time is precious.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*An apartment in the royal castle or chief residence of
ETHWALD. DWINA and several of the ladies serv-
ing the Queen are discovered at work ; some spin-
ning, some winding coloured yarns for the loom, and
some embroidering after a rude fashion.*

Dwi. (*looking over the 1st lady's work*.) How
speeds thy work ? The queen is now im-
patient ;

Thou must be diligent.

1st lady. Nine weary months have I, thou knowest
well,

O'er this spread garment bent, and yet thou seest
The half is scarcely done. I lack assistance.

Dwi. And so thou dost, but yet in the wide realm
None can be found but such as lack the skill
For such assistance. All those mingled colours,
And mazy circles, and strange carved spots,
Look, in good sooth, as though the stuff were
strew'd

With rich and curious things ; though much I fear
To tell you what would prove no easy task.

2d lady. There lives a dame in Kent, I have been
told,

Come from some foreign land, if that indeed
She be no cunning fiend in woman's garb,
Who, with her needle, can most cunningly
The true and perfect semblance of real flowers,
With stalk and leaves, as fairly fashion out
As if upon a summer bank they grew.

1st lady. Ay, ay ! no doubt ! thou hearest strange
tales, I ween.

Didst thou not tell us how, in foreign lands
Full far from this, the nice and lazy dames
Do set foul worms to spin their silken yarn ?
Ha, ha !

[*They all laugh.*]

2d lady (*angrily*.) I did not say so.

1st lady. Nay, nay, but thou didst ! (*Laughing.*)

2d lady. Thou didst mistake me wilfully, in spite,
Malicious as thou art !

Dwi. I pray you wrangle not ! when ladies work,
They should tell pleasant tales or sweetly sing,
Not quarrel ruddily, thus, like villains' wives.

Sing me, I pray you now, the song I love.
You know it well : let all your voices join.

Ommes. We will, good Dwina.

SONG.

Wake awhile and pleasant be,
Gentle voice of melody !

Say, sweet carol, who are they
 Who cheerly greet the rising day ?
 Little birds in leafy bower ;
 Swallows twitt'ring on the tower ;
 Larks upon the light air borne ;
 Hunters rous'd with shrilly horn ;
 The woodman whistling on his way ;
 The new-waked child at early play,
 Who barefoot prints the dewy green,
 Winking to the sunny shen ;
 And the meek maid who binds her yellow hair,
 And blithely doth her daily task prepare.

Say, sweet carol, who are they
 Who welcome in the evening grey ?
 The housewife trim and merry lout,
 Who sit the blazing fire about ;
 The sage a conning o'er his book ;
 The tired wight, in rusly nook,
 Who half asleep, but faintly hears
 The gossip's tale hum in his ears ;
 The loosen'd steed in grassy stall ;
 The proud Thanes feasting in the hall ;
 But most of all the maid of cheerful soul,
 Who fills her peaceful warrior's flowing bowl.

Well hast thou said ! and thanks to thee,
 Voice of gentle melody !

Dwi. (to 3d lady, who sits sad and pensive). What
 is the matter, Ella ? thy sweet voice
 Was wont to join the song.

Ella. Ah, woe is me ! within these castle walls,
 Under this very tower in which we are,
 There be those, Dwina, who no sounds do hear
 But the chill winds that o'er their dungeons howl ;
 Or the still tinkling of the water-drops
 Falling from their dank roofs, in dull succession,
 Like the death watch at sick men's beds. Alas !
 While you sing cheerly thus, I think of them.

Dwi. Ay, many a different lot of joy and grief
 Within a little compass may be found.
 Under one roof the woeful and the gay
 Do oft abide ; on the same pillow rest.
 And yet, if I may rightly judge, the king
 Has but small joy above his wretched thralls.
 Last night I listened to his restless steps,
 As oft he paced his chamber to and fro,
 Right o'er my head, and I did hear him utter
 Such heavy groans !

1st lady (with all the others gathering about DWINA
 curiously). Didst thou ? And utter'd he no
 other sound ?

I've heard it whisper'd, at the dead of night
 He sees strange things.

All (speaking together). O tell us, Dwina ! tell
 us !

Dwi. Out on you all ! you hear such foolish tales !
 He is himself the ghost that walks the night,
 And cannot rest.

Ella. Bclike he is devising in his mind
 How he shall punish those poor prisoners,
 Who were in Hereulf's tower surpris'd so latcly,
 And now are in these hollow vaults confin'd.

1st lady. No marvel that it should disturb him
 much,

When his own brother is among the guilty.
 There will be bloody doings soon, I trow !

Dwi. Into the hands of good and pious Hexulf
 The rebels will be put, so to be punish'd
 As he in holy zeal shall see it meet.

Ella. Then they will dearly suffer.

Dwi. That holy man no tortures will devise.

Ella. Yes, so perchance, no tortures of the
 flesh ;

But there be those that do upon the soul
 The rack and pincer's work.

Is he not grandson to that vengeful chief,
 Who, with the death-axe lifted o'er his head,
 Kept his imprison'd foe a live-long night,
 Nor, till the second cock had crow'd the morn,
 Dealt him the clemency of death ? Full well
 He is his child I know !

Dwi. What ailerh thee ? art thou bewitched also ?
 Lamentest thou that cursed heretics

Are put in good men's power ? The sharpest
 punishment

O'er-reaches not their crime.

Ella. O Dwina, Dwina ! thou hast watch'd by
 me

When on a sick-bed laid, and held my head,
 And kindly wept to see my wasted check,
 And lov'dst thou cruelly ? It cannot be !

Dwi. No, foolish maiden ! mercy to such fiends
 Were cruelty.

Ella. Such fiends ! Alas ! do not they look like
 men ?

Do they not to their needful brethren do
 The kindly deeds of men ? Yea, Ethelbert
 Within his halls a houseless Thane maintain'd,
 Whose substance had been spent in base attempts
 To work his ruin.

Dwi. The blackest fiends of all most saintly
 forms

Oft wear. Go, go ! thou strangely art deluded,
 I tremble for thee ! get thee hence and pray,
 If that the wicked pity of thy heart
 May be forgiven thee.

Enter a Lady eagerly.

Lady. Come, damsels, come ! along the gallery,
 In slow procession holy Hexulf walks,
 With saintly Woggarwolfe, a fierce chief once,
 But now a cowl'd priest of marv'lous grace.
 They bear some holy relics to the blessing ;
 Which, near the royal couch with queens laid,
 Will to the king his wonted rest restore.

Come, meet them on their way and gain a blessing.
Dwi. We will all gladly go. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A royal apartment, lighted only by the moon through the high arched windows. Enter ETHWALD, as if just risen from bed, loose and disordered, but bearing a drawn sword in his hand.

Ethw. Still must this heavy closeness thus oppress me ?

Will no fresh stream of air breathe on my brow,
And ruffle for a while this stilly gloom ?
O night, when good men rest, and infants sleep ;
Thou art to me no season of repose,
But a fear'd time of waking more intense,
Of life more keen, of misery more palpable !
My rest must be when the broad sun doth glare ;
When armour rings and men walk to and fro ;
Like a tir'd hound stretch'd in the busy hall,
I needs must lie ; night will not cradle me.

[Looking up anxiously to the windows.]

What, looks the moon still through that lofty arch ?
Will't ne'er be morn ? — If that again in strength
I led mine army on the bold career
So surely shapen in my fancy's eye,
I might again have joy ; but in these towers,
Around, beneath me, hateful dungeons yaw'n,
In every one of which some being lives
To curse me. Ethelbert and Selred too,
My father's son and my youth's oracle,
Ye too are found with those, who raise to heav'n
The prisoner's prayer against my hated head.
I am a lofty tree of growth too great
For its thin soil, from whose wide rooted fangs
The very rocks and earth that foster'd it
Sever and fall away. — I stand alone !
I stand alone ! I thought, alas ! to spread
My wide protecting boughs o'er my youth's friends ;
But they, like pois'nous brushwood at my root,
Have chok'd my youth's stately growth e'en more than all.

[Musing for some time gloomily.]

How marr'd and stinted hath my greatness been !
What am I now of that which long ere now
I hop'd to be ? O ! it doth make me mad
To think of this ! By hell it shall not be !
I would cut off this arm and cast it from me
For vultures' meat, if it did let or hinder
Its nobler fellow.

Yes, they shall die ! I to my fortune's height
Will rear my lofty head, and stand alone,
Fearless of storm or tempest.

[Turns round his head upon hearing a noise, and seeing ELBURGA enter at the bottom of the stage, with a lamp in her hand, like one risen from bed, he starts back and gazes wildly upon her.]

What form is that ? What art thou ? Speak ! speak quickly !

If thou indeed be aught of living kind.

Elb. Why didst thou start ? Dost thou not know me ?

Ethw. No ;

Thy shadow seem'd to me a crested youth.

Elb. And with that trusty weapon in thy grasp,
Which thou, of late, e'en on thy nightly couch
Hast sheathless kept, fearest thou living man ?

Ethw. It was not living man I fear'd.

Elb.

What then ?

Last night when open burst your chamber door
With the rude blast, which it is wont to do,
You gaz'd upon it with such fearful looks
Of fix'd expectancy, as one, in truth,
Looks for the entering of some dreadful thing.
Have you seen aught ?

Ethw. Get to thy couch. Thinkst thou I will be question'd ?

Elb. *(putting her hand upon his shoulder soothingly.)* Nay, be not thus uncourtly ! thou shalt tell me.

Ethw. *(shaking her off impatiently.)* Be not a fool ! get thee to sleep, I say !

What dost thou here ? [birth,

Elb. That which, in truth, degrades my royal,
And therefore should be chid ; servilely soothing
The fretful moods of one, who, new to greatness,
Feels its unwieldy robe sit on his shoulders
Constrain'd and gallingy.

Ethw. *(going up to her sternly and grasping her by the wrist.)* Thou paltry trapping of my regal state,

Which with its other baubles I have snatch'd,
Dar'st thou to front me thus ? Thy foolish pride,
Like the mock loftiness of mimic greatness,
Makes us contemned in the public eye,
And my tight rule more hateful. Get thee hence ;
And be with hooded nuns a gorgeous saint,
For know thou lackest meekness for a queen.

[ELB. seems much alarmed, but at the same time walks from him with great assumed haughtiness, and exit.]

Ethw. *(alone.)* This woman racks me to the very pitch !

Where I should look for gentle tenderness,
There find I heartless pride. Ah ! there was one
Who would have sooth'd my troubles : there was one
Who would have cheer'd — But wherefore think

I now ? *(Pausing thoughtfully.)*

Elburga has of late been to my will
More pliant, oft assuming gentle looks :
What may this mean ? under this alter'd guise
What treach'ry lurks ? *(Pausing again for some time.)*

And yet it should not be :

Her greatness must upon my fortune hang,
And this she knows full well. I've chid her roughly.

Some have, from habit and united interest,

Amidst the wreck of other human ties,

The steadfast duty of a wife retain'd,
E'en where no early love or soft endearments

The bands have knit. Yes; I have been too rough.
 [Calling to her off the stage.]
 Elburga! dost thou hear me, gentle wife?
 And thou com'st at my bidding: this is kindly.

Enter ELBURGA, humbled.

Elb. You have been stern, my lord. You think belike,

That I have urged you in my zeal too far
 To give those rebel chieftains up to Hexulf,
 As best agreeing with the former ties
 That bound you to those base ungrateful men,
 And with the nature of their chiefest crime,
 Foul heresy; but, if in this I err,
 Zeal for your safety urged me to offend.

Ethw. I've been too stern with thee, but heed it not.

And in that matter thou hast urged so strongly,
 But that I much mistrust his cruelty,
 I would resign those miserable men
 To Hexulf's vengeful arm; for much he does
 Public opinion guide, and e'en to us,
 If now provok'd, might prove a dang'rous foe.

Elb. Mistrust him not; he will by oath engage
 To use no torture. [saved.]

Ethw. And yet methinks, Selred might still be
 A holy man might well devise the means
 To save a brother.

Elb. He will think of it.

Much do the soldiers the bold courage prize,
 And simple plainness of his honest mind;
 To slay him might be dangerous. [of late?]

Ethw. Ha! is it so? They've praised him much

Elb. Yes, he has grown into their favour greatly.

Ethw. The changeful fools! I do remember well

They shouted loudly o'er his paltry gift,
 Because so simply giv'n, when my rich spoils
 Seem'd little priz'd. I like not this. 'Twere well
 He were remov'd. We will consider this.

Elb. Come to your chamber then.

Ethw. No, no! into that dark oppressive den
 Of horrid thoughts I'll not return.

Elb. Not so!

I've trimm'd the smould'ring fire, and by your
 couch

The holy things are laid: return and fear not.

Ethw. I thank thy kindness; I, indeed, have
 need

Of holy things, if that a stained soul
 May kindred hold with such. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

*A vaulted prison. HEREULE, SELRED, and three
 Thanes of their party, are discovered walking
 gloomily and silently up and down.*

1st Th. (to the *2d*, who groans heavily). Ah!
 wherefore, noble partner, art thou thus?

We all are brothers, equal in misfortune;
 Let us endure it nobly!

2d Th. Ay, so I would, but it o'ercometh me.
 E'en this same night, in my far distant home
 Fires blaze upon my towers, to guide my steps
 Through woody dells which I shall pass no more.
 E'en on this night I promis'd to return.

1st Th. Yet bear it up, and do not dash us
 thus;

We all have pleasant homes as well as thou,
 To which I fear we shall no more return.

Sel. (to *3d Thane*, who advances from the bottom
 of the stage). What didst thou look at yon-
 der? Where is Ethelbert?

3d Th. Within yon deep recess, upon his knees,
 Just now I saw him, and I turn'd aside,
 Knowing the modest nature of his worship.

*Enter ETHELBERT from the recess, slowly advancing
 from the bottom of the stage.*

But see, he comes, and on his noble front
 A smiling calmness rests, like one whose mind
 Hath high communion held with blessed souls.

Her. (to *ETH.*) Where hast thou been, brave
 Ethelbert? Ah! now

Full well I see; thy countenance declares.
 Didst thou remember us? A good man's prayers
 Will from the deepest dungeon climb heav'n's
 height,

And bring a blessing down.

Eth. Ye all are men who with undaunted
 hearts

Most nobly have contended for the right.
 Your recompense is sure; ye shall be bless'd.

2d Th. How bless'd? With what assurance of
 the mind

Hast thou pray'd for us? Tell us truly, Ethelbert;
 As those about to die, or those who yet
 Shall for a term this earthly state retain?
 Such strong impress'd ideas oft foreshow
 Th' event to follow.

Eth. Man, ever eager to foresee his doom
 With such conceits his fancy fondly flatters,
 And I too much have given my mind to this;
 But let us now, like soldiers on the watch,
 Put our soul's armour on, alike prepared
 For all a soldier's warfare brings. In heav'n
 He sits, who on the inward war of souls
 Looks down, as one beholds a well-fought field,
 And nobly will reward the brave man's struggle.

[Raising his clasped hands fervently.]
 O let Him now behold what His weak creature,
 With many cares and fears of nature weak,
 Firmly relying on His righteous rule,
 Will suffer cheerfully! Be ye prepared!

Her. We are prepared: what say ye, noble col-
 leagues?

1st Th. If that I here a bloody death must
 meet,

And in some nook unblest'd, far from the tombs
Of all mine honour'd race, these bones be laid,
I do submit me to the will of heaven.

3d *Th.* E'en so do I in deep submission bow.

2d *Th.* If that no more within my op'ning
gates

My children and my wife shall e'er again
Greet my return, or this child'd frame again
E'er feel the kindly warmth of home, so be it!
His blessed will be done who ruleth all!

Her. If these nerv'd arms, full in the strength of
youth,

Must rot in the earth, and all my glorious hopes
To free this land, with which high beat this heart,
Must be cut off i' the midst, I bow my spirit
To its Almighty Lord; I murmur not.
Yet, O that it had been permitted me
To have contended in that noble cause!
Low must I sleep in an unnoted grave,
While the oppressor of my native country
Riots in brave men's blood!

Eth. Peace, noble boy! he will not riot long.
They shall arise, for which that noble cause,
With better fortune, not with firmer hearts
Than we to the work have yoked, will bravely
strive.

To future heroes shall our names be known;
And in our graves of turf we shall be bless'd.

Her. Well then, I'm satisfied: I'll smile in
death;

Yea, proudly will I smile! it wounds me not.

Eth. How, Selred? thou alone art silent here:
To heaven's high will what off'ring makest thou?

Sel. Nothing, good Ethelbert. What can a man,
Little enriched with the mind's rare treasure,
And of th' unrighteous turmoil of this world
Right weary grown, to his great Maker offer?
Yet I can die as meekly as ye will,
Albeit of His regard it is unworthy.

Eth. Give me thy hand, brave man! Well hast
thou said!

In truth thy off'ring far outprizes all;
Rich in humility. Come, valiant friends;
It makes my breast beat high to see you thus
For Fortune's worst prepar'd with quiet minds.
I'll sit me down awhile; come, gather round me,
And for a little space the time beguile
With the free use and interchange of thought:
Of that which no stern tyrant can control.

[*They all sit down on the ground.*]

Her. (to *ETH.*) Nay, on my folded mantle do
thou sit.

Eth. I thank thee, but I feel no cold. My
children!

We do but want, methinks, a blazing fire,
To make us thus a friendly chosen circle
For converse met. Then we belike would talk
Of sprites, and magie power, and marv'llous
things,

That shorten weary hours; now let us talk
Of things that do th' inquiring mind of man
With nobler wonder fill; that state unseen,
With all its varied mansions of delight,
To which the virtuous go, when like a dream
Struck by the beams of op'ning day, this life,
With all its shadowy forms, fades into nothing.

1st *Th.* Ay, Ethelbert, thou'rt full of sacred
lore;

Talk thou of this, and we will gladly hear thee.
How thinkst thou we shall feel, when, like a nest-
ling

Burst from its shell, we wake to this new day?

Eth. Why e'en, methinks, like to the very thing
To which, good Thane, thou hast compared us;
For here we are but nestlings, and I trow,
Pent up i' the dark we are. When that shall open
Which human eye hath ne'er beheld, nor mind
To human body link'd, hath e'er conceiv'd,
Grand, awful, lovely:—O! what form of words
Will body out my thoughts!—I'll hold my peace.

[*Covers his head with his hand and is silent for
a moment.*]

Then like a guised band, that for awhile
Has mimick'd forth a sad and gloomy tale,
We shall these worthless weeds of flesh cast off,
And be the children of our Father's house.

Her. (eagerly). But what sayst thou of those who
doff these weeds

To clothe themselves in flames and endless woe?

Eth. Peace to thee! what have we to do with
this?

Let it be veil'd in night!

Her. Nay, nay, good Ethelbert!
I fain would know what foul oppression earns;
And please my fancy with the after-doom
Of tyrants, such as he beneath whose fangs
Our wretched country bleeds. They shall be
cursed:

O say how deeply!

Eth. Hereulf, the spirit of Him thou call'st thy
master,

Who died for guilty men, breathes not in thee.
Dost thou rejoice that aught of human kind
Shall be accursed?

Her. (starting up). If not within the fiery gulf of
woe

His doom be cast, there is no power above!

Eth. For shame, young man! this ill beseems
thy state:

Sit down and I will tell thee of this Ethwald.

Sel. (rising up greatly agitated). O no! I pray
thee do not talk of him!

The blood of Mollo has been Mercia's curse.

Eth. Sit down; I crave it of you both; sit
down

And wear within your breasts a manlier spirit.

[*Pointing to HER. to sit close by him.*]
Nay here, my son, and let me take thy hand.

Thus by my side, in his fair op'ning youth,
Full oft has Ethwald sat and heard me talk,
With, as I well believe, a heart inclined, [hue,
Though somewhat dash'd with shades of darker
To truth and kindly deeds.
But from this mixed seed of good and ill
One baleful plant in dark strength rais'd its head,
O'ertopping all the rest; which fav'ring circum-
stance

Did feed and strengthen to a growth so monstrous,
That underneath its wide and noxious shade
Died all the native plants of feebler stem.
O I have wept for him, as I have lain
On my still midnight couch! I tried to save him,
But ev'ry means against its end recoil'd.
Good Selred, thou rememb'rest well that night
When to the female Druid's awful cave
I led thy brother.

Sel. I remember well.

(*All the Thanes speaking at once, eagerly.*) *Ay,*
what of that? We've heard strange tales
of it.

Eth. At my request the Arch Sister there receiv'd
him:

And though she promis'd me she would unfold
Such things as might a bold ambitious mind
Scare from its wishes, she, unweeingly,
Did but the more inflame them.

Her. Ha! what sayst thou?
Did she not show the form of things to come
By fix'd decrees, unsubject to her will?

Eth. She show'd him things, indeed, most won-
derful;

Whether by human arts to us unknown,
Or magic, or the aid of powerful spirits
Call'd forth, I wot not. Hark! I hear a noise.

1st Th. I hear without the tread of many feet.
They pull our dungeon's bars: ha, see who come!
Wear they not ruffians brows?

2d Th. And follow'd still by more: a num'rous
crew.

What is their business here?

[*Enter a band of armed men, accompanied by
two priests, and carrying with them a block,
an axe, and a large sheet or curtain, &c.*

Eth. Do not the axe and block borne by those
slaves

Tell thee their errand? But we'll face them bravely.
They do not come upon us unawares:
We are prepar'd.—Let us take hands, my friends!
Let us united stand, a worthy band
Of girded travellers, ready to depart
Unto a land unknown, but yet undreaded.

[*They all take hands, facing about, and waiting
the approach of the men with a steady coun-
tenance.*

1st priest. Why look you on us thus with lowering
brows?

Can linked hands the keen-edg'd steel resist?

Her. No, priest, but linked hearts can bid de-
fiance

To the barb'd lightning, if so arm'd withal
Thou didst encounter us. Quick do thine office!
Here six brave heads abide thee, who ne'er yet
Have meanly bow'd themselves to living wight.

1st priest. You are too forward, youth: less will
suffice:

One of those guilty heads beneath our axe
Must fall, the rest shall live. So wills our chief.
Lots shall decide our victim: in this urn
Inclosed are your fates.

[*Setting down an urn in the middle of the stage
upon a small tripod or stand, whilst the chiefs
instantly let go hands, and stand gazing upon
one another.*

Ha! have I then so suddenly unlink'd you?

[*With a malicious smile.*

Put forth your hands, brave chiefs; put forth your
hands;

And he who draws the sable lot of death,
Full speedy be his doom!

[*A long pause: the chiefs still look upon one
another, none of them offering to step forward
to the urn.*

What pause ye thus, indeed? This hateful urn
Doth but one death contain, and many lives,
And shrink ye from it, brave and valiant Thanes?
Then lots shall first be cast, who foremost shall
Thrust in his hand into this vase of terrors.

Eth. (*stepping forth*). No, thou rude servant of a
gentle master,

Doing disgrace to thy much honour'd garb,
This shall not be: I am the eldest chief,
And I of right should stand the foremost here.

[*Putting his hand into the urn*

What heaven appoints me, welcome!

Sel. (*putting in his hand*). I am the next: heav'n
send me what it lists!

1st Th. (*putting in his hand*). Here also let me
take. If that the race

Of noble Cormac shall be sunk in night,
How small a thing determines!

2d Th. (*putting in his hand*). On which shall fix
my grasp? (*hesitating*) or this? or this?

No, cursed thing! whate'er thou art, I'll have thee.
3d Th. (*putting out his hand with perturbation,
misses the narrow mouth of the urn*). I wis
not how it is: where is its mouth?

1st priest. Direct thy hand more steadily, good
Thane,

And fear not thou wilt miss it.

(*To HERULF*). Now, youthful chief, one lot re-
mains for thee.

[*HERULF pauses for a moment, and his counte-
nance betrays perturbation, when ETHELBERT
steps forth again.*

Eth. No, this young chieftain's lot belongs to
me;

He shall not draw.

[*Putting in his hand quickly and taking out the last lot.*]

Now, priest, the lots are finish'd.

1st priest. Well, open then your fates.

[*They each open their lots, whilst HERULF stands looking eagerly in their faces as they open them.*]

2d Th. (*opening his, and then holding up his hands in ecstasy*). Wife, children, home! I am a living man!

1st Th. (*having opened his*). I number still with those who breathe the air,

And look upon the light! blest heaven so wills it.

3d Th. (*looking at his joyfully*). Fate is with me! the race of Cormac lives!

Her. (*after looking anxiously first upon ETHELBERT and then upon SELRED*). Selred, what is thy lot? is it not dark?

Sel. No, Hereulf.

Her. Oh, Ethelbert! thou smilest on me! alas!

It is a dismal smile! thou art the victim!

Thou shalt not die: the lot of right is mine.

A shade of human weakness cross'd my soul,

Such as before, not in the horrid fields

Of crimson slaughter did I ever feel;

But it is past; now I can bravely die,

And I will have my right.

Eth. (*pushing him affectionately away*). Away, my son! It is as it should be.

Her. O if thou wilt treat me as a man,

Nor slur me with contempt! I do beseech thee

Upon my bended knee! (*Kneeling*). O if thou diest,

I of all living things most wretched am!

Eth. Be temperate, my son! thou art reserv'd

For what the fervid strength of active youth

Can best perform. O take him from me, friends!

[*The Thanes take HERULF forcibly from clinging round ETHELBERT, and he then assumes a softened solemnity.*]

Now, my brave friends, we have together fought

A noble warfare; I am call'd away!

Let me in kind and true affection leave you.

Thanes (*speaking together*). Alas, thou art our father and our friend!

Alas, that thou shouldst meet this dismal end!

Eth. Ay, true indeed, it is a dismal end

To mortal feeling; yet within my breast

Blest hope and love, and heav'nward confidence,

With human frailty so combined are,

That I do feel a wild and trembling pleasure.

E'en on this awful verge, methinks I go,

Like a chid infant, from his passing term

Of short disgrace, back to his father's presence.

[*Holding up his hands with a dignified exultation.*]

I feel an awful joy!—Farewell, my friends!

Selred, we've fought in many a field together,

And still as brothers been; take thou, I pray,

This token of my love. And thou, good Wolfere, I've ever priz'd thy worth, wear thou this ring.

(*To the two other chiefs, giving them also tokens.*) And you, brave chiefs, I've ever loved you both.

And now, my noble Hereulf,

Of all the youth to whom my soul e'er knit,

As with a parent's love, in the good cause,

Thee have I found most fervent and most firm;

Be thine my sword, which in my native hall

Hung o'er my noble father's arms thou'lt find,

And be it in thy hands what well thou knowst

It would have been in mine. Farewell, my friends!

God bless you all!

[*They all crowd about him, some kissing his hands, some taking hold of his clothes, except HERULF, who, starting away from him, throws himself upon the ground in an agony of grief. ETHELBERT lifts up his eyes and his hands as if he were uttering a blessing over them.*]

1st priest. This may not be! down with those impious hands!

Dar'st thou, foul heretic, before the face

Of hallow'd men, thus mutter prayers accurst?

Eth. Doth this offend you?—O it makes me feel

A spirit for this awful hour unmeet,

When I do think on you, ye hypocrites!

1st priest. Come, come! we waste our time, the headman waits.

(*To ETH.*) Prepare thee for the block.

Eth. And will you in the sight of these my friends

Your bloody task perform? Let them retire.

1st priest. Nay, nay, that may not be, our pious Hexulf

Has given his orders.

2d priest. O be not so cruel!

Though he has ordered so, yet, ne'ertheless,

We may suspend this veil, and from their eyes

The horrid sight conceal.

1st priest. Then be it so; I grant it.

[*A large cloth or curtain is suspended upon the points of two spears, held up by spearmen, concealing the block and executioner, &c. from the Thanes.*]

1st priest (*to the men behind the curtain, after a pause*). Are ye ready?

(*Voices behind.*) Yes, we are ready now.

1st priest (*To ETH.*). And thou?

Eth. God be my strength! I'm ready also.

[*As the priest is leading ETHELBERT behind the curtain, he turns about to give a last look to his friends; and they, laying their hands devoutly upon their breasts, bow to him very low. They then go behind the curtain, leaving the Thanes on the front of the stage, who stand fixed in silent and horrid expectation; except SELRED, who sits down upon the ground with his face hid between his knees, and HERULF, who, rising suddenly from the ground, looks wildly round, and seeing ETHELBERT gone,*]

throws himself down again in all the distraction of grief and despair.

(*A voice behind, after some noise and bustle of preparation has been heard*). Now doff his garment, and undo his vest.

Fie on it, there! assist the prisoner.

2d voice. Let some one hold his hands.

3d voice. Do ye that office.

[*A pause of some length.*

Voice again. Headsman, let fall thy blow, he gives the sign.

[*The axe is seen lifted up above the curtain, and the sound of the stroke is heard.*

Thanes (shrinking involuntarily, and all speaking at once). The stroke of death is given!

[*The spearmen let fall the curtain, and the body of ETHELBERT is discovered upon the ground, with a cloth over it; whilst his head is held up by the executioner, but seen very indistinctly through the spears and pikes of the surrounding soldiers. The Thanes start back and avert their faces.*

1st priest (coming forward). Rebellious Thanes, ye see a deed of justice.

Here rest ye, and another day of life

Enjoy together: at this hour to-morrow

We'll visit you, and then, by lot determin'd,

Another head must fall. So wills the king.

1st Th. What words are these?

2d Th. Do thine ears catch their sense?

3d Th. I cannot tell thee; mine confus'dly sound.

1st priest (raising his voice louder). To-morrow at this hour we'll visit you,

And here again, selected by the lot,

Another head must fall. Till then, farewell!

Another day of life enjoy securely:

Much happiness be with you.

[*An involuntary groan bursts from the Thanes, and HERULF, starting furiously from the ground, clenches his hands in a menacing posture as the priests and spearmen, &c. retire. The scene closes.**

ACT V

SCENE I.

An open space on the walls of the castle. Enter ALWY and HEXULF, talking as they enter with violent gesture.

Hex. Escap'd, sayst thou, with all the rebel chiefs?

Hereulf escap'd? th' arch fiend himself hath done it, If what thou sayst be true. — It is impossible. Sayst thou they are escap'd?

Alwy.

In very truth they are.

Hex. Then damned treachery has aided them!

Alwy. Nay, rather say, thy artful cruelty Arm'd them with that which to the weakly frame Lends a nerved giant's strength, despair. From out The thick and massy wall, now somewhat loose And jagged grown with time, cemented heaps, Which scarce two teams of oxen could have mov'd, They've torn, and found a passage to the moat. What did it signify in what dire form Death frown'd upon them, so as they had died?

Hex. Who can foresee events? As well as thou I would that one swift stroke had slain them all Rather than this had been. But Ethelbert And Selred are secur'd. Was it not Selred Who on the second night our victim fell?

Alwy. It was, but better had it been for us Had they been left alive: had they been still In their own castles unmolested left.

For like a wounded serpent, who, aloft, The surgy volumes of his mangled length In agony the more terrific rears

Against his enemy, this maimed compact Will from thy stroke but the more fiercely rise, Now fiery Hereulf is their daring leader.

And what have we to look for?

[*traitor*

Hex. Dire, bloody vengeance. — O some damned Hath done this work! it could not else have been!

Alwy. Well, do thou find him out then, if thou canst,

And let thy vengeance fall where lies the sin.

Hex. Doth the king know of this?

Alwy.

He doth not yet.

Hex. Then must he be inform'd without delay.

Alwy. As quickly as you please, if that you please

To take that office on yourself, good father;

But as for me, I must right plainly say

I will not venture it: no, faith! of late The frame and temper of King Ethwald's mind

Is chang'd. He ever was in former times

Cheerful, collected, sanguine; for all turns

Of fate prepar'd, like a fair ample lake,

Whose breast receives the azure hue of heaven,

And sparkles gaily in the breezy noon:

But now, like a swoln flood, whose course has been

O'er rude opposing rocks and rugged shelves;

Whose turbid waters wear the sullen shade

Of dark o'erhanging banks, and all enchas'd

Round ev'ry little pebble fiercely roars,

thrown into deep shade, and the light only to come give the background at the bottom of the stage: this would give to the whole a greater solemnity; and by this means no expression of countenance, but only that of gesture, would be required of them.

* Should this play ever have the honour of being represented upon any stage, a scene of this kind, in which so many inferior actors would be put into situations requiring the expression of strong passion, might be a disadvantage to it; I should, therefore, recommend having the front of the stage on which the Thanes are, during the last part of the scene,

Boiling in foamy circles, his chaf'd spirit
Can bear th' encounter of no adverse thing
To his stern will oppos'd. I may not tell him.

Hex. Be not so fearful! art thou not a man
Us'd to the sudden turns of great men's humours?
Thou best can do it, Alwy. (*Soothingly.*)

Alwy. Nay, father, better will it suit your age
And rev'rend state. And he has need, I ween,
Of ghostly counsel too; night after night
He rises from his tossing sleepless couch,
Oft wildly staring round the vacant chamber,
As if his fancy peopled the dark void
With horrid shapes. The queen hath told me this.
Come, look to it, for something must be done.

Hex. I will accompany your homeward steps,
Whilst we consider of it. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*A royal apartment, and a servant discovered busily
employed in lighting it up. Enter to him another
servant.*

2d serv. Wilt thou ne'er finish lighting these
grim walls?

Will not those lamps suffice?

1st serv. No, by my faith, we want as many
more;

For still, thou seest, that pillar'd corner's dark,
[*Pointing to a gloomy recess on the other side of
the stage.*]

Wherein the eye of conscience-scared folks
Might fearful things espie. I am commanded
To lighten each apartment of this tower
To noon-day pitch.

2d serv. Ay, Uthbert, these are fearful, bloody
times!

Ethwald, God knows, has on his conscience laid
A weight of cruel deeds: the executioner
Works for him now in the grim holds of death,
Instead of armed warriors in the field;
And now men steal abroad in twilight's gloom,
To talk of fearful things, not by the blaze
Of cheerful fires, in peaceful cottage, heap'd
With sparkling faggots from the winter store.

1st serv. Ay, thou sayst well; it is a fearful
time;

No marvel Ethwald should not love the dark
In which his fancy shapes all fearful things.

2d serv. What, dost thou think it is his fancy's
shapes

He looks upon? No, no: believe me, friend,
Night and the darkness are inhabited
By those who move near neighbours to the living;
Close by their very sides, yet unperceiv'd
By all, but those whose eyes unveiled are
By heavenly power, in mercy or in wrath.
Such proofs of this I've heard.—Last night thou
knowst

The royal grooms who near their master sleep,
In the adjoining chamber much were scar'd
With fearful sounds.

1st serv. I know it not.—Who was it told it
thee?

At midnight was it? (*Eagerly.*)

2d serv. Yes, come with me to Baldwick, he
will tell thee;

He heard it all: thou wilt return in time
To finish, here, thy task. We'll have a horn
Of foaming ale, and thou shalt hear it all.
Good foaming ale: ay, mercy on us all!
We live in fearful times! (*Listening.*)

1st serv. (*listening also.*) What shall I do?
I hear the king a speaking angrily,
And coming hitherward. What shall I do?
Shall I remain and face him? nay, good faith!
I'll shun the storm; he is engag'd, perchance,
Too much to notice my unfinish'd task.

[*Exeunt hastily.*]

Enter ETHWALD, talking angrily to a noble Thane.

Ethw. Nay, nay, these are excuses, noble Edmar,
Not reasons; all our northern troops ere now
Might well have been in readiness. 'Tis plain
Such backward sloth from disaffection springs.
Look to it well:—if with the waning moon,
He and his vassals have not join'd our standard,
I'll hold him as a traitor.

Th. My royal lord, be not so wrathful with him,
Nor let your noble mind to dark suspicion
So quickly yield. This is the season still,
When unbraced warriors on the rushy floor
Stretch them in pleasing sloth; list'ning to tales
Of ancient cronies, or merry harpers' lays,
And batt'ning on the housewife's gusty cheer:
Spring has not yet so temper'd the chill sky
That men will change their warm and shelt'ring
roofs

For its cold canopy.

Ethw. O foul befall their gluttony and sloth!
Fie on't! there is no season to the brave
For war unfit. With this moon's waning light
I will, with those who dare their king to follow,
My northern march begin.

Th. Then, faith, my lord,

I much suspect your army will be small:
And what advantage may you well expect
From all this haste? E'en three weeks later, still
You will surprise the foe, but ill prepar'd
To oppose invasion. Do then, gracious king,
Listen to friendly counsel, and the while,
Within these walls, where ev'ry pleasure courts you,
Like a magnificent and royal king,
Your princely home enjoy.

Ethw. Out on it, man, thou knowst not what
thou sayst!

Home hath he none who once becomes a king!
Behind the pillar'd masses of his halls

The dagger'd traitor lurks; his vaulted roofs
Do nightly echo to the whisper'd vows
Of those who curse him; at his costly board
With grinning smile the damned pois'n'er sits;
Yea, e'en the void recesses of his chamber,
Void though they be unto all eyes but his,
Are peopled — [Stopping short.
Th. (*eagerly*). Good my lord! what do you
mean?

Ethw. In the confusion of tumultuous war,
Midst the terrific shouts of closing foes,
And trampling steeds, and din of bick'ring arms;
Where dying warriors groan unheard, and things
Horrid to nature are as though they were not,
Unwill'd, unheeded:
Where the rough chance of each contentious day
Blots out all irksome mem'ry of the past,
All fear of that to follow: where like herds,
Of savage beasts, on the bleak mountain's side,
Drench'd with the rain, the weary warriors lie,
Whilst nightly tempests howling o'er their heads
Lull them to rest; there is my home, good Thane.

Th. No marvel, then, my lord, if to the field
You turn your eager thoughts! I only fear
Your royal arms will in Northumberland
Find no contention worthy of their force;
For rumour says, the northern prince is gone
With his best troops against the Scottish king.

Ethw. If this be true, it is unto my fortune
Most fair occasion; master of the north
I soon shall be, and on the west again
Pour like a torrent big with gather'd strength.
Who told thee this? it breaks upon me, friend,
Like bright'ning sunbeams thwart a low'ring sky.
Th. A northern villain brought to me the tale,
And told with circumstances of good credit. [here;
Ethw. Run thou and find him out; I'll wait thee
I must have more assurance of this matter.
Quickly, my worthy Edmar! [Exit Thane.

(*Alone.*) If that this rumour bear a true report,
Th' opposing rocks on which my rising tide
So long has beat, before me now give way,
And through the beach my onward waves shall roll
To the wide limits of their destin'd reach.
Full day, although tempestuous it may prove,
Now breaks on me! now come the glorious height,
And the proud front, and the full grasp of power!
Fly, gloomy thoughts, and hideous fantasies,
Back to the sprites that sent you! England's king
Behind him casts the fears of Mercia's lord.
The north subdued, then stretching to the west
My growing strength —

[Stretching out his arms in the vehemence of
action, he turns himself round, directly facing
the gloomy recess on the opposite side of the
stage.

Ha! doth some gloomy void still yawn before me,
In fearful shade?

[Turning his eyes away hastily from it.

No; I saw nothing: shall I thus be moved
With ev'ry murky nook? I'll look again.

[Steals a fearful look to the recess, and then
starting back, turns awry from it with horror.
O they're all there again! and ev'ry phantom
Mark'd with its grisly wounds, e'en as before.
Ho! who waits there? Hugon! I say, ho, Hugon!
Come to me! quickly come!

Enter a Groom of his chamber.

Groom. Save you, my royal lord! What is your
pleasure?
Are you in pain? Your voice did sound, methought,
With strange unnatural strength.

Ethw. Bring me lights here.

Groom. A hundred lamps would scarce suffice, I
ween,
To light this spacious chamber.

Ethw. Then let a thousand do it; must I still
In ev'ry shady corner of my house
See hideous — quickly go, and do my bidding.
Why star'st thou round thee thus? Dost thou see
ught?

Groom. No, nothing. [Looking round fearfully.

Ethw. Thou needst not look; 'tis nothing; fancy
oft
Deceives the eye with strange and flitting things.
Regard it not, but quickly bring more lamps.

Groom. Nay, good my lord, shall I remain with
you,
And call my fellow?

Ethw. (*angrily*). Do as thou art commanded.

[Exit groom.
This man perceives the weakness of my mind.
Am I, indeed, the warlike king of Mercia?

[Re-enter two grooms with lamps, which they
place in the recess. ETHWALD, not venturing
to look on it again till the lights are placed, now
turns round to it, and seems relieved.

Ye have done well.

[After a pause, in which he walks several times
across the stage, stopping short, and seeing the
grooms still there.

Why do ye linger here? I want ye not.

Begone. [Exeunt grooms.

But that I would not to those fools
Betray the shameful secret of my mind,
I fain would call them back.
What are these horrors?
A fearful visitation of a time
That will o'erpass? O might I so believe it!
Edmar, methinks, ere this might be return'd:
I'll wait for him no more: I'll go myself
And meet him.

[Going towards the large arched door by which
he entered, he starts back from it with horror.

Ha! they are there again!
E'en in the very door-way do they front me!
Still foremost Ethelbert and Selred tower

With their new-sever'd necks, and fix on me
Their death-strain'd eye-balls: and behind them
frowns

The murder'd youth, and Oswald's scepter'd ghost:
While seen, as if half-fading into air,
The pale distracted maid shows her faint form.
Thrice in this very form and order seen
They have before me stood. What may it mean?
I've heard that shapes like these will to the utter-
ance

Of human voice give back articulate sound,
And having been adjured so, depart.

[*Stretching out both his hands, and clenching
them resolutely.*]

I'll do it, though behind them hell should yawn,
With all its unveil'd horrors.

[*Turning again to the doorway with awful so-
lemnity.*]

If aught ye be but fitting fantasies,
But empty semblance of the form ye wear;
If aught ye be that can to human voice
Real audience give, and a real sense receive
Of that on which your fix'd and hollow eyes
So stern and fix'dly glare; I do conjure you
Depart from me, and come again no more!
From me depart! Full well those ghastly wounds
Have been return'd into this tortur'd breast:
O drive me not unto the horrid brink
Of dire distraction!

Speak, Ethelbert! O speak, if voice thou hast!
Tell me what sacrifice can soothe your spirits;
Can still the unquiet sleepers of the grave:
For this most horrid visitation is
Beyond endurance of the boldest mind,
In flesh and blood enrob'd.—It takes no heed,
But fix'dly glares upon me as before.
I speak to empty air: it can be nothing.
Is it not some delusion of the eyes?

[*Rubbing his eyes very hard, and rousing him-
self.*]

Ah! still the hideous semblance is before me,
Plain as at first. I cannot suffer this!

[*Runs to the lamps, and taking one in each hand,
rushes forward in despair to the doorway.*]

They are all gone! Before the searching light
Resolv'd to nothing!

Enter HEXULF and ALWY.

Ethw. (*turning hastily upon hearing them enter
behind him*). Ha! is it you? Most happily you
come!

Welcome you are, most welcome!

Alwy. Thanks to you, good my lord! but on
my life

This holy bishop and myself are come,
Unwillingly, with most untoward tidings.

Ethw. Well, use not many words: what now
befalls?

Hex. The rebel Hereulf and his thrall'd mates

Have, with more strength than human hands may
own,

For that the holy church——

Ethw. Well, well, what meanest thou?
And what should follow this?

Alwy. They've brok'n their prison walls and are
escap'd.

Ethw. I am glad on't! be it so! in faith I'm
glad!

We have shed blood enough.

Alwy. Nay, but my lord, unto their towers of
strength

They will return; where bruited abroad
Their piteous tale, as 'nighted travellers
To the false plainings of some water fiend,
All men will turn to them; nor can your troops
In safety now begin their northern march
With such fell foes behind them.

Ethw. (roused). Ay, thou sayst true; it is a
damned bet!

Here falls another rock to bar my way.

But I will on! Come, let us instantly
Set out, and foil them ere they gather strength.

Alwy. This would be well, but that within these
walls

Some of their faithful friends are still confin'd,
Who in our absence might disturbance breed,
As but a feeble guard can now be spar'd
To hold the castle. How shall this be settled?
Shall we confine them in the stronger vaults?

Ethw. (fiercely). No, no! I'll have no more im-
prisonments!

Let them be slain; yea all: even to a man!

This is no time for weak uncertain deeds.

Saw you not Edmar as you hither came?

Alwy. We saw him with a stranger much en-
gaged,

By a faint lamp, near to the eastern tower.

Ethw. Then follow me, and let us find him out.

Hex. We follow you, my lord.

*Ethw. (as he is about to go out, turning hastily
round to ALWY).* Bear thou a light.

My house is like a faintly mooned cave,
And hateful shadows cross each murky aisle.

[*Ezeunt, ALWY bearing a light.*]

SCENE III.

*The evening: a wood with a view of ETHWALD'S
castle seen through the trees. Enter HEREULF dis-
guised like a country hind: enter to him, by another
path, a Thane, disguised also.*

Her. Welcome, my friend! art thou the first to
join me?

This as I guess should be th' appointed time:
For o'er our heads have passed on homeward wing
Dark flights of rooks and daws and flocking birds,

Wheeling aloft with wild dissonant screams ;
 And from each hollow glen and river's bed
 The white mist slowly steals in fleecy wreaths
 Up the dark wooded banks. And yet, methinks,
 The deeper shades of ev'ning come not after,
 As they are wont, but day is lengthen'd out
 Most strangely.

Th. Seest thou those paly streams of shiv'ring
 light

So widely spread along the northern sky ?
 They to the twilight grey that brightness lend
 At which thou wonderest. Look up, I pray thee !

Her. (*turning and looking up.*) What may it
 mean ? it is a beauteous light.

Th. In truth I know not. Many a time have I
 On hill and heath beheld the changeful face
 Of awful night ; I've seen the moving stars
 Shoot rapidly athwart the sombre sky,
 Red fiery meteors in the welkin blaze,
 And sheeted lightnings gleam, but ne'er before
 Saw I a sight like this. It is, belike,
 Some sign portentous of our coming fate :
 Had we not better pause and con awhile
 This daring scene, ere yet it be too late ?

Her. No, by this brave man's sword ! not for an
 hour

Will I the glorious vengeful deed delay,
 Though heav'n's high dome were flaming o'er my
 head,

And earth beneath me shook. If it be aught
 Portentous, it must come from higher powers :
 For demons ride but on the lower clouds,
 Or raise their whirlwinds in the nether air.
 All blessed spirits still must favour those
 Who war on virtue's side : therefore, I say,
 Let us march boldly to the glorious work :
 It is a sign foretelling Ethwald's fall.
 Now for our valiant friends ; they must be near.
 Ho ! holla, ho !

[*Enter by different paths in the wood, the other
 chiefs, disguised, and gather round HEREULF,
 he receiving them joyfully.*

Welcome ! all welcome ! you good Thane, and you,
 And ev'ry valiant soul, together leagued
 In this bold enterprise. Well are we met.
 So far we prosper ; and my glowing heart
 Tells me our daring shall be nobly crown'd.
 Now move we cheerly on our way : behold
 Those frowning towers, where, ere the morning
 watch,

That shall be done, for which, e'en in our graves,
 Full many a gen'rous Mercian, yet unborn,
 Shall bless our honour'd names.

Chiefs (*speaking all together.*) We follow you,
 brave Hereulf.

1st chief. Ay, with true heart, or good or ill
 betide,

We'll follow you.

Her. Come on ! ere this, with fifty chosen men,

Our trusty colleague, near the northern gate,
 Attends our signal. Come, ye gen'rous few ;
 Ye who have groan'd in the foul dungeon's
 gloom,

Whose gen'rous bosoms have indignant heav'd
 To see free men beneath th' oppressor's yoke
 Like base-born villains press'd ! Now comes the
 hour

Of virtuous vengeance : on our side in secret
 Beats ev'ry Mercian heart : the tyrant now
 Trusts not to men : nightly within his chamber
 The watch-dog guards his couch, the only friend
 He now dare trust, but shall not guard it long.
 Follow my steps, and do the gen'rous deeds
 Of valiant freemen : heaven is on our side.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

*An open space within the walls of the castle, fronting
 one of the gates ; the stage darkened, and the sky
 lighted up with the aurora borealis, very bright.
 Enter by opposite sides two Officers of the castle.*

1st off. Ha ! is it thou, my friend ?
 Thou'st left thy post, I guess, as well as I,
 To view this awful sky. Look over head,
 Where like a mighty dome, from whose bright
 centre

Shoot forth those quiv'ring rays of vivid light,
 Moving with rapid change on every side,
 Swifter than flitting thought, the heavens appear !
 While o'er the west in paler brightness gleams
 Full many a widely undulating tide
 Of silver light : and the dark low'ring east,
 Like to a bloody mantle stretched out,
 Seems to conceal behind its awful shade
 Some dread commotion of the heavenly powers,
 Soon to break forth—some grand and unknown
 thing.

2d off. It is an awful sight ! what may it mean ?
 Doth it not woes and bloody strife foretell ?
 I've heard my father talk of things like this.—
 When the king's passing sickness shall be gone,
 Which has detain'd him from his purpos'd march
 Against the rebel chiefs, doubt not, my friend,
 We shall have bloody work.

1st off. Ay, but ere that, mayhap, the man of
 blood

May bleed ; and Mercia from the tyrant's grasp—
2d off. Hush, hush ! thou art unwise : some
 list'ning ear—

1st off. And if there should, what danger ? all
 men now

Harbour such secret thoughts ; and those who
 once

His youthful valour lov'd and warlike feats,
 Now loathe his cruelty. I'll tell thee something—

[*Drawing nearer him mysteriously.*

2d off. (*frightened*). Hush, hush! I will not hear thee! hold thy tongue!

What wilt't avail, when on the bloody stake
Thy head is fix'd, that all men think as thou dost :
And he who fix'd thy cruel doom to-day
Shall die to-morrow? [see

1st off. I'm mute, my friend : and now I plainly
How he may lord it o'er the prostrate land,
Who trembles in his iron tower the while,
With but a surly mastiff for his friend.

2d off. Nay, do not speak so loud. What men
are these

Who pass the gate just now? shall we not stop
them?

[*Enter some of the leagued chiefs in disguise
through the gate.*

1st off. No, do not trouble them. They are, I
guess,

Some 'nighted rustics frighten'd with the sky,
Who seek the shelter of man's habitation.

In such an awful hour men crowd together,
As gath'ring sea-fowl flock before a storm.
With such a welkin blazing o'er our heads,
Shall men each other vex? e'en let them pass.

[*Enter a crowd of frightened women and children.*

2d off. See what a crowd of women this way
come,

With crying children clinging to their knees,
And infants in their arms! How now, good
matrons?

Where do you run?

1st wom. O do not stop us! to St. Alban's shrine
We run : there will we kneel, and lift our hands,
For that his holy goodness may protect us
In this most awful hour.

2d wom. On, sisters, on!
The fiery welkin rages o'er our heads,
And we are sinful souls : O quickly move!

[*Exeunt women and children.*

2d off. I also am, alack! a sinful soul :
I'll follow them and pray for mercy too.

1st off. I'll to the northern wall, from whence
the heavens

In full expanse are seen. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE V.

ETHWALD's apartment : he is discovered sitting by his
couch, with his elbows resting upon his knees, and
supporting his head between both his hands; the
Queen standing by him.

Queen. Why sit you thus, my lord? it is not well:
It wears your strength; I pray you go to rest.

[*A pause, and he makes no answer.*

These nightly watchings much retard your cure;
Be then advis'd!

[*A pause, and he still takes no notice.*

Why are you thus unwilling?

The tower is barr'd, and all things are secure.

Ethw. How goes the hour? is it the second
watch?

Queen. No, near the window now, I heard the
guard

Exchange the word : the first is but half spent.

Ethw. And does the fearful night still lie before
me

In all its hideous length? (*Rising up with emotion.*)

O ye successive terms of gloomy quiet!

Over my mind ye pass like rolling waves

Of dense oppression; while deep underneath

Lie all its noble powers and faculties [cross

O'erwhelmed. If such dark shades must henceforth

My chequer'd life with still returning horrors,

O let me rest in the foul reptile's hole,

And take from me the being of a man!

Queen. Too much thou givest way to racking
thought:

Take this : it is a draught by cunning skill

Compounded curiously, and strongly charm'd;

With secret virtue fill'd — it soothes the mind,

And gives the body rest. [*Offering him a cup.*

Ethw. Sayst thou? then in good sooth I need it
much.

I thank thee too; thou art a careful wife.

[*Takes the cup, and as he is about to put it to
his lips, stops short and looks suspiciously at
her.*

It has, methinks, a strange unkindly smell.

Taste it thyself; dost thou not take my meaning?

Do thou first drink of it.

Queen. I am in health, my lord, and need it not.

Ethw. By the dread powers of darkness, thou shalt
drink it!

Ay, to the very dregs!

Queen. What, would you cast on me such vile sus-
picious,

And treat a royal princess like your slave? [neck,

Ethw. And so thou art. Thou rearest thy stately

And while I list, thou flaarest in men's eyes

A gorgeous queen; but unto me thou art —

I do command thee, drink it to the dregs.

Queen (*subdued, and lifting the cup to her lips*).

Then be convinced how wrongful are thy
thoughts.

Ethw. (*preventing her*). Forbear, I am too slightly
mov'd to anger.

I should have known the being of thy state

Is all too closely with my fortune link'd.

Give me the cup. Thou sayst it soothes the mind?

If I indeed could rest — (*Tastes it*). It tastes not well;

It is a bitter drug.

Queen. Then give it me again; I'll hie to Dwina,
And get from her that which shall make it sweet.

[*She walks to the door of another apartment, but
as she is about to go out, ETHWALD hurries
after her, and catches her by the arm.*

Ethw. Thou shalt not go and leave me thus alone.

Queen. I'll soon return again, and all around thee
Is light as noon-day.

Ethw. Nay, nay, good wife, it rises now before me
In the full blaze of light.

Queen. Ah! what meanst thou?

Ethw. The faint and shadowy forms,
That in obscurity were wont to rise
In sad array, are with the darkness fled.
But what avails the light? for now since sickness
Has press'd upon my soul, in my lone moments,
E'en in the full light of my torch-clad walls,
A horrid spectre rises to my sight,
Close by my side, and plain and palpable,
In all good seeming and close circumference,
As man meets man.

Queen. Mercy upon us! what form does it wear?

Ethw. My murder'd brother's form.

He stands close by my side; his ghastly head
Shakes horribly upon its sever'd neck
As if new from the headsmen's stroke; it moves
Still as I move; and when I look upon it,
It looks—No, no! I can no utterance find
To tell thee how it looks on me again.

Queen. Yet, fear not now: I shall not long be absent;

And thou mayst hear my footsteps all the while,
It is so short a space. *[Exit Queen.]*

Ethw. (returning to the middle of the stage). I'll
fix my steadfast eyes upon the ground,
And turn to other things my tutor'd thoughts
Intently. (After pausing for a little while, with his
clenched hands crossed upon his breast, and his
eyes fixed upon the ground.)

It may not be; I feel upon my mind
The horrid sense that precludes still its coming.
Elburga! ho, Elburga! (Putting his hand before
his eyes, and calling out with a strong voice of
fear.)

Enter Queen in haste.

Queen. Has't come again?

Ethw. No; but I felt upon my pausing soul
The sure and horrid sense of its approach.

Hadst thou not quickly come, it had ere now
Been frowning by my side. The cup, the cup!
[Drinks eagerly.]

Queen. Heaven grant thee peace!

Wilt thou not send unto the holy priest,
To give thee ghostly comfort?

Ethw. (shaking his head). Away, away! to thee
and to thy priests

I have, alas! lent too much heed already.

Queen. Let not your noble spirit thus be shent!
Still bear good heart! these charmed drugs full
soon

Will make you strong and vigorous as before;

And in the rough sport of your northern war,
You will forget these dreadful fancies.

Ethw. Ay, thou speakest wisely now: methinks
I still,

In the embattled field, 'midst circling hosts,
Could do the high deeds of a warlike king;
And what a glorious field now opens to me!
But, oh! this cursed bar; this ill-timed sickness;
It keeps me back ev'n like a bitted steed.
But it was ever thus! What have avail'd
My crimes, and cares, and blood, and iron toil?

Queen. What have avail'd! art thou not king of
Mercia?

Ethw. Ay, ay, Elburga! 'tis enough for thee
To tower in senseless state and be a queen;
But to th' expanded and aspiring soul,
To be but still the thing it long has been
Is misery, e'en though enthron'd it were
Under the cope of high imperial state.
O cursed hind'rance! blasting fiends breathe on me.
Putst thou not something in thy damned drugs
That doth retard my cure? I might ere this
With cased limbs have stridden the clanging field,
And been myself again.—Hark! some one comes.
[Listening with alarm.]

Queen. Be not disturb'd, it is your faithful groom.
Who brings the watch-dog; all things are securc.

Ethw. Nay, but I heard the sound of other feet.
*[Running to the door, and pushing in a great
bar.]*

Say, who art thou without?

Voice without. Your groom, my lord, who brings
your faithful dog.

Ethw. (to *Queen*). Didst thou not hear the sound
of other feet?

Queen. No, only his; your mind is too suspicious.

Ethw. I in his countenance have mark'd of late
That which I liked not: were this dreary night
But once o'ermaster'd, he shall watch no more.

*[Opens the door suspiciously, and enters an
armed man leading in a great watch-dog: the
door is shut again hastily and the bar is
replaced.]*

(To the dog.) Come, rough and surly friend!
Thou only dost remain on whom my mind

Can surely trust. I'll have more dogs so train'd.

[Looking steadfastly at the groom.]

Thy face is pale: thou hast a haggard look:

Where hast thou been? *[Seizing him by the neck.]*
Answer me quickly! Say, where hast thou been?

Gr. Looking upon the broad and fearful sky.

Queen. What sayst thou?

Gr. The heaven's are all a flaming o'er our heads,
And fiery spears are shiv'ring through the air.

Ethw. Hast thou seen this?

Gr. Ay, by our holy saint!

Queen. It is some prodigy, dark and portentous.

Gr. A red and bloody mantle seems outstretch'd
O'er the wide welkin, and——

Ethw. Peace, damned fool!

Tell me no more : be to thy post withdrawn.

[*Exit groom by a small side-door, leading the dog with him.*]

Ethw. (to himself, after musing for some time).

Heaven warring o'er my head ! there is in this
Some fearful thing betoken'd.

If that, in truth, the awful term is come,
The fearful bound'ry of my mortal reach,
O'er which I must into those regions pass
Of horror and despair, to take my place
With those who do their blood-earn'd crowns ex-
change

For ruddy circles of devouring fire :
Where hopeless woe and gnashing agony
Writhe in the dens of torment ; where things be
Yet never imaged in the thoughts of man,
Dark, horrible, unknown——

I'll mantle o'er my head, and think no more.

[*Covers his head with his cloak, and sinks down upon the couch.*]

Queen. Nay, rather stretch you on the fleecy bed.

Ethw. Rest, if thou canst, I do not hinder thee.

Queen. Then truly I will lean my head awhile.

I am o'erspent and weary. [*Leans on the couch.*]

Ethw. (hastily uncovering his face). Thou must
not sleep : watch with me and be silent :

It is an awful hour !

[*A long pause ; then ETHWALD starting up from the couch with alarm.*]

I hear strange sounds ascend the winding stairs.

Queen. I hear them too.

Ethw. Ha ! dost thou also hear it ?
Then it is real. (*Listening.*) I hear the clash of
arms.

Ho, guard ! come forth.

Re-enter Groom.

Go, rouse my faithful dog :

Dark treason is upon us.

Gr. (*disappears and then re-entering*). He sleeps
so sound, my lord, I cannot rouse him.

Ethw. Then, villain, I'm betray'd ! thou hast
betray'd me !

But set thy brawny strength against that door,
And bar them out : if thou but seemst to flinch,
This sword is in thy heart.

[*A noise of armed men is now heard at the door endeavouring to break it open, whilst ETHWALD and the groom set their shoulders to it to prevent them. Enter DWINA hastily from an inner apartment, and with the Queen assists in putting their strength also to the door, as the force without increases. The door is at last broken open, and HERULF, with the rebel chiefs, bursts in sword in hand.*]

Her. (to ETHWALD). Now, thou fell ruthless
lion, that hast made
With bloody rage thy native forest waste !

The spearmen are upon thee ! to the strife
Turn thy rough breast : thou canst no more es-
cape.

Ethw. Quick to thy villain's work, thou wordy
coward,

Who in the sick man's chamber seekst the fame
Thou dar'st not in th' embattled field attain !
I am prepar'd to front thee and thy mates,
Were ye twice numbered o'er.

[*Sets his back to a pillar, and puts himself into a posture of defence.*]

Her. The sick man's chamber ! darest thou,
indeed,

Begrimed as thou art with blood and crimes
'Gainst man committed, human rights assume ?
Thou art a hideous and envenom'd snake,
Whose wounded length even in his noisome hole,
Men fiercely hunt, for love of human kind ;
And wert thou scotch'd to the last ring of life,
E'en that poor remnant of thy curs'd existence
Should be trod out in the dust.

Ethw. Come on, thou boasting fool ! give thy
sword work,
And spare thy cursed tongue.

Her. Ay, surely will I !

It is the sword of noble Ethelbert :
Its master's blood weighs down its heavy strokes ;
His unseen hand directs them.

[*They fight : ETHWALD defends himself furiously, but at last falls, and the conspirators raise a loud shout.*]

1st ch. Bless heaven, the work is done !

2d ch. Now Mercia is reveng'd, and free-born
men

May rest their toil'd limbs in their peaceful homes.

3d ch. (*going nearer the body*). Ha ! does he
groan ?

2d ch. No, he dies sullenly, and to the wall
Turns his writh'd form and death-distorted visage.

[*A solemn pause, whilst ETHWALD, after some convulsive motions, expires.*]

Her. Now hath his loaded soul gone to its place,
And ne'er a pitying voice from all his kind
Cries, "God have mercy on him !"

3d ch. I've vow'd to dip my weapon in his
blood.

1st ch. And so have I.

[*Several of them advancing with their swords towards the body, a young man steps forth, and stretches out his arm to keep them off.*]

Young man. My father in the British wars was
seiz'd

A British prisoner, and with all he had
Unto a Mercian chief by lot consign'd ;
Mine aged grandsire, lowly at his feet,
Rent his grey hair ; Ethwald, a youthful warrior,
Receiv'd the old man's pray'r and set him free ;
Yea, even to the last heifer of his herds
Restor'd his wealth.

For this good deed, do not insult the fallen.
He was not ruthless once.

[*They all draw back, and retire from the body. The Queen, who has, during the fight, &c., remained at a distance, agitated with terror and suspense, now comes forward to HEREULF with the air of one who supplicates for mercy, and DWINA, following close behind her, falls upon her knees, as if to beseech him in favour of her mistress.*

Queen. If thou of good king Oswal, thine old master.

Aught of remembrance hast —

Her.

I do remember :

And deeply grieve to think a child of his
Has so belied her mild and gentle stock.
Nothing hast thou to fear : in some safe place,
In holy privacy, mayst thou repent
The evil thou hast done ; for know, proud dame,
Thou art beneath our vengeance.
But as for thine advisers, that dark villain,
The artful Alwy, and that impious man,
Who does dishonour to his sacred garb,

Their crimes have earn'd for them a bitter meed,
And they shall have it.

2d *ch.* Shall we not now the slumb'ring Mercians
rouse,

And tell our countrymen that they are free
From the oppressor's yoke ?

Her. Yes, thou sayst well : through all the vexed
land

Let every heart bound at the joyful tidings !
Thus from his frowning height the tyrant falls
Like a dark mountain, whose interior fires,
Raging in ceaseless tumult, have devour'd
Its own foundations. Sunk in sudden ruin
To the tremendous gulf, in the vast void
No friendly rock rears its opposing head
To stay the dreadful crash.

The joyful hinds, with grave and chasten'd joy,
Point to the traveller the hollow vale
Where once it stood, and the now sunned cots,
Where, near its base, they and their little ones
Dwelt trembling in its deep and fearful shade.

[*Exeunt.*

THE SECOND MARRIAGE :

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

SEABRIGHT.

BEAUMONT, a worthy clergyman, who is his friend
and his brother-in-law.

LORD ALLCREST.

SIR CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT.

PLAUSIBLE, a schemer.

PROWLER, his knavish follower.

WILLIAM BEAUMONT, son to BEAUMONT.

MORGAN, uncle to SEABRIGHT's first wife.

ROBERT.

Gardener, SHARP, and servants, &c.

WOMEN.

LADY SARAH, sister to LORD ALLCREST.

SOPHIA, daughter to SEABRIGHT.

MRS. BEAUMONT.

PRY, LADY SARAH's woman.

Landlady, servants, &c.

Scene : SEABRIGHT's house in the country, not far
from London, and a small country inn near it.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A garden : the gardener discovered at work among some shrubs and flowers. Enter ROBERT hastily, calling to him as he enters.

Rob. Stop, stop, gardener ! What are you about there ? My mistress's rose-trees rooted out of her favourite nook thus ! Get out of this spot with your cursed wheelbarrow ! If there were one spark of a Christian in your heart, you would pluck the last hair off your bare scalp rather than root out these shrubs.

Gar. Softly and civilly, Master Robert ; and answer me one question first. — If I intend to remain gardener in this family, and make my pot boil and my family thrive as I have done, whether will it be wiser in me, do you think, to obey your orders or my master's ?

Rob. And did he order you to do this ?

Gar. As sure as I hold this spade in my hand.

Rob. I should as soon have thought of tearing the turf from my mother's grave as of doing this thing.

Well, well; perhaps he has forgotten that she liked them.

Gar. Now I rather think he remembered, when he gave me the orders, that another lady likes them not; and a dead woman's fancy matched against a living woman's freak, with a middle-aged widower, hear ye me, who has just pulled the black coat off his back, has but a sorry chance, Robert.

Rob. Ay, and he has pulled the black coat too soon off his back. But away with it!—I'll think no more of what you say—it is impossible.

Gar. May I never handle a spade again, if she did not squirt to this direct spot, with her horrid-looking grey eyes, the last time she walked through the garden, saying it was a mass of confusion that ought to be cleared away, and he gave me the orders for doing it the very next morning.

Rob. Who could have believed this? Who could have believed this but a few months ago, when she rambled through these walks, with all her white-frocked train gamboling round her?

Gar. Nay, good Robert, don't be so down o' the mouth about it: the loss of his wife, and an unlooked-for legacy of twenty thousand pounds, may set a man's brains a working upon new plans. There is nothing very wonderful in that, man. He'll get his lady-wife and the borough together, with a power of high relations, you know, and we shall all be fine folks by-and-bye.—Thou wilt become master-butler, or gentleman-valet, or something of that kind, and I shall be head gardener, to be sure, with a man or two to obey my orders: we shan't be the same pains-taking folks that we have been, I warrant you, when he is a parliament man.

Rob. Thou'rt always looking after something for thine own advantage, and that puts all those foolish notions into thy noddle. No, no; he has lived too sweetly in his own quiet home, amongst the rustling of his own trees and the prattling of his own infants, to go now into the midst of all that shuffling and changing and making of speeches. He'll never become a parliament man.

Gar. Well, then, let him marry Lady Sarah for love, if he please; I'll neither make nor meddle in the matter. If she keep a good house, and give good victuals and drink to the people in it, I'll never trouble my head about it.

Rob. Out upon thee, man, with thy victuals and thy drink! Thou'rt worse than a hog. Well should I like, if it were not for the sake of better folks than thyself, to see thy greedy chaps exercised upon her feeding.

Gar. What, is she niggardly then, and so fine a lady, too?

Rob. Niggardly! she'll pull off her wide hoop, and all them there flounces that people go to court in, to search over the house for the value of a candle's end, rather than any of the poor devils be-

longing to her should wrong her of a doit's worth. Thou'lt have rare feeding, truly, when she comes among us.

Gar. Heaven forbid it, then! No wonder thou'rt anxious she should not come here. I always wondered what made thee so concerned about it.

Rob. And dost thou think, swine that thou art, I am concerned for it upon this account? Thou deservest to be fed on husks and garbage all thy life for having such a thought. I, who was the friend, I may say the relation, of my good mistress (for thou knowest I am her foster-brother); and when I look upon her poor children playing about, I feel as though they were my own flesh and blood. It is not that I boast of the connection: heaven knows I am as humble as any body!

Gar. Ay, no doubt! and a rare good thing it is, this same humility. I know a poor ass, grazing on the common not far off, that, to my certain knowledge, is foster-brother to a very great lord, and yet, I must say that for him, I never saw him prick up his ears or even shake his tail one bit the more for it in my life. By my certies! he must be a very meek and sober-minded ass! (*Singing and gathering up his tools, &c.*) Take this in your hand for me, man; I'm going to another part of the garden. (*Holding out something for ROBERT to carry.*)

Rob. (*pushing away his hand angrily.*) Take care of it yourself, fool: you would sing, though your father were upon the gallows.

Gar. I crave your worship's pardon! I should have whined a little, to be sure, to have been better company to you. (*Looking off the stage.*) But here comes a good man who frowns upon nobody,—the worthy rector of Easterdown: I'll go and bid him welcome; for he likes to see a poor fellow hold up his head before him, and speak to him like a man.

Rob. You bid him welcome, indeed! stand out of the way: I'll bid him welcome myself. He is as good as my own—No matter what. He is married to my good mistress's sister; ay, and his own father christened me, too. I'm glad he is come. You go to him indeed!

Enter MR. BEAUMONT.

O, sir! you're welcome to this sad place.

Beau. I thank you, honest Robert; how do you do?

Rob. So, so; I'm obliged to you for the favour of asking. Woe is me, sir! but this be a sad place since you came last among us.

Beau. A sad change, indeed, my good friend, and you seem to have felt it too. You look thin and altered, Robert.

Rob. I ha'n't been very merry of late, and that makes a body look—(*Passing his hand across his eyes.*)

Beau. (*shaking his head.*) Ay, what must thy poor

master be, then, since it is even so with thee? Poor man, it grieved me to think that I could not be with him on the first shock of his distress, but illness and business of importance made it impossible for me to leave Yorkshire. How does he do? I hope you look cheerfully before him, and do all that you can to comfort him.

Rob. Indeed I should have been very glad, in my homely way, to have done what I could to comfort him; but, I don't know how it is, he gets on main well without, sir.

Beau. (*surprised*). Does he? — I'm very glad to hear it. I love him for that, now; it is a noble exertion in him; he has a great merit in it, truly.

Rob. Humph, humph. [*A pause.*]

Beau. What were you going to say, my good Robert?

Rob. Nothing, sir; I was only clearing my throat.

Beau. How does he sleep, Robert?

Rob. I can't say, sir, not being present when he's a-bed, you know.

Beau. How does he eat, then? Little rest and little food must, I fear, have brought him very low.

Rob. Nay, as for the matter of his eating, I can't say but I find as good a notch made in the leg of mutton, when he dines alone, as there used to be.

Beau. Well, that's good. But I fear he is too much alone.

Rob. No, sir; he has dined out a pretty deal of late. He does, indeed, walk up and down the shady walk by the orchard, and talk to himself, often enough.

Beau. (*alarmed*). Does he? that is a sign of the deepest sorrow: I must speak to him; I must put books into his hands.

Rob. O, sir, there's no need of that; he has a book in his hand often enough.

Beau. And what kind of books does he read?

Rob. Nay, it is always the same one.

Beau. Well, he can't do better; there is but one book in the world that can't be too often in a man's hand.

Rob. Very true, sir; but it is not that one though. I thought as you do myself, and so I slyly looked over his shoulder one morning to be sure of it; but I saw nothing in it but all about the great people at court, and the great offices they hold.

Beau. You astonish me, Robert. His heavy loss I fear has bewildered his wits. Poor man! poor man! and all the sweet children too!

Rob. Yes, sir, they — will feel —

Beau. What would you say, my friend?

Rob. Nothing, sir. This vile neckcloth takes me so tight round the throat, an' a plague to it!

Gar. (*coming forward with a broad grin*). Bless you, sir! I be glad to see you here. How does your good lady and Master William do? He is

grown a fine young gentleman now, I warrant: he, he, he, he, he!

Rob. (*to gar. angrily*). Can't you ask a gentleman how he does, fool, without putting that damned grin upon your face?

Beau. Why, my friend Robert, what words are these you make use of?

Rob. True, sir, I should not have used them: but when a body is vexed he'll be angry, and when a body is angry, good sooth! he'll e'en bolt out with the first word that comes to him, though he were a saint.

Beau. Too true, Robert; but long before a body becomes a saint, he is very seldom vexed, and still seldomer angry at any thing.

Rob. Heaven bless you, sir, I know very well I a'n't so good as I should be, and I wish from my heart I was better.

Beau. Give me your hand, honest Robert; you will soon be better if you wish to be so, and it is a very pleasant progress when once it is fairly begun. (*Looking off the stage.*) I think I see your master at a distance. Good day to you! good day to you, gardener. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

A parlour, with a door opening into the garden. SEABRIGHT and BEAUMONT are seen walking together in the garden. BEA. talking to SEA. as they enter.

Beau. (*continuing to talk*). I must, indeed, confess, my dear friend, you had every thing that this world can bestow; a moderate fortune, with health to enjoy it; the decent, modest tranquillity of private life, and the blessings of domestic harmony. I must, indeed, confess you were a happy man. (*Pauses, and looks at SEA., who says nothing.*) Your measure of good things was complete; it was impossible to add to it; there was no more for you to desire on this side of heaven. (*Pauses again.*)

Sea. (*answering very tardily*). I had indeed many of the comforts of life.

Beau. Many of the comforts of life! you had every thing the heart of man can desire: and, pardon me, you could afford to lose part of your felicity, dear as that part might be, and still retain enough to make life worth the cherishing. To watch over your rising family; to mark the hopeful progress of their minds; to foster every good disposition, and discourage every bad one found there: this, my friend, is a noble, an invigorating task, most worthy of a man.

Sea. It is certainly the duty of every man to attend to the education of his children; their fortunes in the world depend upon it.

Beau. (*looking displeas'd at him*). Pooh! their fortunes in that world, from which this will appear but

like a nest of worms, a hole for grubs and chrysalis's, that world, which is our high and native home, depend upon it. (*Walking up and down disturbed, and then returning to SEA. with a self-upbraiding look.*) Forgive me, Seabright; you know I am sometimes thus, but my spark is soon extinguished. I am glad—I ought to be glad to see you so composed. It is a noble conquest you have gained over your feelings, and what must it not have cost you! Give me your hand, and be not thus constrained with me: I know the weakness of human nature, and dearly do I sympathise with you.

Sea. You are very kind, my friend; but you have travelled far, you must want refreshment; let me order something. (*Going to the door, and calling a servant, to whom he gives orders.*)

Beau. (*aside.*) Well, there is something here I don't understand. But I am wrong, perhaps: some people can't bear to have the subject of their sorrow touched upon: I'll talk to him of other things. (*Aloud to SEA. as he returns from the door.*) Your old acquaintance, Asby of Gloucestershire, called upon me a day or two before I left home, and inquired kindly after you. He is a very rich man now; he has purchased the great estate of Carriswood, near his native place, and is high sheriff of the county.

Sea. (*becoming suddenly animated.*) What, Asby? my old school-fellow Asby? that is a great rise, indeed. The estate of Carriswood, and high sheriff of the county! What interest has pushed him? what connections has he made? has he speculated with his money? how has he advanced himself?

Beau. I can't very well tell you: he has gone on, like many others, turning, and scraping, and begging, and managing great people's matters for them, till he has become one of the most considerable men in that part of the country.

Sea. He must be a clever fellow. We used to think him stupid at school; but we have been greatly deceived.

Beau. No, you have not, for he is stupid still. His brother, the poor curate of Crofton, is a clever man.

Sea. (*contemptuously.*) The poor curate of Crofton! one of those clever men, I suppose, who sit with their shoes down at the heel, by their own study fire, brooding o'er their own hoard of ideas, without ever being able from their parts or their learning to produce one atom's worth of good to themselves or their families. I have known many such; but let me see a man, who from narrow and unfavourable beginnings, shapes out his own way in this changing world to wealth and distinction, and, by my faith! he will be wise enough for me.

Beau. My friend, you become animated: I am happy to see you so much interested in the fortune of others; it is a blessed disposition. I have

something also to tell you of your old friend Malton, which I am sure will give you pleasure.

Sea. What, he has got a fortune too, I suppose, and is standing for the county.

Beau. No! something better than that, my friend.

Sea. Ha! well, some people get on amazingly.

Beau. It is amazing, indeed, for it was altogether hopeless. You remember his only son, the poor little boy that was so lame and so sickly?

Sea. Yes, I do.

Beau. Well, from some application, which I cannot remember at present, the sinews of his leg have recovered their proper tone again, and he is growing up as healthy and comely-looking a lad as you can see.

Sea. O, that is what you meant: I am glad to hear it, certainly: a cripple in a family is not easily provided for. But pray now, let me understand this matter more perfectly.

Beau. I tell you I have forgotten how they treated the leg, but—

Sea. (*impatiently.*) No, no, no! What relations, what connections had Asby to push him? A man can't get on without some assistance. His family, I always understood, was low and distressed.

Beau. He had two or three ways of getting on, which I would not advise any friend of mine to follow him in; and the worst of them all was making what is called a convenient marriage.

Sea. (*affecting to laugh.*) Ha, ha, ha! you are severe, Beaumont. Many a respectable man has suffered interest to determine even his choice of a wife. Riches and honours must have their price paid for them.

Beau. Trash and dirt! I would not have a disagreeable vixen to tyrannise over my family for the honours of a peerage.

Sea. Well, well, people think differently upon most subjects.

Beau. They do indeed; and it is not every one who thinks so delicately, and has so much reason to do so, upon this subject, as we have, my dear Seabright. Our wives—

Sea. (*interrupting him hastily.*) And he comes in for the county, you say?

Beau. No, no, Seabright; you mistake me; high sheriff of the county, I said. How you do interest yourself in the fortunes of this man!

Sea. And what should surprise you in this? There is nothing so interesting to me as to trace the course of a prosperous man through this varied world! First he is seen like a little stream, wearing its shallow bed through the grass; circling and winding, and gleaming up its treasures from every twinkling rill as it passes: farther on, the brown sand fences its margin, the dark rushes thicken on its side: farther on still, the broad flags shake their green ranks, the willows bend their wide boughs o'er its course: and yonder,

at last, the fair river appears, spreading its bright waves to the light.

Beau. (staring strangely on him, then turning away some paces, and shaking his head ruefully). Poor man! poor man! his intellects are deranged: he is not in his senses.

Enter a Servant.

Sea. (to ser.) Very well. (To *BEAU.*) Let us go to the breakfast-room, Beaumont, and you'll find something prepared for you. (As they are about to go out, the children appear at a distance in the garden.)

Beau. (looking out). Ha! yonder are the children: blessings on them! I must run and speak to them first.

[Exit into the garden to the children.]

Sea. (to himself, looking contemptuously after *BEAU.*) Ay, go to the children! thou art only fit company for them! To come here with his comfort and his condolence full eight months and a half after her death—he is a mere simpleton! His wonderful delicacy too about interested marriages!—he is worse than a simpleton! And my only business now, forsooth, must be to stay at home and become schoolmaster to my own children! He is an absolute fool. (Turning round and seeing the servant still standing at the door.) Have you inquired at the village which of the inns my Lord Lubberford stops at on his way to town?

Ser. Yes, sir; but they don't know.

Sea. But they must know. Go, and make farther inquiries, for I must pay my respects to his lordship as he passes. Were the fruit and the flowers carried to Lady Sarah this morning?

Ser. I don't know, sir.

Sea. Run to the gardener, and put him in mind of it. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A library. Enter *SEABRIGHT*, who walks several times slowly across the stage, as if deeply engaged in his own mind; then stops short with a considerable pause.

Sea. I am now upon the threshold of distinction, and with one step more I cross it. On this side lies spiritless obscurity; on that, invigorating honour. (Pauses.) Member of parliament! there is magic in the words, and of most powerful operation. Let that man find a place elsewhere; why should I squeeze myself and every body round me to make room for him? Sir, he's a member of parliament.—Let that fool hold his tongue there; why do we silently listen to all his prosing stuff? Sir, he's a member of parliament.—What! bells ringing, children huzzaing, corporation men bustling at this rate, to welcome that poor lurking creature to your town? To be sure; he's a member

of parliament.—Ay, so it is. I too have mixed with the ignoble crowd to stare upon men thus honoured. I have only now to overstep the bounds, and be myself the very thing I gazed at. (Pausing again.) There is, indeed, a toll, a price of entrance that must be paid, and my heart stands back from it; but there is no other way than this, and what I would wear I must purchase. O, it is well worth its price! To be but known and named as filling such a place in society brings pleasure with it. And in the eyes of our early friends too.—Methinks I can see at this moment every curious face in my native village gathering about the letter-boy as he sets out upon his rounds, to look with grinning admiration upon my first franks. "Free, Seabright;" ha, ha, ha! (Laughing to himself, and rubbing his hands together with great complacency.)

Enter ROBERT.

Sea. (turning round shortly, like one who is caught). What brings you here, sirrah?

Rob. You desired me to tell you, sir, when Miss Seabright returned from her walk.

Sea. (with his countenance changed). And is she so soon returned?

Rob. Yes, sir; and I have told her you wish to speak with her.

Sea. You have told her—I wish—I looked not for her so soon—I wish you had not—

Rob. Sir!

Sea. Begone, begone! and say I am waiting for her. (Exit *ROB.*, stealing a look of observation at his master as he goes out.)—Ah! here comes the hard pull! here comes the sticking-place! I should have prepared her for this before, but my heart would not suffer me. O that I had employed some one else to tell her! She little thinks of this! I hear her coming. (Listening, while children's voices are heard without.) What! she is bringing the children with her! I hear the little one prating as he goes. O heaven! I cannot—I cannot!

[Exit, running out with much agitation.]

Enter SOPHIA, carrying a little boy on her back, and an elder boy and girl taking hold of her gown.

Soph. (to the little one). You have had a fine ride, and a long ride, have you not?

Little one. Yes.

Soph. Come down then, boy, for your horse is tired.

Little one. No.

Soph. No, tit! but you must though. (Setting him down.) Stand upon your fat legs there, and tell me what I'm to have for all this trouble of carrying you. What am I to have, urchin?

Little one. Kiss.

Soph. (after kissing him affectionately). And what

am I to have for these comfits I have saved for you ?

Little one. Kiss.

Soph. (*kissing him again*). And what am I to have for the little dog I bought for you this morning ?

Little one. Kiss.

Soph. What ! kiss again ? kiss for every thing ? (*Kissing him very tenderly*.) O, you little rogue ! you might buy the whole world for such money as this, if every body loved you as I do. Now, children, papa is not ready to see us yet, I find ; so in the mean time I'll divide the little cake I promised you.

[*Taking a little cake from her work-bag, and dividing it ; whilst ROBERT, peeping in at the door, and seeing SEABRIGHT not there, ventures in, and stands for a little while looking tenderly upon SOPH. and the children.*]

Rob. Bless all your sweet faces !

Soph. What do you want here, good Robert ?

Rob. Nothing—nothing. Heaven bless you all, my pretty ones ! (*Listening*.) I hear him coming.

[*Exit, looking piteously upon them as he goes off.*]

Soph. I hear papa coming.

Little girl. I'll run and meet him.

Eldest boy. Don't, Emma ; he does not like to play with us now ; it is troublesome to him.

Little girl. When mamma was alive he played with us.

Soph. Hush ! my good girl.

Enter SEABRIGHT.

We have been waiting for you, papa ; Robert told us you wanted to see us all together.

Sea. Did Robert tell you so ? I wanted to see you alone, Sophia ; but since it is so, the others may remain. I have got something to say to you.

Soph. You look very grave, my dear sir : have I offended you ?

Eldest boy. It was I who broke the china vase, so don't be angry with her for that.

Sea. My brave boy ! it is distress, and not anger, that makes me grave.

Soph. And are you distressed, papa ? O don't be distressed ! we will do every thing we can to please you. I know very well we can't make you so happy as when mamma was alive ; but we'll be such good children ! we'll obey you, and serve you, and love you so much, if you will but play with us, and look upon us again as you used to do.

Sea. (*softened*). My dear girl, I wish I could make you all happy : I wish to raise your situation in the world above the pitch of my present confined abilities : I wish—(*stops and is much embarrassed*.)

Soph. (*kissing his hand*). My dear, dear father ! you say that I am your dear girl, and I promise you, you shall find me a good one. I want no better fortune in the world, than to live with you,

and be useful to you. I can overlook the household matters, and order every thing in the family as you would like to have it. I want no better fortune than this : I shall be a happy girl and a proud girl, too, if you will put confidence in me.

Sea. (*taking her hand tenderly*). My sweet child ! this would be a dull and sombre life for a young girl like you ; you ought now to be dressed and fashioned like other young people, and have the advantage of being introduced to the world by those who—

Soph. O no ! I don't care whether my gown be made of silk or of linen ; and as for being dull, never trouble your head about that ; we shall find a way to get the better of it. Do you know, papa, — but I am almost ashamed to tell it you. —

Sea. What is it, my dear ?

Soph. I have been learning to play at backgammon ; for you know mamma and you used to play at it of a winter evening ; and I'll play with you, if you'll allow me.

Sea. O heaven ! this is too much !

[*Turns from them in great agitation, and running to the opposite side of the room, stands leaning his back against the wall, whilst SOPHIA and the children gather round him.*]

Soph. My dear father ! what is the matter ?

Eldest boy. Are you not well, papa ?

Sea. I am well enough ! I am well enough ! but I have something to tell you, and I cannot tell it.

Soph. Pray let me know what it is !

Sea. You must know it ; it is necessary that you should. I am—(*Pauses*.)

Soph. A bankrupt.

Sea. No, no, no ! I am going to be married.—(*SOPHIA staggers some paces back, and stands like one perfectly stupified*.) What is the matter, Sophia ? are you going to faint ?

Soph. No, I shan't faint.

Sea. Be not so overcome with it, my dear child ! it is for the good of my children I marry. (*Pauses and looks at her, but she is silent*.) You, and all children in your situation, look upon these matters with a prejudiced eye. It is my great regard for you that determines me to take this step. (*Pauses, but she is silent*.) Do you hear me ? Will you not speak to me ?

Soph. O my poor mother ! little did I think when I kissed your cold hands, that you would so soon be forgotten !

Sea. No more of this, my dear ! no more of this ! It is improper ; it is painful to me. I have not forgotten—I love—I respect—I adore her memory : but I am engaged—it is necessary—your interest is concerned in it, my dear children ; and I know, my good Sophia, you will not add to your father's distress by stubborn and undutiful behaviour.

Soph. O no, my dear sir ! if you love and adore her memory, I am satisfied. Yet if you do, how can

you—O how can you!—I will say no more: God bless you and give you a good wife! (*Weeping.*) But she will never be so good as my mother: she will never love you as my mother did.

Sea. Forbear, my good girl! I know it very well: and I don't marry now to be beloved. But Lady Sarah is a very good woman, and will make me as happy as I can expect to be; she is sister to Lord Allcrest, you know, and is related to the first people of the country.

Soph. Good heaven, sir! you can't mean to marry Lady Sarah: all the world knows how ill-tempered she is.

Eldest boy. What, that lady with the cunning-looking nose, and the strange staring eyebrows? If she come into this house, I'll cast my top at her.

Soph. Hold your tongue, George! papa is not so hard-hearted as to set such a woman over us. Come, come, children! gather round, and hold up your little hands to him: he will have pity upon you. (*The children gather round, and SOPHIA, putting the hands of the youngest child together, and holding them up, kneels down before him.*) O, sir! have pity on them! We have nobody to plead for us, and I cannot speak.

Enter ROBERT with his face all blubbered, and throwing himself upon his knees by the children, holds up his hands most piteously.

Rob. O, sir!

Sea. (*bursting into a violent rage.*) What, sirrah! have you been listening at the door! Go from my presence this moment!

Soph. Dear sir! be not angry with him!

Sea. (*putting her away.*) No, no! let us have no more of this nonsense: I have listened too long to it already. (*Breaks from them and exits.*)

Rob. I wish my head had been cut off before I had come in with my ill-timed assistance! Confound my stupid pate! I deserve to be hanged for it. (*Beating his head and grasping his hair.*) O, my pretty ones! I sent you to him that you might work on his heart, for I knew what he wanted to say well enough, and yet I must needs thrust in my silly snout amongst you to mar all! For a man that can read books and cast accounts, and all that, to do such a trick! I deserve to be cudgelled!

Soph. Don't be so angry at yourself, Robert; you meant it well, and you have always been so good to us!

Rob. Good to you! I love you like my own flesh and blood, every one of you; and if any body dare to do you wrong, I'll—no matter what. (*Clenching his fist and nodding significantly.*) He may turn me off if he please; but I'll not quit the neighbourhood! I'll watch over you, my pretty ones; and hang me if any one shall hurt a hair of your heads!

Soph. I thank you, Robert; but don't tell any

body; that would not be right, you know. Come, children; you shall go with me to my own room.

[*Exeunt SOPHIA and children by one side, and exit ROBERT by the other, looking after them with tenderness and pity.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Before the front of SEABRIGHT'S house. Enter PLAUSIBLE and PROWL.

Plaus. Do you wait for me in that farther walk yonder, till I come from visiting my subject.

Prowl. Well, I trust he will prove a good subject! we are woundily in want of one at present.

Plaus. Don't lose courage, man; there is always a certain quantity of good and of bad luck put into every man's lot, and the more of the one that has passed over his head, the more he may expect of the other. Seabright has a fortune to speculate with, and some turn, as I have been told, for speculation: he is just launching into a new course of life, and I have a strong presentiment that I shall succeed with him.

Prowl. Now away with your presentiments! for we have never yet had any good luck that has not come pop upon our heads like a snow-ball, from the very opposite point to our expectation: but he has got an unexpected legacy lately; and I have observed that a sum coming in this way, to a man of a certain disposition, very often plays the part of a decoy-bird to draw away from him all the rest of his money: there I rest my hopes.

Plaus. Why, you talk as if I were going to ruin him instead of increasing his fortune by my advice.

Prowl. I have seen ruin follow every man that has been favour'd with your advice, as constantly as the hind legs follow the fore legs of a horse, and therefore I cannot help thinking there must be some connection between them. However, I don't pretend to reason, Plausible: it might only be some part of their bad luck that happened just at those times to be passing over their heads: and they have always, in the mean time, supplied you and your humble follower with money for our immediate wants.

Plaus. Well, hold your tongue, do! (*Knocks at the door, which is opened by ROBERT.*) Is your master at home?

Rob. Yes.

Plaus. Can he be spoken with?

Rob. No, sir, he can't see you at present.

Plaus. At what hour can I see him?

Rob. I don't know, sir.

Plaus. Is he so much engaged? But you seem sad, my friend: has any thing happened? You had a funeral in the house some time ago?

Rob. Yes, sir; but it is a wedding we have got in at this bout.

Plaus. I had the honour of calling on Mr. Seabright yesterday morning, but he was not at home.

Rob. Yes, sir; he has been at the borough of Crockdale to be chaired, and the parish of Upperton to be married; and he returned last night—

Prowl. Bridegroom and member of parliament!

Rob. Keep your jokes till they are asked for.

Prowl. They would be stale jokes indeed, then.

Plaus. (to *Prowl.*) Hold your tongue pray. (To *Rob.*) He is engaged?

Rob. Yes, sir; he is with the bride and the company, in the garden, at breakfast.

Plaus. Well, I shan't disturb him at present.—Here is a crown for you: you will recollect my face again when you see it? I'll call again very soon.

Prowl. (aside). Mercy upon us! the last crown we have in the world given away on such a chance! it shan't go though.

Rob. O yes, sir, I'll recollect you.

[*Exit PLAUSIBLE.*]

Prowl. (lingering behind). Don't shut the door yet. Hark you, my good Mr. John, for I know your name very well!

Rob. My name is Robert.

Prowl. Yes, Robert I said.

Rob. Did you so, truly? have not I ears in my head?

Prowl. Assuredly, sir, and ears, let me tell you, that will hear good news soon, if you will be counselled by me.

Rob. Anan?

Prowl. Have you never a mind to put out a little money to advantage? a guinea or so, now, in such a way as to return to you again with fifteen or twenty of his yellow-coated brethren at his back?

Rob. Pooh! with your nonsense! I have sent two or three guineas out upon such fool's errands already.

Prowl. And did they come back empty-handed to you?

Rob. No, by my faith; for they never came back at all.

Prowl. O dear! there be such cheats in this world, they frighten honest folks from trying their fortune. I have got a crown of my own, just now, and with another crown put to it by any good-hearted fellow that would go halves with me in the profit, I have an opportunity of making a good round sum, at present, in a very honest way, that would almost make a man of me at once: but I'm sure I don't advise you to do it; for prudence is a great virtue; prudence is a very great virtue.

[*Bell rings, and ROBERT stands hesitating.*]

Rob. Hang it! a crown is no great matter after all. There it is. (Giving him the crown whilst the bell rings again.) How that plaguy bell rings! When

you get the money for me, you'll know where to call?

Prowl. Never fear! when I get the money for you, I'll find my way back again, I warrant you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A garden, with a temple seen at some distance, in which are discovered LADY SARAH, SOPHIA, MR. and MRS. BEAUMONT, and WILLIAM BEAUMONT, as if seated after breakfast; whilst Gardener and one or two of the Servants skulk near the front of the stage, behind some bushes, looking at them.

Gar. Bride indeed! she's as unlovely a looking piece of goods as ever I looked upon. See how she stares at every thing about her, and curls up her nose like a gherkin! I'll warrant you she'll be all through my kitchen grounds by-and-bye, to count over my cabbages.

1st ser. Hold your tongue, man: we're too long here: see, they are all breaking up now, and some of them will be here in a trice. [*Exeunt servants.*]

[*The company come out from the temple, and MR. and MRS. BEAUMONT advance to the front of the stage, talking together earnestly.*]

Beau. (continuing to talk). Nay, my dear, you are prejudiced and severe; it did not strike me that she behaved to you with so much forbidding coldness. She has an ungracious countenance to be sure, but now and then when it relaxes she looks as if she had some good in her.

Mrs. B. Yes, Charles, you find always some good in every one of God's creatures.

Beau. And there is some good in every one of God's creatures, if you would but look for it.

Mrs. B. I'm sure those who can find it out in her have a quicker discernment than I can pretend to. How unlucky it was that we came to the house last night, without inquiring beforehand the state of the family; I thought I should have fainted when they told me of the marriage; and when I saw that creature in my sweet sister's place!

Beau. I pitied you, my dear Susan, very much, indeed I did; but it would have looked pettish and unforgiving in us to have gone away again at that late hour; and I think we must stay with them till to-morrow. For the children's sake, we must endeavour to be on good terms with them. But here come William and Sophia.

Enter WILLIAM BEAUMONT and SOPHIA, talking as they enter.

Will. You like the yellow-streaked carnations best?

Soph. Yes, I think they are the prettiest, though we have but very few of them.

Will. O! then I'll make our gardener sow a whole bushel of carnation-seed when I go home, that we may have a good chance, at least, of raising some of the kind you admire. And what else can I do for you, Sophy? Shall I copy some of my friend's verses for you? or send you some landscapes for your drawing-book? or—did not you say you should like to have a rocking-horse for little Tony?

Soph. Indeed you are very good, cousin.

Will. No, no! don't say that: there is no goodness at all in doing any thing for you.

Soph. (going up to Mrs. B., who puts her arm affectionately round her). My dear aunt!

Will. Ah, mother! see how tall she has grown since we saw her last, and how dark her hair is now.

Mrs. B. (archly). You like fair hair best, I believe, William.

Will. I like fair hair! I can't endure it!

Mrs. B. (smiling). Well, well, you need not be so vehement in expressing your dislike.

Beau. Here comes Lady Sarah to join us: this at least is civil, you will confess.

Lady S. (coming forward to join them). You are fond, ma'am, I perceive, of the shade, from preferring this side of the garden. (Formally to Mrs. B., who coldly bows assent.) It is a very pleasant morning for travelling, Mr. Beaumont.

Beau. Yes, madam, it is a very pleasant morning for travelling.

Lady S. I'm sorry, however, that you will have so much dust on your road to town.

Soph. (to Mrs. B.) Why, you don't go to-day, aunt? I thought you were to stay longer.

Mrs. B. No, my dear, we go this morning. (Looking significantly to BEAUMONT.)

Lady S. Would not the cool of the evening be more agreeable?

Mrs. B. No, ma'am, the coolness of this morning has been quite enough to induce us to set out immediately.

Enter Servant.

Ser. (to LADY S.) Some poor people from the village are come to wish your ladyship health and happiness.

Lady S. (ungraciously). I am obliged to them.—What do they mean? Ay, ay! tell them I am obliged to them. You need not wait; that is all.

[Exit ser., whilst Mrs. B. smiles significantly to her husband.]

Soph. I wonder if my old friend, Huskins, be among them: I'll run and see. [Going to run out.]

Lady S. Perhaps Miss Seabright will do me the honour to consult me upon what friendships are proper for her to cultivate.

Mrs. B. (seeing SOPHIA distressed). If your ladyship will permit us, she shall retire with me for a little while.

[Exit Mrs. B. and SOPHIA.]

Will. (aside to his father, as they are about to follow them). What an ugly witch it is! must we leave Sophia with her?

[Exit BEAUMONT and WILLIAM B., LADY SARAH looking after them suspiciously.]

Enter SEABRIGHT.

Lady S. (turning to him with affected sprightliness). So you have been upon the watch, I suppose, and will not suffer me to stroll through these shady walks alone: I am positively to have no time to myself.

Sea. You don't call me an intruder, I hope?

Lady S. Indeed, if you become very troublesome, I don't know what I may call you. He, he, he! (Laughing foolishly. SEABRIGHT putting his hand up to the side of her hat, she pushes it away with pretended coyness). How can you be so childish? he, he, he!

Sea. (gravely). Won't you let me pick a caterpillar from your ribbon?

Lady S. (looking foolish and disappointed). O! is that it? I am much obliged to you: but you are always so good, so tenderly attentive to me! Indeed this little hand was well bestowed upon you, Seabright: I wish it had conveyed to you a better gift when it gave away myself. (Thrusting out a great brown hand to him.)

Sea. (raising it to his lips with affected tenderness). What could it possibly convey, my dear Lady Sarah, more—(stopping short as he is about to kiss it). Is that a family ring upon your finger?

Lady S. Yes, it was my mother's: why so?

Sea. The arms of the Highcastles are upon it; Lord Highcastle then is your relation?

Lady S. I am nearly related to him.

Sea. (with his countenance brightening). I did not know this: by my soul, I am glad of it! He is in credit with the minister: you are on good terms with him, I hope.

Lady S. Yes, I have always taken pains to be upon good terms with him.

Sea. I dare say you have; I dare say you have: you have so much prudence, and so many good qualities, my dear love! (Kissing her hand with great alacrity.)

Lady S. O! it is all your blind partiality! (Putting her hand tenderly upon his shoulder.) Do you know, my dear Mr. Seabright, that coat becomes you very much: I wish you would always wear that colour.

Sea. I'll wear any thing you like, my dear. But, by-the-bye, my constituents at Crockdale have a manufacture of woollen in the town: I must buy two or three hundred yards of their stuff from them, I believe, lest I should have occasion to be elected again.

Lady S. (taking her hand eagerly off his shoulder). Two or three hundred yards of stuff from them! Why the cheapest kind they make is eighteenpence-

halfpenny a yard : only consider what that will come to.

Sea. No very great sum !

Lady S. I am surprised to hear you say so. Now I should think, if you were to send the mayor and aldermen a haunch of venison now and then when it comes in your way, and the earliest information of any great public events that may occur, it would be a more delicate and pleasing attention.

Sea. Well, well, my dear Lady Sarah, don't let us fall out about it.

Lady S. I am perfectly good-humoured, I assure you ; but you are so——

Sea. Yonder is your maid coming to speak to you, I'll leave you.

Lady S. Indeed she has nothing to say : I won't suffer her to break in upon our tender conversation.

Sea. But I must go to give directions about accommodating Lord Allcrest and his friend. They will be here soon.

Lady S. Nay, there you have no occasion to give yourself any trouble : leave every thing of that kind to me : you are too profuse, and too careless, in every thing.

Sea. I may at least go to the stables, and give my groom orders to provide oats for their horses.

Lady S. I have a very good receipt in my receipt-book for feeding horses upon the refuse of a garden.

Sea. (*shaking his head, and breaking away from her.*) No, no ! that won't do. [*Exit.*]

Enter PRY, with a busy face.

Lady S. What brings you here, Pry ? Did not you see Mr. Seabright with me ?

Pry. I protest, my lady, I have been looking at so many things this morning, I can't tell what is before my eyes.

Lady S. You have looked over every thing then as I desired you : and I hope you have done it as if it were to satisfy your own curiosity.

Pry. To be sure, my lady ; and I might say so with truth too, for nothing does my heart so much good as looking through all them there places. And, O dear, my lady ! the chests and the wardrobes, and the larders, and the store-rooms, that I have looked into ! but that cunning fellow, Robert, would not let me into the wine-cellar though.

Lady S. And you are sure you let them understand, it was all to please your own curiosity ?

Pry. To be sure ; and I was glad I could speak the truth too, for I never does tell a lie but when I cannot get a turn served without it. I remember, my lady, you told me long ago that this was the best rule ; and I have always held you up, my lady, for an example. Lord have mercy upon their souls, that will tell you over a pack of lies for no other purpose but to make people laugh ! And there is all your writers of books too, full of stories from one

end to the other, what will become of them, poor sinners ?

Lady S. Never trouble your head about them : what have you seen ?

Pry. O dear me ! the sheets and the table-linen, and the pickles, and the sweetmeats, and the hams, and the bacon, that I have seen !

Lady S. Indeed, Pry !

Pry. But do you know, my lady, there is a curious place in the house.

Lady S. What is it, pray ?

Pry. A closet where they keep cordials for poor people.

Lady S. (*sourly.*) Humph.

Pry. It was kept for that purpose by the late Mrs. Seabright, and this young lady, I am told, is as fond of it as her mother was.

Lady S. Humph—every body has some crotchet or other.

Pry. Certainly, my lady, but this is a very strange one though. For you must know, my lady, I thought no harm just to taste one of the bottles myself, thinking it might be some pennyroyal-water or blackberry-wine, or such things as charitable ladies give away ; but I protest it is as good liquor as any gentlewoman would choose to keep for her own use.

Lady S. I believe it has run in your head, Pry ?

Pry. No, no ! my lady ; whatever I may do by myself, when I have a pain in my stomach, or such like, for nobody can help afflictions when it pleases heaven to send them, I never takes more than is creditable before people.—And, O my lady ! the pans of milk, and the butter, that I have seen in the dairy ! And I assure you, my lady, the servants make good use of it : they make spare of nothing : the very kitchen-maids have cream to their tea.

Lady S. Well, well ; we shall see how long this rioting will last.

Pry. And I have been in the garden and the orchard too—But stop ! I hear a noise in the bushes.

Lady S. (*looking round alarmed.*) Why did you talk so loud, and incautiously too ? Come with me into the house.

[*Exeunt LADY SARAH and PRY, looking round alarmed.*]

Enter Gardener, creeping from amongst the bushes, and shaking his fist, and making faces after them.

Gar. I have been in the garden and the orchard too ! hanged jade ! we shall see who comes off winner at last. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Enter SEABRIGHT followed by ROBERT.

Sea. (*speaking as he enters.*) And he'll call again, you say ? His name is Plausible ?

Rob. Yes, sir ; he is a very grave, sensible looking man.

Sea. And has nobody else called ?

Rob. No, sir.

Sea. No letters for me ?

Rob. No, sir.

Sea. Nobody applying for franks ?

Rob. No, sir.

Sea. (*aside.*) Stupid dolts ! (*Aloud.*) So much the better. Be in the way when I call for you. (*Exit ROBERT.*) Well, this is strange enough : nobody soliciting ; nobody coming to pay their court to me ; nobody asking me even for a frank : it is very strange ! (*After musing some time.*) Ha ! but there is a bad spirit in men, which makes them always unwilling at first to acknowledge the superiority of him who has been more nearly on a level with themselves. It is only when they see him firmly established, and advancing in the path of honours, that they are forced to respect him. (*After walking across the stage proudly.*) And they shall see me advance. I am not a man to stop short at such beginnings as these, after the high connections I have made : I feel that I am born for advancing. The embarrassment of public affairs at present offers my activity a fair field for exertion. (*A great noise and clamour heard without.*) What is that ? who waits there ?

Enter ROBERT.

What dreadful clamour and noise is this I hear ?

Rob. Only my lady, sir, who has been all over the house with Mrs. Pry, and laying down some prudent regulations for the family.

Sea. And what have the servants to say to that ?

Rob. A pretty deal, sir : they are novise mealy mouthed about the matter ; and they're all coming to your honour with it in a body.

[*The noise without still coming nearer.*]

Sea. Don't let the angry fools come to me ; I'll have nothing to do with it. Go, tell them so.

Rob. Very well, sir ; I'll be sure to tell them, he, he, he !

Sea. What, sirrah ! is it a joke for you ?

Rob. I didn't laugh, sir.

Sea. (*very angry.*) But you did, you perfect fool !

(*Voices without.*) I'll tell his honor of it, that I will. His honor is a good master, and has always kept his house like a gentleman.

Sea. Did not I tell you not to let those angry idiots come to me ?

[*Exit by the opposite side from the noise, in great haste, whilst ROBERT pushes back the crowd of servants, who are seen pressing in at the door.*]

Rob. Get along all of you ! his honor won't be disturb'd.

[*Exeunt ; a great clamour heard as they retire.*]

SCENE IV.

LADY SARAH'S dressing-room. *Enter* LADY SARAH, followed by SOPHIA, carrying a work-basket in her hand, which she sets upon a work-table, and sits down to work.

Lady S. (*sitting down by her.*) Now I hope, Miss Seabright, I may flatter myself with having more of your company this morning than you generally favour me with. If Lord Allcrest does not come at an early hour, we shall have time for a good deal of work. When a young lady is industrious, and is not always reading nonsensical books, or running up and down after children, or watering two or three foolish flower-pots on her window, she can do a great many things for herself, that enable her to appear better dressed than girls who are more expensive. (*Pausing.*) You don't answer me.

Soph. Indeed, ma'am, I had better not, for I don't know what to say.

Lady S. You are a very prudent young lady, indeed, to make that a reason for holding your tongue.

Soph. It is a reason, indeed, which elder ladies do not always attend to.

Lady S. What gown is that you have put on to-day ? It makes you look like a child from the nursery. Mr. Supplecoat is to accompany Lord Allcrest, who is a very promising young man, of good expectations, and I could have wished you had dressed to more advantage. There is a young friend of mine, scarcely a year older than yourself, who is just going to be married to one of the best matches in the country ; and it is of great importance to have a daughter of a large family well and early settled in life.

Soph. (*looking very much surprised.*) O how different ! My poor mother used to say, that young women ought not to be married too early, but wait till they had sense to conduct themselves at the head of a family.

Lady S. Some of them would wait till they were pretty well wrinkled then.

Soph. It must be confessed that some, who do wait till they are pretty well wrinkled, are fain at last to marry without it. [*Voices heard without.*]

Lady S. (*rising quickly.*) It is my brother's voice : he is come early.

Enter SEABRIGHT, LORD ALLCREST, and SIR CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT.

Lady S. My dear brother, I am rejoiced to see you. (*Holding out her hand to LORD ALLCREST, who salutes her, and then curtsying very graciously to SIR CRAFTY.*)

Lord A. I am happy to see you look so well, sister.

Sir C. Lady Sarah looks as a bride ought to look, fair and cheerful.

Lady S. And Mr. Supplecoat talks as a courtier ought to talk : I need not say how.

Lord A. I beg pardon ; let me have the pleasure of introducing Sir Crafty Supplecoat to your ladyship.

Lady S. Every new honour that Sir Crafty acquires must give me pleasure. And permit me to introduce to your lordship, Mr. Seabright's— I mean my daughter, who has many good qualities to make her worthy of your esteem. (*Presenting SOPHIA to LORD ALL, and then to SIR CRAFTY ; who afterwards modestly shrinks back behind LADY S.*)

Sea. (*aside to LADY S., pulling her by the sleeve.*) What, is he made a baronet ?

Lady S. (*aside.*) Yes.

Sea. (*aside.*) A baronet, not a knight ?

Lady S. (*aside.*) No, no ; a baronet, certainly.

Sea. (*aloud.*) Permit me again to say how happy I am to see your lordship in this house : I hope you and Sir Crafty will not run away from us so soon as your letter gave us reason to fear.

Lord A. You are very obliging, my good sir ; but my time, as you may suppose, is of some little importance at present, and not altogether at my own command.

Sir C. His lordship's time has been so long devoted to the public, that he begins to believe it has a right to it.

Lord A. (*affecting humility.*) Why, I have been placed, without any merit of my own, in a situation which gives my country some claims upon me : ever since the time of Gilbert third Earl of Allcrest, the chiefs of my family have pursued one uniform line of public conduct.

Sir C. For which they have been rewarded with one uniform stream of ministerial approbation. Changes of men and of measures have never been able to interrupt the happy and mutual uniformity.

Lord A. I believe, indeed, without the imputation of vanity, I may boast of it. The imputation of pride I am not so anxious to avoid : it more naturally attaches itself to that dignified stability ; that high integrity—I mean that public virt—I should say—(*mumbling indistinctly to himself*) which my family has been conspicuous for.

Sir C. Pride is a fault that great men blush not to own : it is the ennobled offspring of self-love ; though, it must be confessed, grave and pompous vanity, like a fat plebeian in a robe of office, does very often assume its name.

Lord A. Ha, ha ! Sir Crafty, you have a pleasant imagination : one can see that you sometimes read books.

Sir C. I would rather follow your example, my lord, in the more agreeable study of men. No : I very seldom take a book in my hand, unless it be

patronised by some great name, or have the honour, as has been the case with one of our best works lately, to be dedicated to your lordship.

Lord A. I am obliged to you, Supplecoat ; I am sure I am very happy if a name of so little importance as mine can be of any use to the learned world : we all owe learning a great deal.

Sir C. I am sure the patronage of your lordship's name is a full recompense to learning for all the obligations you owe her.

Lord A. (*bowing graciously, and then turning to SEABRIGHT, as if modestly to interrupt the stream of his own praise.*) Mr. Seabright, I must have a conversation with you in your library, when you can bestow as much leisure upon me. Most of our elections are already decided, and the ensuing parliament bids fair to be as united and as meritorious as its predecessor. In those places where I have the honour to possess some little influence, the constitution, the government or ministry—that is to say the same thing, you know, will find hearty and zealous supporters : I think I may depend at least on the member for Crockdale. (*Bowing.*)

Sea. I hope I shall always be found to merit the friendship and alliance I have the honour of bearing to your lordship.

Lord A. (*drawing back coldly.*) Friendship is always the strongest tie, Mr. Seabright : indeed the only one that is now held in any consideration, or indeed ever mentioned.

Sea. (*mortified, and drawing back also.*) I am ready to attend you, my lord, whenever you please : I shall have the honour of showing you the way to my library.

Lord A. I am infinitely obliged to you. Will you go with us too, Sir Crafty ? You have a list of the voters for Underwall in your pocket. The ladies will excuse us.

[*Exit LORD ALL., SIR CRAFTY, and SEA., who goes out with them, and re-enters almost immediately.*]

Sea. (*to LADY S.*) His lordship sent me back to borrow your spectacles.

Lady S. Spectacles ! I use no such thing.

Sea. He says you do.

Lady S. O yes, there is a particular kind, which I sometimes look through to examine any thing very minutely.

[*After receiving the spectacles and going to the door, he suddenly stops and turns back.*]

Sea. But is it your brother's interest that has made Supplecoat a baronet ?

Lady S. I dare say it is.

Sea. Yes, yes, I make no doubt of it.

[*Exit, hurrying away.*]

Lady S. (*to SOPH, angrily.*) What made you, child, skulk behind backs so, like a simpleton ?— You can be fluent enough when there is no occasion for it, and when you ought to speak you have not

a word to say for yourself. This is true nursery breeding.

Soph. Indeed, madam, you may thank yourself for it; for after what you said to me, before they arrived, about Sir Crafty Supplecoat and marrying, I could not bear to look at him; and every time he looked at me, I felt strange and mortified, just as if I had been set there to be looked at. He is the most disagreeable man I ever saw in my life.

Lady S. Don't be uneasy! you have little chance, I'm afraid, of being molested by him. But I forget; I must write to my friend, Mrs. Cudimore: her husband is in credit now, and I have been too negligent a correspondent. [Exit.

Soph. (sighing deeply). O dear! O dear! O dear me! she sleeps quietly under the green sod whom I would right gladly lie down beside.

[Exit sorrowfully.

SCENE V.

A small room with SOPHIA's books and music, and flower-pots, &c. set in order. Enter SOPHIA very sorrowful, leaning upon nurse.

Soph. O my dear nurse, you are our best friend; and so she is going to send you away from us.—What will become of the poor children now? What will become of us all by-and-bye? And my father, too, even my father? Oh, how it grieved me to see him courting that proud lord, who seems ashamed to consider him as a brother-in-law! To see even my father looked down upon—it goes to my heart.

Nurse. Let him take what he gets, an' a murrain to him! he had no business to bring her here to torment us all, after the dear lady we have lost. But dry up your tears; we'll be revenged upon her: there is not a creature in the house that has not sworn it; we'll be revenged upon her.

Soph. What do you mean, nurse?

Nurse. I must not tell you, my dear young lady; it is not proper that you should know any thing of it; but all the servants are joined in a plot, and they'll damp her courage, I warrant ye; they'll scare her finely.

Soph. (skipping and clapping her hands). O, I shall be so glad to have her well scared! And I wish they would steal that nasty dog of hers, for she is kind to no living creature but it.

Nurse. Nay, to give the devil his due, I believe she is growing fond of little Tony.

Soph. Little Tony?

Nurse. Yes, indeed: it is strange enough; but the other day as she passed through the hall, we were all looking sourly enough upon her, no doubt: when what possessed the child I don't know, but he held out his arms to her and smiled.

Soph. Nasty little toad! to hold out his arms to her.

Nurse. And would you believe it, she took him

in her arms, kissed him very kindly, and has taken to him wonderfully ever since.

Soph. And do you think she really loves him?

Nurse. Upon my honest word I do.

Soph. O, then don't let them do any harm to her; don't let them take any revenge upon her: if she love Tony I would not have her hurt.

Nurse. O, but she loves none of the rest; she is as hard as a millstone to the other two. O la! here comes that fine Sir Crafty, as they call him: I wonder what can bring him here: can he be coming after you, Miss Sophy? (With a significant smile.)

Soph. Now don't say so, nurse, for you know I can't bear it.

Enter SIR CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT, advancing to SOPHIA with a very courteous smiling face, whilst she shrinks back, and keeps close to nurse.

Soph. (aside). O don't go, nurse.

Sir C. Lady Sarah has had the goodness, Miss Seabright, to send you a very willing messenger, who is happy to find any pretence in the world to present himself before you.

Nurse (aside to SOPH.). It is just as I said. (Aloud to SIR C.) Meaning yourself, sir?

Sir C. Yes: well guessed, nurse! you are cunning enough, I see: you have the true sagacity about you that becomes your occupation; and I doubt not that your young lady has profited by your very instructive society. Now that you have found out the messenger, perhaps Miss Seabright herself may guess what his errand is. (With an affected smile.)

Nurse (aside to SOPHIA, who shrinks back still more). Ay, it is very like courting, I assure you.

Sir C. (advancing as she recedes). Will not Miss Seabright do me the honour to bestow one thought upon it? I cannot doubt of her ability to guess my errand, if she will have the condescension.

Nurse (aside to SOPH.). Yes, yes, it is the very thing: I have heard many a courtship begin after this fashion.

Soph. (to SIR C., very much embarrassed and frightened). I—I—I'm surc I don't know.

Sir C. (still advancing towards her as she recedes, with a more intolerable leer on his face). Nay, do have the goodness to give me this proof of the skill you have acquired in this refined academy of improvement, and tell me on what errand I am come.

Soph. (becoming angry). I'm surc I don't know, unless it be to make a fool of me, and I don't think I need to stay any longer for that purpose.

[Runs out.

Nurse (running after her). Don't run away, Miss Sophy: he is a good-looking gentleman, and very civil spoken, too.

[Exit.

Sir C. (looking after them). Ha, ha, ha!

Enter SHARP at the side by which they have gone out.

Sharp. You are merry, sir : I believe I can guess what amuses you.

Sir C. I dare say thou canst, Sharp : it is easy enough to see what they have got into their foolish heads. Ha, ha, ha ! does the political Lady Sarah think to put off her troublesome nursery girl upon Crafty Supplecoat ? But let me encourage the mistake for a little : it will strengthen my interest with Lord Allcrest, which at present is necessary to me. Thou understandst me, Sharp ?

Sharp. Yes, yes, sir ; and you'll have little trouble in keeping it up ; for the servants, thanks to Mrs. Pry's gossiping, who is in her lady's secrets, have got it so strongly into their heads, that if you but pick up the young lady's glove when she drops it, they think you are putting a ring on her finger.

Sir C. I thank thee, Sharp ; and if thou canst at any time pick up, in thine own way, any information that may be useful to me, thou shalt not go without thy reward. And how does the young lady like her stepmother's scheme ? hast thou heard them talk about that ?

Sharp. Nay, they say she dislikes it very much, and is deucedly shy about it.

Sir C. (smiling conceitedly). Pooh, pooh, pooh ! she must be allowed to have her little management as well as older people : deceit is inherent in the human mind. I came here at Lady Sarah's desire, to request that she would bring her music-book into the drawing-room, and play to us ; and she took it into her head—but what brought you here to seek me ? Is the horse-dealer come to look at my ponies ?

Sharp. Yes, sir.

Sir C. Then I must go to him.

[Exit SIR CRAFTY, whilst SHARP remains behind, musing, as if in serious thought about something.]

Enter ROBERT, in a great rage.

Rob. Ay ! what vile tricks are you thinking of ? I have overheard, at the door here, all that you and your vile master have been saying. My young lady to be made a fool of for his condescension, indeed ! She's a match for a better man than him any day in the year ; there is not a lord of the land too good for her. But I'll be revenged upon him, vile serpent that he is ! I'll be revenged upon him !

Sharp. Well, don't be so loud, my good Robert, and you will perhaps be satisfied. He has twice promised to get me a place or to raise my wages for me, and if he break his word with me a third time—I know what. Come, man, let us go and have a glass together. [*Exit.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A small country inn near SEABRIGHT'S house. Enter BEAUMONT, MORGAN, and WILLIAM BEAUMONT.

Beau. (to MOR.) Well, my good sir, how do you like travelling once more a little easy forenoon's journey in your native country ?

Mor. Every thing in my native country is pleasant to me, or at least ought to be so ; but I don't know ; I return to it again like a dog to a deserted house ; he begins to wag his tail at the threshold, but there is nobody to welcome him in ; there is another generation grown up, that knows not me ; there is nothing but young people now in the world.

Beau. But those young people will love and esteem you, and honour you. The caresses even of cheerful infancy go very kindly to an old man's heart. Come, come ! you shall see the promising family your niece has left behind her, and your heart will warm to them. Seabright has, I fear, set an ungracious step-mother over their head ; but she, perhaps, looks more so than she is.—Here comes our landlady.

Enter Landlady.

Good morning, Mrs. Thrifty.

Land. (to BEAU.) O sir ! I be glad to see you !

Beau. I thank you, good landlady : take good care of my wife.

Land. That I will, sir ! she's in the green chamber, giving orders to her maid. And this young gentleman is your son, I suppose. *(Turning and curtseying to WILL.)*

Beau. Yes, my good madam.

Land. Blessings on him ! Ay, if he be like his father, the blessings of the widow and the helpless will rest upon him.—You are going to the Squire's, I suppose ?

Beau. Yes, landlady ; how does the family do ?

Land. O lud, sir ! what an altered family it be ; the servants a-grumbling ; the lady a-scolding ; the Squire himself going up and down like a man possessed, as they tell me, and can't sleep in his bed o'nights for writing to dukes and lords and such like, and tormenting himself, poor man, just to be made a Sir or a Knight, or some nonsense or other of that kind ;—and then all the poor children ; it grieves me to see them like so many chickens that have got no dam to gather them together, though I'm sure that dear good young lady does all that she can for them. I see her every morning from the room overhead, which overlooks their garden, walking with them as if she were the mother of them all, though I warrant you she's soon snubbed into the house again : O, it grieves me to see them !

Will. (eagerly). In the room overhead did you say? and in the morning? about this time?

Land. I don't know if just at this very time.

Will. I dare say she is. (*Going out eagerly.*)

Beau. But you wanted to read that paragraph about your friend, William, and here is the newspaper just come.

Will. (impatiently). O hang it! not now: I don't care if I never read it. [*Exit quickly.*]

Beau. (to land.) And he can't sleep in his bed, they say, for writing letters to great people?

Land. Yes, sir, so they say; but there may be other reasons for a man not resting in his bed.

Beau. And what other reasons may there be?

Land. Sir, my grandfather was sexton of the parish, and would have thought nothing of digging you a grave in a dark winter evening, or ringing the church bell in the middle of the night, with never a living creature near him but his dog and his lantern, and I have myself sat up with dead corpses ere now, and I can't but say they always lay very quietly when I was with them; therefore I'm not a very likely person, you know, to give heed to foolish stories about ghosts and such like. Howsoever, the servants say that they hear strange noises since their new lady came home; and some of them swear that they have heard their late lady's footsteps walking along the hall in the middle of the night, as plainly as when she was alive.

Beau. That is strange enough, landlady.

Land. To be sure it is, sir; but what shall we say against it? for misers come back to the world again to look after their gold, why may not a mother come back to it again to look after her children, oppressed by a hard-hearted step-mother?

Beau. Indeed, it would be difficult in this case to gainsay it. But let us have coffee in the next room. I pray you, as soon as you can.

Land. Immediately, sir. [*Exit landlady.*]

Beau. This is a strange untoward account that our good landlady gives us of the family. One can find out, however, that domestic comfort is no more the lot of poor Seabright—but we shall see when we go to him what state he is in.

Mor. You will see yourself then, for I shan't go to him at all.

Beau. No! don't say so, my good friend: he was an affectionate husband to your niece, and an indulgent father to her children. (*MOR. shakes his head.*) When his wife died his old habits were broken up; he is of an aspiring disposition; a high alliance and a borough presented themselves to him, and he fell into the snare. (*MOR. still shakes his head.*) He has married a woman who is narrow-minded naturally; but that disposition has been strengthened by circumstances: she has long been left, as a single woman, to support high rank upon a very small income, and has lived much with those to whom begging and solicitations are no disgrace: differently

circumstanced she might have been more respectable, and when differently circumstanced she may become so.

Mor. Go to him thyself, Beaumont: I am an old man; my life's bark has been long buffeted about on a stormy sea, and I have seen cruel sights. I do not look upon my fellow-men with the same gentle eye as thou dost: I cannot love them myself, but I love thee because thou dost: so e'en take me home to thine own house! no other house will I enter; and let me have an arm-chair by thy fire-side to end my days in, where I may sit at my ease, and grumble at the whole human race.

Beau. No, no! you shall see all your relations; and love them too, and do what is right by every one of them.

Mor. Do it for me then: I can't be troubled with it. Take my fortune into your own hands, and dispose of it as you please.

Beau. No; you shall do it yourself; and the blessings of those you bestow it upon shall fall on your own head undivided and unintercepted.

Mor. I will take the simplest and shortest way of settling my fortune; I'll give it all to your son.

Beau. (stretching himself up with a proud smile). Yes, if he will have it.

Enter WILLIAM B. with great animation.

Will. I've seen her, father! I've seen her!

Beau. Whom have you seen?

Will. My cousin Sophy: she is in the garden just now with all the children about her; and they have pulled off her hat in their play, and she looks so pretty—I—I mean good-humoured, and—

Beau. (smiling). There is no harm in calling her pretty, William.—But Mr. Morgan has got something very serious to say to you: he wishes to settle his fortune upon you.

Mor. Yes, my brave William, every shilling of it.

Will. What! and Sophia and all the little Seabrights, who are as nearly related to you, to have nothing!

Mor. It shall be all your own.

Will. (with great vehemence). No, sir, no; not one sixpence more than should naturally belong to me.

Mor. Ah! I see how it is: I am a blasted tree from which no sapling shoots: my grey hairs are despised.

Will. O say not so, my good sir! (*Bending one knee to the ground, and kissing the old man's hand.*) I will bow my head as affectionately beneath your blessing as the most dutiful child. But you shall have many children to respect and love you! and one of them—O you shall see one of them that will make your heart leap with pleasure. (*Hurrying away.*)

Beau. Where are you going in such haste?

Will. Never mind; I'll soon return. [*Exit.*]

Mor. (to Beau, who looks significantly to him). Yes,

my friend, he was sent to you from Him who has given you many blessings.

Beau. But none like this (*fervently*). He is a brave and upright spirit, passing with me through this world to a better. When he was but so high, yea but so high, how his little heart would spurn at all injustice!

Enter MRS. BEAUMONT.

Mrs. B. Where is William?

Beau. He is gone over the way, I believe, to fetch Sophia here.

Mrs. B. I'm glad of that: I came here only to see her, and I will never enter Seabright's door again as long as I live.

Beau. "As long as I live," my dear, is a phrase of very varied significations: it means the term of an angry woman's passion, or a fond woman's fancy, or a —

Mrs. B. Or a good man's simplicity, Mr. Beaumont. Do you think I will ever enter the house where that woman is the mistress; unfeeling, indelicate, uncivil?

Beau. But she won't squander his fortune, however, and that is a good thing for the children.

Mrs. B. Pooh, Mr. Beaumont! the wickedest creature on earth has always your good word for some precious quality or other.

Beau. Well, my dear, and the wickedest creature in the world always has something about it that shows whose creature it is — that shows we were all meant for a good end; and that there is a seed — a springing place — a beginning for it, in every body.

Mrs. B. It is a very small speck with her, then, I'm sure, and would elude any body's search but your own.

Beau. Now, Mr. Morgan, don't think hardly of my wife's disposition, because she is angry at present: I assure you she is a very good woman, and has an excellent heart: she is in all things better than myself, though I'm of a more composed disposition.

Mrs. B. (*softened*). My dear Beaumont! I chide you as a child, and I honour you as a man! But no more of this. — Does William tell Sophia that she is to meet her great-uncle here?

Mor. I hope he will not: I should wish to be unknown for some time, that I may observe and determine for myself, since you will make me act for myself.

Beau. Go, then, into the next room with Mrs. Beaumont: I'll wait for them here, and if he has not told her already, I'll desire him to conceal it. I hear them coming.

[*Exeunt MRS. B. and MORGAN.*]

Enter WILLIAM B. leading in SOPHIA.

Soph. But whom are you taking me to see?

Will. You shall know by-and-by. — But do stop a moment, Sophy, and pull back the hat a little from

your face: you look best with it so. (*Stopping and putting her hat to rights.*) That will do. — And throw away that foolish basket out of your hands; (*taking a flower-basket from her, in which she seems to have been gathering rose-leaves, and throwing it away*); and pray, now, hold up your head a little better.

Soph. But what is all this preparation for?

[*BEAU., who had retired to the bottom of the stage, unobserved by them, now advances softly behind*

SOPH. and makes a sign to WILLIAM to be silent.

Will. You are to see somebody that loves you very much, and likes to see you look well, you know; you are to see your aunt.

Soph. But there is somebody else you told me of.

Will. Yes, there is an old connection of ours with her; and pray now, Sophy, look pleasantly upon him! for he is an old man, and has met with misfortunes; he has been in foreign countries; he has been in prisons, and has had chains on his legs.

Soph. O then, I am sure I shall look upon him kindly!

[*Exeunt SOPH. and WILL., followed at a distance by BEAUMONT.*]

SCENE II.

A large room in SEABRIGHT'S house. LADY SARAH is discovered sitting by a table writing, near the bottom of the stage.

Lady S. There is so much light thrown across my paper here, it makes me almost blind. Who's there? is it you, Pry?

Enter PRY from the adjoining room.

Pry. Yes, my lady; I sits in this room here pretty often, for the servants are vulgar and rude to me, and my own room is so lonesome I can't bear to be in it. Not that I hear any of them noises, excepting in the night-time; yet I can't help thinking of it all day long when I am alone. — First it comes to my door, "low, low, low!" just like a great bull: then it comes presently after, "serie, serie, serie!" just like a raven, or a cock, or a cat, or any of those wild animals; and then for the groans that it gives — O! an old jack that has not been oiled for a twelvemonth is a joke to it.

Lady S. (*gravely*). Remove this table for me to the other end of the room: it is too much in the sun here. (*PRY removes the table near the front of the stage, and LADY S. sits down to write again without speaking; then looking up and seeing PRY still by her.*) Leave me.

Pry. I'm just going, my lady: I believe I told you, my lady, that Robert tells me, the vicar always expects the present of a new gown and cassock when he is sent for to lay a ghost in any gented house.

Lady S. Leave me, I say; I'll hear no more of that nonsense at present.

[*Exit PRY, and enter SEABRIGHT.*]

Sea. What has that absurd creature been chattering about?

Lady S. Still about those strange noises.

Sea. I thought so: every noise is a thief or a ghost with her. Whom are you writing to?

Lady S. I am writing to Lady Puler, to beg she will have the goodness to send me a few lines by return of post, to let me know how her rheumatism is: her husband, you know, may have it in his power to serve you.

Sea. (*nodding.*) That is very right, my dear.

Lady S. And here is a letter I have just written to Lady Mary Markly: she is a spiteful toad, and I never could endure her; but she is going to be married for the third time to a near relation of the minister's, and it will be proper in me, you know, to be very much interested in her approaching happiness.

Sea. Yes, perfectly right, my dear Lady Sarah; I won't interrupt you. (*Sits down.*)

Lady S. Indeed, my dear Seabright, I have been in the habit of studying these things, and I know how to make my account of it. If people would but attend to it, every acquaintance that they make, every letter that they write, every dinner that they give, might be made to turn to some advantage.

Sea. (*hastily, with marks of disgust.*) No, no! that is carrying it too far!

Lady S. Not at all, Mr. Seabright! I sent a basket of the best fruit in your garden this morning even to old Mrs. Pewterer, the mayor of Crockdale's mother-in-law, and I dare say it won't be thrown away.

Sea. (*smiling.*) Well that, however, was very well thought of. But I interrupt you. (*She continues to write, and he sits musing for some time, then speaking to himself.*) A baronet of Great Britain and seven thousand a-year! (*Smiling to himself.*) Ay, that would be a resting-place at which I could put up my horses, and say I have travelled far enough. A baronet of Great Britain, and seven thousand a-year!

Lady S. (*looking up from her paper.*) A baronet of Great Britain you will soon be; this day's post, I trust, will inform you of that honour being conferred upon you; but the seven thousand a-year, I wish we were as sure of having that added to it.

Sea. I wish we were; but Mr. Plausible has been with me last night, and has pointed out a way to me, in which, by venturing a considerable capital on very small risk, a most prodigious gain might be made; and in which, money laid out—

Lady S. (*interrupting him eagerly.*) Will never return any more! (*Getting up alarmed.*) Pray, pray, my dear Seabright, don't frighten me! The very idea of such a scheme will throw me into a fit.—Don't let that man enter the house any more—he

is a dark-eyed, needy-looking man—don't let him come here any more.

Sea. Why, what alarms you so much? he is a very uncommon man, and a man of genius.

Lady S. Keep him out of the house, then, for heaven's sake! there is never any good got by admitting men of genius; and you may keep them all out of your house, I'm sure, without being very inhospitable.

Sea. Your over-caution will be a clog upon my fortune.

Lady S. A clog upon your fortune, Mr. Seabright! Am not I doing every thing that a woman can do to advance it? am not I writing letters for you? making intimacies for you? paying visits for you? teasing every body that is related to me within the fiftieth degree of consanguinity for you?—and is this being a clog upon your fortune?

Sea. Well, well! we shall see what it all comes to.

Lady S. Yes, we shall see; this very post will inform you of our success; I'm sure of it: and see, here are the letters.

Enter PRY with letters, which she gives to SEA; and then puts one down on the table for LADY SARAH, who is so busy looking at SEABRIGHT's that she does not perceive it.

Lady S. (*to PRY, who seems inclined to stay.*) Don't wait: I shall call when I want you.

[*Exit PRY.*]

Sea. (*opening a letter, and running his eye over it, eagerly.*) Hang it! it is about the altering of a turnpike road. (*Throws it away impatiently, and opens another letter, which he reads in like manner.*) Stuff and nonsense, about friendship, and old acquaintance, and so on! What a parcel of fools there are in the world! Ha! what seal is this? (*Opening another letter eagerly.*) Intolerable! it is a letter from your brother, and only a common-place letter of compliment, with never a word on the subject! (*Tearing the letters in a rage, and strewing them upon the floor.*) Cursed be pen, ink, and paper, and every one that puts his trust in them!

Lady S. Don't destroy the blank sides of your letters, Mr. Seabright, they will do to write notes upon.

Sea. O confound your little minute economy, Lady Sarah! it comes across me every now and then like the creeping of a spider: it makes me mad.

Lady S. (*putting aside her papers, much offended.*) I think I need scarcely give myself the trouble of writing any more to-day. (*Seeing the letter on her table.*) Ha! a letter from my brother to me! (*Opening it.*) And of a later date I fancy than that which you have received. (*Reads it with her countenance brightening up.*)

Sea. (*looking eagerly at her.*) What's in it? (*She is silent.*) What's in it? for heaven's sake tell me!

Lady S. (*going up to him with a smiling face, and*

an affected formal curtsy). I have the honour to congratulate Sir Anthony Seabright.

Sea. Is it really so? Is it really so? Let me see, let me see. (*Snatches the letter from her, and reads it.*) O it is so, in very truth!—Give me your hand, my dear Lady Sarah! and give me a kiss too. (*Kisses her on one cheek, and she graciously turns to him the other.*) O one will do very well.—Where are all the children? let every soul in the house come about me!—No, no, no! let me be decent; let me be moderate.

Enter PLAUSIBLE.

Sea. (*going up joyfully to him.*) How do you do? how do you do, my very good friend?

Lady S. (*pulling SEA. by the sleeve.*) You know you are engaged; you can't speak with any body at present.

Sea. I can do all I have to do very well, and give a quarter of an hour to Mr. Plausible, notwithstanding.

Lady S. (*still pulling him.*) You have many letters to write, and many other things.—You understand me?

Plaus. I shall have the pleasure of calling, then, to-morrow morning.

Lady S. He is engaged to-morrow morning.

Plaus. And in the evening also?

Lady S. Yes, sir, and every hour in the day.—He has not yet laid out his fortune to such advantage as will enable him to bestow quite so much leisure time upon his friends as Mr. Plausible.

Plaus. I can never regret the leisure time I have upon my hands, since it has given me an opportunity of obliging your ladyship: I have procured the inestimable receipt for whitening linen without soap, that I mentioned to you, and I shall bring it to you to-morrow.

Lady S. Pray don't take the trouble! I am much obliged to you: but we are all so much occupied! (*To SEA.*) Are not you going to write by return of post?

Sea. (*to PLAUS.*) I am really much engaged at present: the King has been graciously pleased, though most unworthy of it, and most unlooked-for on my part, to honour me with the dignity of a baronet of Great Britain.

Plaus. I rejoice, my dear sir, I congratulate you with all my heart; and I have the honour to congratulate your ladyship also.

Lady S. I thank you, sir—good morning—good morning.

Sea. (*to PLAUS.*) Trifling as these things may be, yet as a mark of royal favour—

Lady S. (*impatiently.*) Yes, yes; he knows all that well enough.—Good morning. (*To PLAUS.*) You will positively have no time to write your letters by the return of post. (*To SEA. pulling him away, who bows to PLAUS. and goes with her unwillingly.* Turn-

ing round suddenly to PLAUS. as they are just going out.) Whitening linen without soap?

Plaus. Yes, madam; and no expense of any kind in the business.

Lady S. When you are passing this way, at any rate, I should be glad to look at it.

Plaus. I shall have the honour very soon of calling upon your ladyship.

Lady S. You are very obliging. You will excuse us; you will excuse us, Mr. Plausible; we are really obliged to be extremely rude to you.

[*Exeunt LADY S. and SEA.*

Plaus. (*alone.*) Ha, ha, ha! I shall keep my hold still, I find.

Enter PROWLER, looking cautiously about as he enters.

What do you want?

Prowl. Unless you want to be laid up by the heels, don't go out of this house by the same door that you entered it. I have waited in the passage here to tell you.

Plaus. Ha! have they found me out?

Prowl. Yes, by my faith, there are two as ugly looking fellows waiting for you at the front entry as ever made a poor debtor's heart quake. There is surely some back door in this house.

Enter ROBERT.

(*To ROB.*) My good friend, I want to know where we can find a back way out of this house.

Rob. And I want to know when I am to have the crown I intrusted to you.

Prowl. To me, sir?

Rob. Yes, to you, sir; and you know it very well, you do.

Prowl. O! you are my friend, Robert, that I was inquiring after.

Rob. Yes, sir; and I will have my money directly; for I know you are a cheat; I know it by your very face.

Prowl. Ha, ha, ha! So you prefer having a crown to-day to receiving ten guineas to-morrow?

Rob. Receiving ten fiddle-strings to-morrow! Pay me my crown directly.

Prowl. Very well, with all my heart; but you must sign me a paper, in the first place, giving up all right to the ten guineas you are entitled to. (*ROBERT hesitates.*) Nay, nay, I'm not such an ass as you take me for: there is pen, ink and paper. (*Pointing to the table.*) Sign me a right to the ten guineas directly.

Rob. (*scratching his head.*) Well, we'll let it stand, if you please, till another time.

Prowl. I thought so: faith you're too cunning for me! But show us the way to the back door, quickly.

Rob. And should you like to come that way to-morrow, when you bring me the money? I shall be sure to be in the way to let you in.

Proul. Let us out by the back door to-day, and let me in to-morrow by any door you please.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

SEABRIGHT'S library. *Enter SEABRIGHT, as if from a short journey, and the Eldest Boy running after him.*

Boy. O papa, papa! I'm glad you're come back again; and have you said over your speech to the parliament? and did they say any fine speeches back again to you?

Sea. Go away, George: I'm fatigued; I can't speak to you now.

Enter ROBERT.

Rob. Won't your honour have some refreshment after your journey? My lady is gone out an airing; you had better have something.

Sea. No, nothing, Robert.—A glass of water, if you please. (*Sits down grave and dispirited, whilst ROBERT fetches the water, and the boy plays about the room.*)

Rob. (*presenting the water.*) I'll warrant now that you have had a power of fine talking in this parliament house; and I'll warrant your honour's speech was as well regarded as any of it.

Sea. I thank you, Robert: I am fatigued, and would be alone for a little: take that boy away in your hand. (*Exeunt ROB. and the boy, and SEA. remains some time musing with a dissatisfied face; then speaking to himself.*) "The conciseness with which the Honourable Baronet who spoke last has treated this question." Ah! but I was,—I was too concise! The whole train of connecting and illustrative thoughts, which I had been at so much pains, beforehand, to fix and arrange in my head, vanished from me as I rose to speak; and nothing of all that I had prepared presented itself before me, but the mere heads of the subject, standing up barren and bare, like so many detached rocks in a desert land. (*Starting up.*) This will never do! I'm sure I have not spared myself: I have laboured night and day at this speech: I have worked at it like a slave in a mine; and yet, when I came to the push, it deceived me. (*Shaking his head.*) This will never do! let me rest satisfied with what I have got, and think of being a speaker no more. (*Stands despondingly for a little while, with his arms across, then suddenly becoming animated.*) No! I will not give it up! I saw an old school-fellow of mine in the lobby, as I went out, who whispered to the person standing next him as I passed, that I was his townsman. Does not this look as if my speech, even such as I was

enabled to give it, had been approved of? O, I will not give it up! This is the only way to high distinctions: I must drudge and labour still. Heigh ho! (*Yawning grievously. A gentle tap is heard at the door.*) Who's there? (*Angrily.*)

Soph. (*without.*) May I come in, papa?

Sea. Yes, yes; but what do you want?

Enter SOPHIA timidly.

Soph. I only come, my dear sir, to see how you do after your journey. But you don't look well, papa; you don't look happy: has any thing displeased you?

Sea. No, my good girl.

Soph. (*kissing his hand.*) I thank you, papa, for calling me your good girl: I was your good girl.

Sea. And are so still, my dear Sophia: but you must sometimes excuse me; I am not very happy.

Soph. Ah, papa! I know what makes you unhappy.

Sea. (*Shaking his head.*) Thou dost not! thou dost not!

Soph. Ah, but I do! and nobody told it me neither—I can just see it my own self. You are giving yourself a great deal of trouble, and courting very proud and disagreeable people, for what you very probably won't get; and you are grieved to think that Lady Sarah does not treat us so kindly as she might do. But don't be unhappy: don't court those proud people any more: you have enough to live upon as you used to do; and Lady Sarah will be kinder to us by-and-bye. I know she will; for she loves little Tony already; and if she should not, we will never complain.

Sea. (*kissing her.*) My sweet child! thou deservest—O thou deservest more than I can ever do for thee!

Soph. (*gladly.*) Do you say so, indeed? O then do this for me!

Sea. What is it, Sophia?

Soph. Trouble yourself no more with great people, and studying speeches for that odious parliament; and when Lady Sarah is out of the way, let the children come and play about you again, as they used to do.

Sea. (*tenderly.*) I thank you, my good child, but you don't understand these things. (*Walks thoughtfully across the room, and then returns to her again.*) There is an office which Lord Allcrest has promised to procure for me, that would bring me a considerable and permanent addition to my income; if I once had that secured, I believe, in truth, it would be no unwise thing in me to follow your advice.

Soph. O, my dear sir, I hope you will have it, then! (*Skipping joyfully.*) I hope you will have it!

[*Enter a servant, and announces SIR CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT.*]

Sea. Sir Crafty here! can any thing have happened for me?

Soph. O if it should be the place!—But shall I go away? for I don't like to see that man.

Sea. No, my dear, stay with me; I like to have you beside me.

Soph. Then I will stay: for I am happy now, and I can look upon him boldly.

Enter SIR CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT.

Sea. Sir Crafty, your servant; I'm very happy to see you.

Sir C. Your servant, Sir Anthony; I'm happy in being able to pay you my respects.—Miss Seabright I hope is well. (*Bowing to SOPH., who returns his civility with cheerfulness.*) Indeed, Sir Anthony, I have longed ever since I heard your speech in the House, which, for a maiden speech—Well, I will not say what it was.—I have longed to declare to you the extreme pleasure I take in the fair career that is now opened before you, and in being permitted to consider myself as one of your friends.

Sea. You do me great honour; I am infinitely obliged to you. My speech indeed ought—it ought to have—(*hesitating*)

Sir C. To have been just what it was, my dear baronet. Your friends enjoyed it; and, let me say it freely, without envy.

Sea. I am much flattered; their praises are—
are—(*hesitating*)

Sir C. Are proportioned to their admiration, Sir Anthony; and they have great pleasure in talking of it.

Sea. (*eagerly*). Ha! do they talk much of it?

Sir C. Yes; more than I would venture to repeat to you.

Sea. Friends, indeed, say many things that ought not to be believed.

Sir C. I assure you, yours say many things which one of the qualities you so eminently possess would not, perhaps, suffer you to believe. Eloquence—eloquence, my dear sir—great things are to be attained in this country by eloquence. Eloquence and high connections give a man such velocity in moving, that nothing can stop his career.—But I ought to tell you, by-the-bye, that old Saunter is dead, unexpectedly; and that office, if indeed it can be considered as any object to you now, is ready for your acceptance.

Soph. (*aside to SEA.*) Is that the office, papa?

Sea. Yes, child: hold your tongue. (*Aloud.*) I am obliged to you for this intelligence, Sir Crafty: an office for life, though not very considerable, is of some consequence to a man who has a family of children. (*SOPH. takes her father's hand and presses it gratefully.*)

Sir C. Ha, ha, ha! Sir Anthony Seabright, with all his abilities and connections, is, like a very good father, anxious to provide for his family! I thought, my dear sir, such talents as yours had generally been accompanied with an aspiring temper; but

Lady Saral's prudent character, I perceive, has had its effect upon you.

Sea. No, no; you are wrong.

Sir C. Nay, pardon me if I say that you also are wrong, in fixing yourself down, in the very beginning of your career, as a quiet unambitious man, who is glad to be early provided for in a quiet, humble permanency; for this office, you know, is regarded as—

Sea. (*interrupting him eagerly*). What, is it regarded in that light?

Sir C. It really is. Mr. Trotman, now promoted to a peerage, and whose first speech, by-the-bye, very much resembled your own, refused it on that very account; and Mr. Brown, and Mr. Wilson, and Sir Samuel Soppet, and many other Misters and Sirs, promoted to the same dignity, would never have got on, be assured, if they had thus fixed themselves down at the very threshold of advancement.

Sea. But I see no reason why accepting such an office as this should hinder one from advancing.

Sir C. I can give you no good reason for it, I confess; but there have been certain places, time out of mind, which have, somehow or other, been considered as indicative or otherwise of promotion, and which stand up in the great field of honours like finger-posts in a wide-tracked common, saying "This is the way to such a place:" they who are once possessed of those places, move on to the others, for no earthly reason, that we can perceive, but because they have been placed in the first; and this you will readily allow is no time for innovation.

Sea. I believe there is something in what you say.

Sir C. There is so much in it, that if you can find some less aspiring friend, to whom you can with confidence give up this office, relying on his honour to assist you with the full weight of his interest on all future occasions, I am sure you will never think of accepting it.

Soph. (*laying hold of her father's arm, and speaking eagerly to SIR CRAFTY*). Ah, but he will though!

Sea. Sophia, you forget yourself. (*She shrinks back abashed.*)

Sir C. (*smiling*). It is an amiable weakness in this interested age to forget yourself, and confined, I believe, to young ladies alone.

Soph. (*provoked and roused*). I believe, at least, political baronets, though not very old, do but seldom fall into it. (*Archly*). And I know, papa, who this friend is that will so kindly take this office off your hands. Sir Crafty will name him to you by-and-bye: it is a man who does not forget himself.

Sea. (*displeased*). What is the meaning of this, Sophia? I never saw you thus petulant before: I beg of you to retire: Sir Crafty and I must not be interrupted.

Soph. I will retire, my dear sir—but oh! (*taking*

her father's hand and pressing it) but oh!—you know what I would say to you.

[*Exit, casting a significant look to SEABRIGHT as she goes out.*]

Sea. (after a considerable pause). Sir Crafty, there is much in what you say, and I believe you are perfectly disinterested in the advice you give me; but I don't know that I could justify myself to my own mind in refusing this office.

Sir C. There are few men less interested than myself; I will say it, Sir Anthony; I will say it, proudly.—Pardon me, however, I do not presume to advise you; but hearing Lord Clacker, and the Marquis of Lackland, and some others, talking of your speech, and the usual race of such abilities, and so forth, many suggestions arose in my mind, in regard to you, my dear sir, which I very naturally supposed just now might have presented themselves to your own.

Sea. Ha! did Lord Clacker and the Marquis of Lackland talk of my speech, and my ability—I mean the probable effects of my situation and connections?

Sir C. I assure you they spoke of both in a way very gratifying for a friend, so much interested in your promotion as I am, to hear:—but remember, I give you no advice: I am a young man, and apt, perhaps, to be too sanguine where the admiration of talents may mislead me: I am too presumptuous to mention my opinion at all.

Sea. (taking his hand with warmth). O, no! I like you the better for it! to be warmly sanguine is characteristic and graceful in youth; and perhaps this propensity does not more often mislead than the timorous caution of age.—You mentioned a friend to whom I might resign my pretensions to this office?

Sir C. I did, Sir Anthony: but I now feel an embarrassment.—I'm sure it would never have entered into my imagination to think of it. But will you be kind enough to take a turn with me in the garden? There are some things that must be explained to you at length, lest you should at all misconceive what I'm going to propose to you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The servants' hall; and ROBERT discovered pulling some clothes out of a bag, and laughing to himself as he looks at them. Enter cook-maid.

Cook. Are you here, Robert?

Rob. Yes, beef-drippings; what do you want?

Cook. It is ghost-time, don't you know? and your night for it, too.

Rob. Indeed!

Cook. Ay, indeed! I groaned last night, and gardener the night before; so e'en take your own turn when it comes to you: you was the first contriver of the plot.

Rob. Why don't you see me preparing, hussy? I'm going to dress myself up this very night for the grand contasterly, as a learned person would call it.

Cook (clapping her hands). O griskins and gravy, but that be delightful! Are you to appear to her to-night?

Rob. Yes, wench; for my master is in town, and is not expected back before to-morrow. (Holding out the clothes.) How do you like this black robe? Has it not a smack of the devil in it?

Cook. Black! I thought you were to have been all in white, like my late lady, and to have threatened her for being so unkind to the children.

Rob. So I intended, Deborah; but I don't know how, a qualm came across my heart, and would not let me make a mockery and a semblance of my dear mistress; so we'll just make the devil do, my fat Deborah; he'll serve our turn well enough.

Cook. Yes; he serves many a turn, if all that is said of him be true.

Rob. How do you like that black hood with the horns to it? it is all my own contrivance.

Cook. O it will do hugely!

Rob. And pray mix a little sooty grease for my face, cooky; and let me have some brick-dust to make a red staring ring round my eyes.

Cook. That I will in a trice! But where is your tail, master devil? Will the jack-chain be of any use to you?

Rob. No, no! let her once have a good look of my horns, and my red staring eyes, and I warrant you she'll never miss my tail.

Cook. Good success to you!

Rob. I don't doubt of success; for my lady has lived a great part of her life in an old castle in the North, and has as good a notion of a ghost or a goblin as most folks.

Cook. He, he, he! Some folks will be warm enough to-night without frying cutlets. And bless you, man! if Mrs. Pry should come in your way, give her a claw for my sake.

Rob. O never doubt that, hussy!—And here, in good time, comes Sharp to settle his part of the business; for you know we are to give his master a claw too, as well as Mrs. Pry.

Enter SHARP.

Cook. Come away, Sharp; which of us all is to visit your master's chamber to-night in the shape of the lady that he jilted, as you told us of, because her rich uncle chose to marry whilst their wedding clothes were a-making, and who took it so much to heart, poor thing! that she died soon after of the small-pox? I should not much care to do it myself.

Sharp. No, cooky, we have a better plan than that!

Cook. What is it, man?

Sharp. Though he laughs at Miss Seabright as a girl from the nursery, he has taken a strong desire

to know whether she likes him or not; and, above all, what fortune she is to have: now I have promised to set Pry a-talking to her lady about this, when she puts her to bed to-night, and to place him snugly in the adjoining chamber where he may hear every word that they say.

Rob. You have told him there is no danger of being discovered, as that room is always kept locked, and that you have stolen the key of it?

Sharp. You may be sure of that.

Rob. Then you may be sure the devil won't fail to take that chamber on his way from Lady Sarah's, and pay his respects to him in passing. Come, come! let us all set about it! I'll dress in my own garet. Take some of those things in your hand. *(Giving cook some of the clothes to carry, and taking the rest himself.)* [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

LADY SARAH'S bed-room, almost dark, with a feeble light thrown across the floor, as from a bad fire. Enter SIR CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT and SHARP, stealing softly on their tiptoes.

Sir C. Hist, hist! which is the door, Sharp?

Sharp. Never fear, sir; come this way. *(Opening the door of an adjoining room.)* Go in, sir, and fear nothing. But you must sit in the dark, and not be impatient: Pry won't fail to pump her lady, and you'll hear every word that is said.

[Putting SIR CRAFTY into the room, and pretending to lock the door upon him, then exit laughing to himself as he goes out.]

Enter LADY SARAH and PRY, carrying lights by the same door by which SHARP went out, allowing him time to get out of the way without meeting him.

Pry *(setting down the lights).* Well, I wish this night were well over, for I had such strange dreams last night.

Lady S. Don't trouble me with your dreams now. Have you put all my muslin things into the press, and screwed them well down? When the creases are taken out of them, they will do perfectly well to wear another day.

Pry. To be sure, my lady; but for that old petticoat, if I do but touch it, it comes to pieces: it grieves me to see your ladyship dragging it about like a cobweb that the flies have been through; it would tear up into such pretty handkerchiefs!

Lady S. Will it? as large as those I commonly wear?

Pry. O, no! I don't mean such handkerchiefs as you would wear, my lady, but just——

Lady S. Don't tease me now.—Have you heard any of those noises to-night? *(Seating herself in a chair near the front of the stage.)*

Pry. La, no! my lady: did you hear any thing?

Lady S. No, nothing at all: why do you look so frightened?

Pry. I'm sure the very thoughts of it has made my teeth to chatter like a spoon in an empty dish. I never heard of such things being heard in any house, except the old castle of Allcrest, just before the earl, your grandfather, died. Mercy on us! there was no such noises heard in our village.

Lady S. Apparitions seldom visit people of low condition, Pry.

Pry. Praise be for it! I hope this here will be of the same way of thinking. I would not be a great lady and have ghosts grunting at my bed-side for the whole universal world. If you please, my lady, I should like to go up to Susan as soon as may be, pardon my boldness, for she is as frightened as I am; and I may chance to meet something on the stairs, if I am much later; and I know very well, my lady, you're not afraid.

Lady S. No, I'm not afraid, but I don't know how—I have a little of I don't know what, that has come upon me.— You had better sleep on the couch by my bed to-night: I may want my drops in the night-time.— What o'clock is it?

Pry *(looking at the watch).* Mercy on us! it's just the very time when it begins.—What's that? *(Alarmed.)*

Lady S. Nothing: I heard nothing. *(A long pause; then a deep groan is heard from the bottom of the stage.)* Come, come! stand closer to me, Pry. *(Taking hold of PRY.)* It had a strange, hollow, unnatural sound.

Pry. Yes; just like a body speaking out of a coffin.

[A pause, and then a second groan is heard, louder than the first.]

Lady S. Stand closer still, I beseech you: that was horrible! *(Putting out her hand trembling.)* Whe—whe—where is the bell-ropes?

Pry. O, la! you know well enough it hangs in the other end of the room.

Lady S. Go pull it then: pull it violently. *(PRY hesitates, and seems very unwilling to go.)* Go, I say!

[PRY goes; and as she is half-way across the room, another groan, followed by a terrible howl, is heard, and she runs back again to LADY SARAH.]

Lady S. O go and do it! for heaven's sake! for mercy's sake do it!

[PRY then goes sidling across the floor, looking on every side with terror and suspicion, till she gets to the bell-ropes which hangs by the head of the bed, and near the door of the room; when, putting out her hand to pull it, ROBERT, dressed like the devil, rises from behind a great chair close to the bed. PRY screams and runs out of the door, whilst he gives her a claw in the passing, and then advances towards the front of the stage to LADY SARAH.]

Lady S. (*shrinking back as he advances*). O, come no nearer, whatever thou be, thou black and horrible sight! (*Devil still advances*.) O, come no nearer! in the holy name of—

Devil. Baw! (*giving a great howl and still advancing*.)

Lady S. In the blessed name of—

Devil. Baw! (*with another howl and coming very near her*.)

Lady S. (*falling upon her knees, and clasping her hands together*). O, as thou art awful, be merciful! O, touch me not, for I am a miserable sinner!

Devil. Yea, thou art—yea, thou art—yea, thou art, and thou shalt smart. Ill deeds thou dost, and thou shalt roast. (*Holding his great claw over her*.)

Lady S. (*contracting all her body together, and sinking down upon the floor*). O, as thou art horrible, be merciful! What shall I do? what shall I do?

Devil. Be kind to thy husband's children, or I will tear—

Lady S. O yes, yes!

Devil. Give them good victuals, and good education, and good clothing, or I will tear thee—

Lady S. O, yes, yes!

Devil. And give no more good things to Tony than the rest, or I will—(*Starting back upon hearing a loud knocking at the street door*). What's that?

Lady S. (*raising her head and seeing him farther off*). No more good things to Tony than the rest! It was no devil that spoke those words, I'm sure.

[*Taking courage, and getting up*.]

Devil (*aside, after moving farther off, and listening*). Faith, I'll turn and give her a claw yet! I shall never have another opportunity. (*Approaching her again*.)

Lady S. Get along! I know you well enough: you are no devil, but a rascally knave.

[*Setting herself in a posture of defence, when a noise is heard without, and he, taking alarm, makes a hasty exit into the adjoining chamber*.]

Enter SEABRIGHT and PRY coming fearfully after him.

Sea. Where is this devil that Pry has been telling me of?

Lady S. (*pointing to the adjoining room*). Follow him, my dear Sir Anthony! Follow after the rascal.

[*Exit SEABRIGHT into the adjoining room*.]

Lady S. (*calling to him*). Be sure you don't let him escape.—Have you caught him yet?

Sea. (*within*). Yes, I've caught him.

Lady S. Give him a good beating, then; don't spare him! he's a good brawny devil! O, don't spare him!

[*A great scuffle is heard within, and SEA calls to LADY S.*]

Sea. I'm dealing with him roughly enough, if that will satisfy you. (*He then calls out as if speaking to the devil*.) And take that, and that, and that, too,

you diabolical rascal! You must have midnight frolics in my house, must you?

Enter SOPHIA, alarmed.

Sophia. What is all this? Did I not hear my father's voice?

Lady S. (*looking suspiciously at her*). Yes, you know nothing of the matter, innocent lamb!

Pry. I hope my master will give him a sound beating, for I know well enough it is that knave Robert: I could smell his tobacco as he clawed me in the passing.

Lady S. Drag him to the light, Sir Anthony: let us see him stript of his devil's skin. Ha! here he comes.

Enter SEABRIGHT, dragging in SIR CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT, who is pulled along very unwillingly, and hiding his face with his arm.

Pry. Why, that a'n't like him, neither. Come, come! take down your arm, and let us see who you are. (*Pulling down his arm, and discovering his face*.)

All (*exclaiming*). Sir Crafty Supplecoat!

Soph. (*clapping her hands*). O, I'm glad of that! I'm so glad that it is only Sir Crafty! I should have been grieved indeed if it had been poor Robert. And so it is you, Sir Crafty! ha, ha, ha, ha!

[*All join her in laughing heartily, whilst ROBERT, having pulled off his devil's dress, enters accompanied by SHARP, and some of the other servants, and joins also in the laugh*.]

Lady S. (*going up to SIR CRAFTY with great indignation*). And so, Sir Crafty Supplecoat, it is to your midnight mummery I am indebted for the stern and solemn threatenings I have received! I have been visited I find by a devil of consequence. Your earnest zeal for my reformation is, indeed, very flattering.

Sea. Sir Crafty, mean and despicable as you must appear to me, I have too much respect for your situation in life to expose you any longer to this open humiliation and disgrace. Come with me to my dressing-room.

Sir C. I protest to you, Sir Anthony, and to Lady Sarah, and to all the world if they were here present, that I am in no wise concerned in what you suspect me of.

Lady S. O, certainly you protest, Sir Crafty! but do you think that will pass upon me? Have I not known you since you were a boy but so high, with all your little, artful, wriggling, underhand ways of getting your playfellows' toys from them, which I always despised and contemned? To be sure, you will protest any thing, and in the politest manner, too; you will send a message to Sir Anthony to-morrow morning, I doubt not, to inquire how he does; and to hope that his fists are not too much fatigued with their last night's exertions.

[*All the servants laugh again*.]

Sea. Come, come, this is too bad! Retire with me, Sir Crafty: you can say nothing for yourself at this moment. I am sorry I have rib-roasted you so unmercifully; can you walk?

Sir C. (very shortly). Yes, yes.

Rob. O we'll help his honor. (*Going up with SHARP, very provokingly, to assist him.*)

Sir C. Keep off, scoundrels! you are at the bottom of all this.

[*Exit: SEABRIGHT leading out SIR CRAFTY in a very rueful plight, followed by LADY SARAH and SOPHIA, and the servants, endeavouring to stifle their laughter.*

SCENE IV.

SEABRIGHT'S library. *A great noise and confusion of voices is heard without.*

Seabright (speaking without). Torment me no more with these things! I will hear no more complaints, and no more explanations! Let me have peace, I beseech you, in mine own house, for one half-hour at least. (*He enters much disturbed, shutting the door violently behind him, and pacing up and down the room, sometimes muttering to himself, and sometimes speaking aloud.*) What! is there no getting on in this upward path of honour, unless we tear our way through all these briars and nettles?—Contention and misery at home! is this the price we pay for honour and distinction in the world? Would no honours take root on my untoward soil, till I had grubbed up every sprig and shoot of comfort to make room for them? It were better to be a panniered jackass, and pick up my scanty provender from the ditch, than be a gartered peer in such a home as this.—I had once a home! (*Beating his heel rapidly upon the floor.*)—Well, well, well, I have pushed my bark from the shore, and I must take wind and tide as they set.

Enter Servant.

Who comes to disturb me now?

Ser. A packet, please your honor, from Mr. Plausible.

Sea. (eagerly). Ha! give it me. (*Exit ser.*) Yes, it is the plan. (*Tearing off the cover.*) I hold in my hand, perhaps, that which shall put every domestic arrangement on such an ample footing, as must extinguish these petty broils. (*A pause, and then his countenance lightening up eagerly.*) Ah, do I indeed grasp in this handful of paper the embryo of my future fortune? In faith, I could almost believe that I do! Let me go to my closet and examine it.

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

A room in the inn. Enter SEABRIGHT and landlady, speaking as they enter.

Sea. So, Mr. Plausible is not yet come?

Land. No, your honour, not as I know of. There is a dark-looking, lank gentleman in the cow-yard, just now, asking our Bridget how many pounds of butter may be made out of one cow's milk in a year, and such like, and setting all that she says down in his pocket-book. He, he, he! poor thing, she scarcely knows a cow from a sheep, by reason that she is but a poor pea-picking girl from St. Giles's, that has scarcely been a month in the country; howsomever, he gets wonderfully on with his information.

Sea. Ay, that is he: he has a talent for picking up information upon every subject, and from every body: pray let him know I am here. (*Exit land.*)—(*After musing a little while.*) Ten thousand a-year! and the risk of failing but a mere trifle, not to be taken into the calculation. And his reasons are good, obvious, and convincing. But let me be moderate now: let me suppose that it only brings me in six thousand a-year; even that will entitle me to a peerage.

Enter PLAUSIBLE.

Plaus. I have a request to make to you, Sir Anthony.

Sea. What is that, my dear Plausible?

Plaus. When you purchase the large estate in Shropshire, will you let me have an easy lease of a good pasture-farm or two upon it? It will be a country-retirement for me; and I find on calculation that a hundred milk-cows, well fed and well managed, will bring in no contemptible revenue.

Sea. (smiling). You talk of this estate with great confidence, Plausible.

Plaus. Nay, I am only certain of putting the money to buy it into your pocket; you will purchase it or not, as you please.

Sea. I begin, indeed, to think favourably of your scheme, and I appointed you to meet me here that we might not be interrupted by Lady Sarah. Women, you know, are timorous, and have no idea of increasing a fortune except by saving. We shall look over your calculations together. If salt be raised but one penny in the pound, how many thousands do I put in my pocket?

Plaus. This paper will inform you exactly. And you see I have put but one penny upon the pound; for salt being a necessary of life, greatly to increase its price would be hard and unfeeling; it would make you unpopular in the country, and in the end create a resistance detrimental to its own ends. I am for moderate and sure gains.

Sea. (taking the paper). I esteem you for it; my ideas coincide with yours most perfectly in this particular; and the paper also, in which you have drawn out your plan for buying up the rock-salt, I should be glad to look over that.

Plaus. Here it is in my pocket.

Enter BEAUMONT and WILLIAM BEAUMONT.

Sea. (angrily). Who comes now? O, it is you, Beaumont. We are busy; I shall come to you by-and-by, but at present I cannot be interrupted.

Beau. I must speak with you, my friend.

Sea. Not at present:—you see I am engaged.

Beau. (beckoning him). But one word in your ear, I beseech you.

Sea. Yes, by-and-by; at present I am busy with affairs of importance.

Beau. By-and-by will, perhaps, be too late; I must speak with you immediately. (*Beckoning him again.*)

Sea. (impatiently). I cannot speak with you just now, Beaumont, and I will not.

Beau. No, no! you will. If there be any love of God, or any love of man in your heart, you will speak with me.

Sea. (softened). Well then. (*Goes to BEAUMONT, who whispers in his ear, and endeavours to draw him away.*) No, I won't go with you, Beaumont, to be retarded and crossed with your fears and suspicions: speak out boldly, and Mr. Plausible will answer for himself. (*Smiling to PLAUS.*) I believe we must explain our plan to this good friend of mine, for he thinks you are going to ruin me, and he is miserably afraid of projectors; ha, ha, ha!

Plaus. (smiling placidly). I esteem him for the interest he takes in his friend, and I don't condemn his suspicions: there are so many absurd schemes in the world, that it is prudent to be distrustful; but I will show him the firm ground on which we rest, and he will be satisfied. Do me the honour, my dear sir, to sit down by me, and I'll explain it to you. (*To BEAU.*)

Beau. Pray don't take that trouble, Mr. Plausible: I have no information for enabling me to judge of it: my mind has been little exercised in regard to the money affairs of the world. But though I am not a man of the world, I have one or two things to say to my friend that I wish him to attend to.

Sea. (smiling rather contemptuously). Well, what are they, Beaumont? you are, indeed, not a man of the world.

Beau. Every man who risks his fortune in any scheme believes he has good grounds to rest upon: they are such as appear feasible to him.

Sea. Feasible! ours is certain.

Beau. (shaking his head). A man who is anxious to get rich is apt to let his judgment be imposed upon, and forgets how many have failed in the same track before him.

Sea. I wish those who are apt to give advice, would take the same thing into their consideration.

Beau. Nay, my friend, there is a social influence which we all have, even the meanest of us, over one another, and there is more advice taken in the world

than you are aware of. But had every adviser from the beginning of time failed before me, I will never believe that he who pleads to a father in behalf of his own children will speak without effect. Hear me then; let him who stands alone, run every risk to aggrandize himself, but let a father—O let the father of a family consider!

Plaus. You forget, my good sir, that the father of a family has a higher motive than any other man to aggrandize himself.

Sea. (vehemently). Rather than not place my children in the situation I desire for them, I would have no children at all.

Beau. (with warmth). What! will you say of creatures passing onward to the noblest destination, you had rather they had never been, unless they can gather up so much dust and trash on their way? You think yourself an ambitious parent—O, I would be for them a thousand times more ambitious than thou art.

Sea. Yes, you will shape your son's fortune out of the clouds, I make no doubt. (*Smiling contemptuously.*)

Will. B. (who has modestly kept behind, now coming forward with spirit). Wherever my fortune may be shaped for me, to be the honest, well-principled son of an honest and good father, is a distinction I would not give up for all that you, and men like you, are scrambling for. (*Turning to BEAU.*) Come away, father; they but mock at what you say.

Beau. Let him mock if he will, but let him hear me.

Plaus. He will hear your advice with great pleasure from the pulpit, Mr. Beaumont.

Will. B. It would have been happy for the unfortunate men who have listened to yours, Mr. Plausible, if they had received it from the same place. (*Pulling BEAUMONT away.*) Come away, father, you but waste words upon them.

Beau. Nay, I would yet try if there is not some heart in him to be moved.

Sea. My dear Beaumont, you are a very good man, but you know nothing of the matter.

Will. B. (pulling away his father). Leave them, leave them, sir! Good man, as he contemptuously calls you, you are also wise enough for me: and I would not exchange fathers with the proudest young lord in the kingdom.

[*Exeunt BEAU. and WILL. B., WILL. putting his father's arm proudly under his, and walking off with spirit.*]

Plaus. We are obliged to that young dog, however, for taking him away.

Sea. Yes; but we'll go to another room, for he may return again. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

SEABRIGHT'S library. *He is discovered sitting by a table fast asleep, on which are scattered letters and papers. Enter PRY softly behind on her tiptoes, and making a long neck to see what he is about.*

Pry (shaking her head piteously). Poor man! poor man! he can't sleep in his bed o' nights, and yet he has never committed any wicked crimes, that I ever heard of.

Sea. (angrily, after speaking inarticulately to himself in his sleep). You don't know my name! (*Muttering again inarticulately.*) The name of Lord Seabright! (*Muttering again, whilst PRY slips still nearer to him, listening with a face of great curiosity.*) I can't walk in my robes any longer.—See how the crowd stares at me; ha, ha, ha! (*Laughing uncouthly, and PRY drawing still nearer him, comes against a chair on her way, the noise of which wakes him, and she retires precipitately.*) What's that? (*Rubbing his eyes and looking round.*) It has been some noise in my dream. Ah! would it had been a reality!—What a busy, prosperous, animating world I have been in for these last two hours. (*Looking at his watch.*) Ha! I have slept only a quarter of an hour; and I have enjoyed as many hours in that short term as would enrich my lifetime.—Shall they indeed enrich it?—Wise men, in former ages, considered the visions of our sleep as faintly sketching out what is to happen, like trees and castles seen through the morning mist, before the brightening sun gives to them the distinct clearness of reality. (*Smiling animatedly.*) In faith I could almost believe it! There is that invigorating confidence within me which says I shall not stop short at these paltry attainments—A baronet! every body now is a baronet.—My soul disdains the thought. (*Gives his chair a kick, and overturns it with a great noise.*)

Enter PRY alarmed.

Pry. O la, sir! what is the matter?

Sea. What! are you up, *Pry*? Why are you out of bed so late?

Pry. Making your coffee, sir.

Sea. Did not I tell you to leave it on the lamp, and go to bed?

Pry. Yes; but I thought it would keep warmer, somehow, if I sat by it myself.

Sea. (aside). Great fool! (*Aloud.*) Let me have some of it, then; my head will be clearer afterwards for writing. [*Exit.*]

Pry (shaking her head, and looking after him as he goes out). Poor man! he would have every body to go to bed but himself. What has he got here now? (*Looking at the papers on the table.*) Copies of letters to my Lord B——, and notes for a speech on the salt duties; and calculations.—What a

power of trouble he does give himself! Poor man! poor man! (*Exit in a hurry, calling out as she goes.*) I just stayed behind, sir, to stir the fire for you.

SCENE II.

A room in the inn. *Enter MRS. BEAUMONT and landlady by different sides.*

Land. La, madam! here be the great lord, Lady Sarah Seabright's brother, who wants to see you.

Mrs. B. Wants to see me? how comes this great condensation?

Land. I reckon, madam, that some misfortune has befallen him, and that makes some folks wonderfully well bred. I was just standing at the door, a few minutes ago, and thinking, to be sure, nothing at all of the matter, when who should I see drive past but my lord, just turning the corner as he used to do to Sir Anthony's gate. Well, I think no more of the matter, when in a trice by comes that saucy-looking gentleman of his, that turns up his nose at my ale, and puts a letter into his lord's hand; upon which, after he had read it, he desired his postillions to turn round and set him down here. I'm sure as I am a living woman that something has happened, for he came into the house with a face as white as my apron.

Mrs. B. And wants to see me?

Land. Yes, madam; he asked first of all for Mr. Beaumont, and finding he had walked out, he asked next for you.

Mrs. B. But how did he know we were here?

Land. La, madam! he saw your carriage in the yard; and moreover your man told him that his master and mistress had stopped here, on their way to Yorkshire, to see Sir Anthony's children. But here he comes, madam. Save us all! how proud and how vexed he looks! [*Exit.*]

Enter LORD ALLCREST.

Lord A. Madam, I am sorry to find Mr. Beaumont is gone out: I had something of importance to communicate to him, but I believe it will be nearly the same thing if I impart it to you. I—I—(*seems embarrassed*)—It is an unfortunate affair. As to myself, I have little to do with it; but it is right that the near relations of Sir Anthony Seabright should know, that his salt scheme has entirely failed, and he is involved in utter ruin: they can communicate the dreadful tidings to him more properly than I can.

Mrs. B. We are obliged to you, my lord: it is a piece of intelligence we have every day expected to hear, but which does not certainly concern us more nearly than yourself; as I, who am Sir Anthony's connection, stand exactly in the same degree of relation to him with your lordship.

Lord A. Yes; my sister, indeed, would gratify very foolishly a foolish inclination—but it is a recent thing, scarcely to be considered as a—a—a—he had many children by your sister, and lived with her many years.

Mrs. B. (*smiling with great contempt*). I don't know, indeed, at what time, from the date of a man's marriage, he ought to claim affinity with his wife's relations: perhaps it varies with occurrences, and misfortunes certainly have no tendency to shorten it.

Lord A. Madam, let me have the honour to inform you, that there is no term in which the chief of a noble and ancient family can be contaminated by the inferior alliances of those individuals who belong to his family; such things are considered as merely adventitious circumstances.

Mrs. B. You teach me, my lord, to make very nice distinctions; and therefore, whilst I pay all respect to you as the representative of a noble family, you must likewise permit me to express for you, as an individual, sentiments of a very opposite nature.

Lord A. Good breeding, madam, will not permit me to return such an answer as you deserve; and therefore I will no longer intrude on your time.

Mrs. B. A better excuse, perhaps, might be found; but any one will be perfectly acceptable that procures me the pleasure of wishing your lordship good morning.

[*As LORD ALLCREST is about to go out, enter BEAUMONT and MORGAN, and prevent him.*

Beau. I am sorry, my lord, I was not in the way when you did me the honour to inquire for me.

Lord A. (*passing him abruptly with a slight bow*). Good morning, sir; good morning.

Beau. (*going after him*). You are not going to leave me thus, my lord, angry and disturbed as you appear to be? I cannot suffer any body, man, woman, or child, to leave me offended, if it be possible for me to part with them on more amicable terms. I flatter myself it is possible to do so on the present occasion: I am sure,—I am confident of it, if you will do me the honour to explain in what way I can be useful to you.

Lord A. I came here, sir, upon no concerns of my own; and the conversation I have had the honour to hold with this lady makes any explanation of the business that brought me unnecessary.

Beau. But she is angry too, I perceive, and I shall have no explanation from her. I know already the unfortunate affairs of poor Seabright; and I can explain to myself the intention of your lordship's visit: you must have the goodness to stay and hear if I explain it right. (*Taking him by the coat, and preventing him from going*). Nay, nay, my lord! the spirit of charity and peace-making makes a well-meaning man very bold,—you shall stay.

Lord A. (*relenting, and turning back*). I do believe,

Mr. Beaumont, that you are a very good man, and as such I respect you; but since you already know the misfortune of Sir Anthony Seabright, and will, from the dictates of your own good heart, open the matter to him in the best manner possible, my business with you is anticipated.

Mrs. B. Not, I believe, entirely, my lord; for he knows nothing at all, as yet, of those nice distinctions between individual and family relationship, which may be necessary to prevent him from forming any unreasonable expectations from a noble brother-in-law. I presume your lordship means to hurry back to town again, without seeing Sir Anthony.

Beau. Hold your tongue, Susan; your spirit is less mild than it ought to be, considering the warm good heart it belongs to. It is not so: his lordship did not intend returning to town without seeing his distressed friend; you are wrong in the very outset of your account—is she not, my lord?

Lord A. (*confused and hesitating*). If my seeing him could be of any real service, I should never—I could not certainly have thought of returning without seeing him.—But he has never attended to my opinions: my advice has been disregarded—and then his foolish vanity: he refused an office the other day, which I had procured for him, that would have been a competency for life—it makes me mad to think of it.

Beau. Ah, my lord; he is in that state in which a man's errors should be remembered only by himself: he is in adversity.

Lord A. He has thought only of himself, I'm sure.

Beau. His connection with your sister has indeed been unlucky; and I can, in some degree, sympathize with your resentment.

Lord A. You mistake me, sir; his connection with my sister is of no consequence to me; and I shall take care that it shall be of as little to her as possible, for I will make her independent of him: but children!—risking every thing on one single stake, with a family of children!—I am provoked beyond all measure when I think of this.

Mrs. B. (*bridling up*). His children, my lord—

Beau. Now pray, my dear, hold your tongue, if it be possible! We are weak, passionate creatures; why should we rub and fret one another thus? (*To LORD A.*) I praise you much, my lord, for the interest you take in the children; but here is a good man (*pointing to MORGAN*) who will—

Mor. Stop, stop, my good friend, and don't now lead me into any discussion upon this subject. I am disturbed, and uncomfortable, and unequal to it. Take his lordship by himself; and say to him what you please for me. (*To MRS. B.*) Come with me, niece. [*Exeunt MOR. and MRS. B.*]

Beau. Let me have the pleasure of attending your lordship into the fields, where we can take a short

turn or two, and speak of this subject at length : I see strangers arrived : and it is noisy here.

Lord A. Most willingly. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

SEABRIGHT'S house. Enter SEABRIGHT, followed by SOPHIA, the Eldest Boy, and the Little Girl.

Soph. Indeed, papa, you are in such good humour this morning, we can't help following you. I hope we are not troublesome ; if we are, I'll take the children away.

Sea. No, my good children, you are not troublesome ; you shan't go away.

[*The children hang on his coat, and look up in his face much pleased.*]

Soph. They are so glad to hang upon you again, papa ; and you are so good-humoured this morning !

Sea. I finished my papers last night ; and I have had some pleasant dreams too.—This is a cheerful, enlivening morning : every thing is in bright sunshine around us : it is like a day that wears good fortune on its face :—and, perhaps, it does.

Soph. I hope it does ; and now that you seem so happy, papa, I would fain plead to you in behalf of a poor good man, who is not very happy at present.

Sea. And who is that ?

Soph. Ah, you know very well ; it is poor Robert. I know it was very wrong in him to frighten Lady Sarah ; but he meant it for our good, and he will break his heart if he is not allowed to be with us again.

Sea. Say no more of this at present, Sophia ; and perhaps, by-and-bye, he may return to us again as your own servant.

Soph. Ha ! (*Surprised.*)

Sea. Yes, my sweet girl ; I will be very liberal to you and to all my children : I will make a good amends to you for all that is past. (*Turning to the boy.*) And you, my good boy, I must think of you soon. Thou art become a stout boy, George : let me look at thy face. (*Lifting up his hair from his forehead.*) Ay, it is a comely face enough : it will make a very good countenance for an admiral, or a general, or even for the woollack, if thine inclinations should lead thee that way. Let me feel thy weight too, young rogue. (*Taking him up in his arms.*) Ah ! would now that I could but know the rank and eminence of the future man I hold in these arms !

Soph. My dear sir, you are so good to us, and so good-humoured this morning, I could wager those letters by the post have brought you pleasant news.

Sea. Letters by the post ! I have received none.

Soph. Then you have not read them yet. You slept so much longer than usual this morning, that you were not up when they came, and they were put on the table in the next room. (*Pointing off the stage.*)

Sea. Let me see them, then ; if they bring me any good news, they are welcome.

[*Exit with a light active step.*]

Soph. Now, children, did not I tell you yesterday that papa would love us again ? and you see he has begun to do it already.

Boy. And so he does, Sophy ; and I'm sorry I spoke so naughtily of him, for my heart jumps so when he loves me ! (*Looking off the stage.*) But see ! what is he about now, beating his forehead and walking up and down so strangely ?

Soph. O dear ! something is the matter.

[*Exit, alarmed.*]

Boy (to little girl). Now don't ask me for those marbles at present, Emma : I can't find them, I don't know where they are. (*Looking off the stage again.*) O how terrible he looks !

[*Re-enter SEABRIGHT, with an open letter in his hand, beating his head with his clenched hands, and tossing about his arm distractedly, followed by SOPHIA, who seems frightened at him, and yet wishing to soothe him. A long pause, in which he paces up and down the stage followed by SOPHIA, whilst the children run into a corner, frightened, and stare at him.*]

Soph. (after attempting in vain several times to speak). My father ! my dear, dear father ! (*He still paces up and down without heeding her.*) O if you would but speak two words, and tell what is the matter with you, my dear, dear sir !

Sea. I am ruined, and deceived, and undone ! I am a bankrupt and a beggar !—I have made beggars of you all !

Soph. Oh no, father ! that won't be ! for heaven's sake don't take on so violently !

Sea. (still pacing up and down, followed by SOPH.) I am a bankrupt and a beggar !—disgrace, and ridicule, and contempt !—Idiot, idiot, idiot ! O worse than idiot !

Soph. Dear father !

[*The children run, and take hold of SOPHIA, as she follows him.*]

Sea. Come not near me—come not near me, children—I have made beggars of you all !

Soph. But we will come near you, my dear father, and love you, and bless you, too, whatever you have done. Ay, and if we are beggars, we will beg with you, and beg for you cheerfully.

Sea. Oh, oh, oh ! This is more than I can bear !

[*Throws himself into a chair, quite overcome, whilst the children stand gazing on him, and SOPHIA hangs over him affectionately.*]

Enter LADY SARAH.

Lady S. What are you doing here, children ?—What is all this for ?—What is the matter with you, Sir Anthony ?—No answer at all ?—What letter is this ? (*Picks up the letter which SEABRIGHT had dropped in his agitation, and reads it ; then breaking out*

violently.) O, I told you it would come to this!—I counselled you—I warned you—I besought you. O, Sir Anthony! Sir Anthony! what devil tempted you to such madness as this?

Soph. Oh, Lady Sarah, do not upbraid him! See how he is!

Lady S. I see how it is, well enough: the devil, the devil of ambition has tempted him.—(*Going nearer him with great vehemence.*) Did not I tell you that with prudence and management, and economy, we should in the end amass a good fortune? but you must be in such a hurry to get rich!—O it would get the better of a saint's spirit to think how I have saved, and regulated, and laid down rules for my household, and that it should all come to this!—To have watched, and toiled, and fretted as I have done, and all to no purpose!—If I did not begrudge the very food that was consumed in the family!—If I did not try all manner of receipts that the wife of the meanest citizen would scarcely have thought of!—If I did not go a bargain-hunting through every shop in London, and purchase damaged muslins even for my own wearing!—It is very hard—it is very hard, indeed. (*Bursting into tears.*) O it is enough to turn a woman's brains!

Sea. (*starting up in a rage.*) By heavens! madam, it is enough to turn a man's brains to think, that, in addition to the ruin I have brought upon myself and my children, I have taken to my bosom—I have set over their innocent heads, a hard-hearted, narrow, avaricious woman, whose meanness makes me contemptible, whose person and character I despise!—This, madam, the spirit of ambition, which you talk of, has tempted me to do; and for this, more than all his other malice, I will curse him!

Soph. (*endeavouring to soothe him.*) Pray be not so violent with her! she does not consider what she says—she did not intend to hurt you.

Lady S. Sir Anthony Scabright, you are a base man and a deceiver: my brother shall know how you have used me: he has made you a member of parliament and a baronet.

Sea. Yes, and a contemptible fool, and a miserable wretch into the bargain. But, no, no, no! I have made myself so; I deserve my punishment.

Enter LORD ALLCREST, BEAUMONT, MORGAN, MRS. B. and WILLIAM B.

And here are more of my advisers and beseechers come to visit me: advance, advance, good friends! you are come to look upon a ruined man, and you are gratified.

Beau. (*going up to him affectionately.*) No, my dear Scabright; in a very different spirit are we come: we come to sympathize with you, and to console you.

Sea. I hate sympathy, and I hate consolation! You are come, I suppose, to sympathize with me too, my lord, and to put me in mind of the place

I have given up to that knave Sir Crafty Supplecoat.

Lord A. No, Sir Anthony, I scorn to upbraid, but I pretend neither to sympathize with you nor to console you: I come to rescue my sister from a situation unworthy of a daughter of the house of Allcrest, and she shall go home with me.

Sea. Nay, by the sincerity of a miserable man, but you do console me.—Take her in heaven's name! I received her not half so willingly as I resign her to you again. (*Taking LADY SARAH'S hand to give her to her brother, which she pulls away from him angrily, and going up to LORD ALLCREST, gives him her hand as an act of her own.*)

Lady S. If my brother will, indeed, have the goodness!

Boy (*skipping joyfully.*) Sophy! sister Sophy! she is going away from us! is not that nice?

Soph. Hush, George!

Sea. (*to MRS. B. on perceiving her smile to herself.*) Yes madam, I make no doubt but all this is very amusing to you—you are also come, no doubt, to bestow upon me your contribution of friendly sympathy.

Mrs. B. Indeed, Sir Anthony, recollecting the happiness you have enjoyed, and the woman that shared it with you, you are entitled to no small portion of pity.

Beau. (*to MRS. B.*) Fie upon it! fie upon it! Susan! can't you hold out your hand to him, and forgive him nobly, without tacking those little ungracious recollections to it? (*To SEA.*) Indeed, my dear Seabright, you look upon us all with the suspicious eye of an unfortunate man; but we are truly come to you in kindness and Christian simplicity; and we bring you comfort.

Sea. Yes, Beaumont, you come to me in simplicity. What comfort can you bring to me, ruined as I am? all my fair prospects blasted! all my honours disgraced! sunk even to obscurity and contempt! you are indeed come in great simplicity.

Beau. What comfort can we bring you? Do grandeur and riches include the whole of human happiness, that you should now feel yourself inconsolable and hopeless? Cannot a quiet, modest retreat, independent of the bustle of the world, still be a situation of comfort?

Sea. I know what you mean: contemptible, slothful obscurity.

Beau. You mistake me, Sir Anthony; respectable and useful privacy.

Sea. I understand you well enough: hopeless and without object—I abhor it.

Beau. What, Scabright! can a man with a family to grow up around him, be hopeless and without object? Come here, children, and speak for yourselves.

[*He takes the children in his hands, and encouraging SOPHIA to come forward, they surround SEABRIGHT.*

Soph. (after endeavouring in vain to speak, and kissing her father's hand tenderly). O, my dear father! in the loneliest cottage in England I could be happy with you. I would keep it so neat and comfortable, and do every thing for you so willingly; and the children would be so good, if you would but love us enough to be happy with us!

Sea. (catching her in his arms). Come to my heart, my admirable girl! thou truly hast found the way to it, and a stubborn unnatural heart it has been. But I will love you all—yes, my children, I will love you enough to be happy with you. (Pausing.) I hope I shall—I think I shall.

Will. B. (eagerly). Yes, you will! yes, you will; if there be one spark of a true man in your breast, you will love them to the last beat of your heart.

Beau. (smiling affectionately on his son). Go away, striving! your warmth interrupts us.

Sea. O no, let him speak! say all of you what you please to me now! say any thing that will break the current of my miserable thoughts; for we are at this moment indulging fancies as illusive as those that formerly misled me; even the cottage that we talk of, a peaceful home for my children, is no longer in my power.

Beau. (going up to MORGAN). Now, my friend, this is the time for you to step forth, and make a subdued father and his innocent children happy: bestow your wealth liberally, and the blessings that will fall upon your grey head shall well reward the toils and dangers that have earned it.

[Leading him to SEABRIGHT.]
Sea. Ha! what stranger is this? I observed him not before.

Beau. Speak for yourself now, Mr. Morgan, I will do no more for you.

Sea. Mr. Morgan, the uncle of my Caroline!

Mor. Yes, Sir Anthony, and very much disposed, if you will give him leave, to—to love—to befriend—to be to you and yours—to be the uncle and friend of you all. (Speaking in a broken agitated voice.)

Sea. O no! I am unworthy to receive any thing from you—from the uncle of my much-injured wife; but these children, Mr. Morgan—I am not too proud to ask you to be a friend to them.

Beau. (hastily to SEA.) Pooh, man! you have no real goodness in you, if you cannot perceive that he must and will be a friend to yourself also. Come, come! give him a hand of fellowship! (Putting SEABRIGHT'S hand into MORGAN'S.) Now, God will bless you both!

Mor. If Sir Anthony will permit an old man, who has passed through many buffetings of fortune, to draw his arm-chair by him in the evening of his life, and tell over the varied hardships he has met with, he will cheer its gloom, and make it pass more pleasantly.

[SEA. presses MORGAN'S hand to his breast without speaking.]

Mrs. B. (to MOR.) Well said, and gracefully said, my good uncle! Did not I tell you, you would go through your part well, if you would but trust to the dictates of your own good heart?

Beau. O there is nobody, when he does what is noble and right, that does not find a way of doing it gracefully.

Mrs. B. (to SOPHIA, who is going up timidly to MOR.) Yes, that is right, my dear. Come, children (leading the children up to him), gather all about him. Yes, take hold of him; don't be afraid to touch him: it does young people good to pat the cheeks of a benevolent old man.

[MOR. embraces them affectionately.]

Will. B. (joining the children in caressing MOR.)—My dear Mr. Morgan, I love you with all my soul!—And my sweet Sophy—my good Sophy, don't you love him too?—She is such a good girl, Mr. Morgan!

Mor. So she is, William; and she must have a good husband by-and-bye to reward her. I dare say we shall find somebody or other willing to have her. (Smiling archly upon WILLIAM, who looks abashed, and, letting go SOPHIA'S hand, retires behind.)

Sea. (to MOR.) I have now vice enough, my generous friend, to say that I am sensible of your goodness: but there are feelings which depress me—

Mor. Say no more about it, my good sir! I am happy, and I would have every body to rejoice with me.

Lord A. (to MOR. leading forward LADY SARAH.) And every body does rejoice with you, my good sir. Permit me to assure you, that though, perhaps, somewhat injured with the ways of the world, I have not been an unfeeling spectator of what has passed; and I believe Lady Sarah also has not looked upon it with indifference. (Turning to SEA.) Now, Sir Anthony, I would, if possible, part friends with you; and I have a favour to request, which will, if it is granted, make me forget every unpleasant thing that has passed between us.

Sea. Mention it, my lord; I will not willingly refuse you.

Lord A. My sister has just now told me, that she will leave you without regret, if you will let her have your youngest boy to live with her: I join my request to hers.

Boy (eagerly). What, take Tony away from us! no, but she shan't, though!

Sea. I am much obliged to you, my lord, and to Lady Sarah also; but I cannot find in my heart to divide my children. He shall, however, visit her frequently, if she will permit him; and if she will have the goodness to forget the hasty words of a passionate man, and still take an interest in any thing that belongs to him, he will be gratified by it.

Soph. And I will visit Lady Sarah too, if she will have the goodness to permit me.

Lady S. I thank you, my dear; it is, perhaps, more than I deserve. (*To Mrs. B.*) And may I hope, madam, that you will forget whatever unpleasant things may have passed between us?

Beau. (*interrupting his wife as she is about to speak.*) Now answer her pleasantly, my dear Susan! (*Mrs. B. smiles pleasantly, and gives her hand to LADY SARAH.*) Now every thing is right. O it is a pleasant thing to find that there is some good in every human being!

Enter a Servant, and whispers to BEAU.

Is he here? let him enter then.

Sea. Who is it? I can see nobody now.

Beau. Don't be alarmed: it is a friend of yours, who has offended you, and takes a very proper season to be forgiven. It is one who durst not, in your prosperity, show you the extent of his attachment; but he has now come, for he has already opened his mind to me upon hearing of your misfortunes, to put into your hands, for the benefit of your children, all the little money he has saved, since he first began to lay up one mite after another, and to call it his own property.

Sea. Who can that be? I did not think there was a creature in the world that bore us so much affection.

Enter ROBERT, who starts back upon seeing so many people.

Beau. Come in, my good Robert (*taking his hand, and leading him forward*): thou needst not be ashamed to show thy face here: there is nobody here who will not receive thee graciously, not even Lady Sarah herself.

[*The children and every body gather round ROBERT.*

Sea. (*coming forward with BEAU.*) Ah, my dear Beaumont, what a charm there is in doing good! it can give dignity to the meanest condition. Had this unlucky scheme but succeeded, for, if we could have but weathered it a little while longer, it must have succeeded, I should have been—I think I should have been munificent as a prince.

Beau. Ah, no more of that, my dear friend! no more of that! such thoughts are dangerous, and the enemy is still at hand: chide the deceiver away from you, even when he makes his appearance in the fair form of Virtue.

[*The following was prefixed to the Third Volume of Plays on the Passions.*]

TO THE READER.

AFTER an interval of nine years, I offer to the Public a third volume of the "Series of Plays;" hoping that it will be received, as the preceding volumes have been, with some degree of favour and indulgence. This, I confess, is making very slow progress in my promised undertaking; and I could offer some reasonable excuse for an apparent relaxation of industry, were I not afraid it might seem to infer a greater degree of expectation or desire, on the part of my Readers, to receive the remainder of the work, than I am at all entitled to suppose.

With the exception of a small piece, in two acts, at the end of the book, this volume is entirely occupied with different representations of one passion; and a passion, too, which has been supposed to be less adapted to dramatic purposes than any other—Fear. It has been thought that, in Tragedy at least, the principal character could not possibly be actuated by this passion, without becoming so far degraded, as to be incapable of engaging the sympathy and interest of the spectator or reader. I am,

however, inclined to think, that even Fear, as it is, under certain circumstances and to a certain degree, a universal passion, (for our very admiration of Courage rests upon this idea,) is capable of being made in the tragic drama, as it often is in real life, very interesting, and consequently not abject.

The first of these plays is a Tragedy of five acts, the principal character of which is a woman, under the dominion of Superstitious Fear; and that particular species of it, (the fear of ghosts, or the returning dead,) which is so universal and inherent in our nature, that it can never be eradicated from the mind, let the progress of reason or philosophy be what it may. A brave and wise man of the nineteenth century, were he lodged for the night in a lone apartment where murder has been committed, would not so easily believe, as a brave and wise man of the fourteenth century, that the restless spirit from its grave might stalk around his bed and open his curtains in the stillness of midnight: but should circumstances arise to impress him with such a belief, he would feel the emotions of Fear as intensely, though firmly persuaded that such beings have no power to injure him. Nay, I am per-

sued that, could we suppose any person with a mind so constituted as to hold intercourse with such beings entirely devoid of Fear, we should turn from him with repugnance as something unnatural—as an instance of mental monstrosity. If I am right, then, in believing this impression of the mind to be so universal, I shall not be afraid of having so far infringed on the dignity of my heroine, as to make her an improper object to excite dramatic interest. Those, I believe, who possess strong imagination, quick fancy, and keen feeling, are most easily affected by this species of Fear: I have, therefore, made Orra a lively, cheerful, buoyant character, when not immediately under its influence; and even extracting from her superstitious propensity a kind of wild enjoyment, which tempts her to nourish and cultivate the enemy that destroys her. The catastrophe is such as Fear, I understand, does more commonly produce than any other passion. I have endeavoured to trace the inferior characters of the piece with some degree of variety, so as to stand relieved from the principal figure; but as I am not aware that any particular objection is likely to be made to any of them, they shall be left entirely to the mercy of my Reader.

But if it has been at all necessary to offer any apology for exhibiting Fear as the actuating principle of the heroine of the first play, what must I say in defence of a much bolder step in the one that follows it, in which I have made Fear, and the fear of Death too, the actuating principle of a hero of Tragedy. I can only say, that I believed it might be done without submitting him to any degradation that would affect the sympathy and interest I intended to excite. I must confess, however, that, being unwilling to appropriate this passion in a serious form to my own sex entirely, when the subjects of all the other passions hitherto delineated in this series are men, I have attempted what did indeed appear at first sight almost impracticable. This *esprit de corps* must also plead my excuse for loading the passion in question with an additional play. The fear of Death is here exhibited in a brave character, placed under such new and appalling circumstances as might, I supposed, overcome the most courageous: and as soon as he finds himself in a situation like those in which he has been accustomed to be bold, viz. with arms in his hand and an enemy to encounter, he is made immediately to resume all his wonted spirit. Even after he believes himself to be safe, he returns again to attack, in behalf of his companion, who beseeches him to fly, and who is not exposed to any personal danger, a force so greatly superior to his own as to leave himself scarcely a chance for redemption.

That great active courage in opposing danger, and great repugnance from passive endurance and unknown change which are independent of our exertions, are perfectly consistent, is a point, I believe,

very well ascertained. Soldiers, who have distinguished themselves honourably in the field, have died pusillanimously on the scaffold; while men brought up in peaceful habits, who without some very strong excitement would have marched with trepidation to battle, have died under the hands of the executioner with magnanimous composure. And, I believe, it has been found by experience, that women have always behaved with as much resolution and calmness in that tremendous situation as men; although I do not believe that women, in regard to uncertain danger, even making allowance for their inferior strength and unfavourable habits of life, are so brave as men. I have therefore supposed that, though active and passive courage are often united, they frequently exist separately, and independently of each other. Nor ought we to be greatly surprised at this, when we consider that a man actively brave, when so circumstanced that no exertion of strength or boldness is of any avail, finds himself in a new situation, contrary to all former experience; and is therefore taken at greater disadvantage than men of a different character. He, who has less of that spirit which naturally opposes an enemy, and still hopes to overcome while the slightest probability remains of success, has often before, in imagination at least, been in a similar predicament, and is consequently better prepared for it. But it is not want of fortitude to bear bodily sufferings, or even deliberately inflicted death under the circumstances commonly attending it, that the character of Osterloo exhibits: it is the horror he conceives on being suddenly awakened to the imagination of the awful retributions of another world, from having the firm belief of them forced at once upon his mind by extraordinary circumstances, which so miserably quells an otherwise undaunted spirit. I only contend for the consistency of brave men shrinking from passive sufferings and unknown change, to show that, so far from transgressing, I have, in this character, kept much within the bounds which our experience of human nature would have allowed me. If I am tediously anxious to vindicate myself on this subject, let my Reader consider that I am urged to it from the experience I have had of the great reluctance with which people generally receive characters which are not drawn agreeably to the received rules of dramatic dignity and commonplace heroism.

It may be objected, that the fear of Death is in him so closely connected with Superstitious Fear, that the picture traced in this play bears too near a resemblance to that which is shown in the foregoing. But the fears of Orra have nothing to do with apprehension of personal danger, and spring solely from a natural horror of supernatural intercourse: while those of Osterloo arise, as I have already noticed, from a strong sense of guilt, suddenly roused within him by extraordinary circum-

stances, and the prospect of being plunged almost immediately by death into an unknown state of punishment and horror. Not knowing by what natural means his guilt could be brought to light in a manner so extraordinary, a mind the least superstitious, in those days, perhaps I may even say in these, would have considered it to be supernatural; and the dreadful consequences, so immediately linked to it, are surely sufficiently strong to unhinge the firmest mind, having no time allowed to prepare itself for the tremendous change. If there is any person, who, under such circumstances, could have remained unappalled, he does not belong to that class of men, who, commanding the fleets and armies of their grateful and admiring country, dare every thing by flood and by field that is dangerous and terrific for her sake; but to one far different, whom hard drinking, opium, or impiety, have sunk into a state of unmanly and brutish stupidity. It will probably be supposed that I have carried the consequences of his passion too far in the catastrophe to be considered as natural; but the only circumstance in the piece that is not entirely invention, is the catastrophe. The idea of it I received from a story told to me by my mother, many years ago, of a man condemned to the block, who died in the same manner; and since the play has been written, I have had the satisfaction of finding it confirmed by a circumstance very similar, related in Miss Plumtre's interesting account of the atrocities committed in Lyons by the revolutionary tribunals.*

The story of the piece is imaginary, though one of its principal circumstances, by a coincidence somewhat whimsical, I found after it was written to agree with real history. In looking over Planta's History of Switzerland, I found that a violent pestilence, about the time when I have supposed it to happen, did actually carry off great multitudes of people in that country.† Had it been a real story, handed down by tradition, the circumstances of which were believed to be miraculous, I should have allowed it to remain so; but not thinking myself entitled to assume so much, I have attempted to trace a natural connection from association of ideas, by which one thing produces another, or is insinuated to have done so from beginning to end. The only circumstance that cannot be accounted for on this principle, is the falling of the lot to the guilty hand; and this must be conceded to me as a providential direction, or happy coincidence.

Contrary to our established laws of Tragedy, this play consists only of three acts, and is written in

prose. I have made it short, because I was unwilling to mix any lighter matter with a subject so solemn; and in extending it to the usual length without doing so, it would have been in danger of becoming monotonous and harassing. I have written it in prose, that the expressions of the agitated person might be plain, though strong, and kept as closely as possible to the simplicity of nature. Such a subject would, I believe, have been weakened, not enriched, by poetical embellishment. Whether I am right or wrong in this opinion, I assure my Reader it has not been indolence that has tempted me to depart from common rules.

A Comedy on Fear, the chief character being a man, is not liable to the objections I have supposed might be made to a Tragedy under the same circumstances. But a very great degree of constitutional cowardice would have been a picture too humiliating to afford any amusement, or even to engage the attention for any considerable time. The hero of my third play, therefore, is represented as timid indeed, and endeavouring to conceal it by a boastful affectation of gallantry and courage; but at the same time worked upon by artful contrivances to believe himself in such a situation as would have miserably overcome many a one, who, on ordinary occasions of danger, would have behaved with decorum. Cowardice in him has been cultivated by indulgence of every kind: and self-conceit and selfishness are the leading traits of his character, which might have been originally trained to useful and honourable activity. Fear, in a mixed character of this kind, is, I apprehend, a very good subject for Comedy, and in abler hands would certainly have proved itself to be so.

The last play in the volume is a drama of two acts, the subject of which is Hope. This passion, when it acts permanently, loses the character of a passion; and when it acts violently is, like Anger, Joy, or Grief, too transient to become the subject of a piece of any length. It seemed to me, in fact, neither fit for Tragedy nor Comedy: and like Anger, Joy, or Grief, I once thought to have left it out of my series altogether. However, what it wanted in strength it seemed to have in grace; and being of a noble, kindly, and engaging nature, it drew me to itself; and I resolved to do every thing for it that I could, in spite of the objections which had at first deterred me. The piece is very short, and can neither be called Tragedy nor Comedy. It may indeed appear, for a passion so much allied to all our cheerful and exhilarating thoughts, to approach too nearly

* Plumtre's Residence in France, vol. i. p. 339.

† A plague raged in Switzerland in 1349. It was preceded by terrible earthquakes: about a third part of the inhabitants were destroyed.

The monastery of St. Maurice, where the story of the play is supposed to have happened, is situated in a narrow pass between lofty precipices, where the Rhone gushes from the Valais. The founder was Sigismund, King of Burgundy. It

was richly endowed; the monks at one period leading very luxurious lives, hunting, and keeping hounds, &c. It was dedicated to St. Maurice and his companions, the holy martyrs of the Theban Legion.

Many of the abbots and priors in Switzerland were, in those days, feudal lords of the empire, and maintained troops of their own. Even some of the abbesses, presiding over convents of nuns, were possessed of the same power and privilege.

to the former ; but Hope, when its object is of great importance, must so often contend with despondency, that it rides like a vessel on the stormy ocean, rising on the billow's ridge but for a moment. Cheerfulness, the character of common Hope, is, in strong Hope, like glimpses of sunshine in a cloudy sky.

As this passion, though more pleasing, is not so powerfully interesting as those that are more turbulent, and was therefore in danger of becoming languid and tiresome, if long dwelt upon without interruption ; and at the same time of being sunk into shade or entirely overpowered, if relieved from it by a variety of strong marked characters in the inferior persons of the drama, I have introduced into the scenes several songs,—so many, indeed, that I have ventured to call it a Musical Drama. I have, however, avoided one fault so common, I might say universal, in such pieces, viz. making people sing in situations in which it is not natural for them to do so ; and creating a necessity for either having the first characters performed by those who can both act and sing (persons very difficult to find), or permitting them to be made entirely insipid and absurd. For this purpose, the songs are all sung by those who have little or nothing to act, and introduced when nothing very interesting is going on. They are also supposed not to be spontaneous expressions of sentiment in the singer, but (as songs in ordinary life usually are) compositions of other people, which have been often sung before, and are only generally applicable to the present occasion.

The story is imaginary, but I have endeavoured to make it — as far as my information enabled me — correspond with the circumstances of the time and place in which it is supposed to have happened.

Having said all that appears to me necessary in regard to the contents of the volume, I should now leave my Reader to peruse it without further hindrance : but as this will probably be the last volume of plays I shall ever publish, I must beg to detain him a few moments longer. For I am inclined to think, he may have some curiosity to know what is the extent of my plan in a task I have so far fulfilled ; and I shall satisfy it most cheerfully. It is my intention, if I live long enough, to add to this work the passions of Remorse, Jealousy, and Revenge. Joy, Grief, and Anger, as I have already said, are generally of too transient a nature, and are too frequently the attendants of all our other passions to be made the subjects of an entire play. And though this objection cannot be urged in regard to Pride and Envy, two powerful passions which I have not yet named, Pride would make, I should think, a dull subject, unless it were merely taken as the ground-work of more turbulent passions ; and Envy, being that state of mind, which, of all others meets with least sympathy, could only be endured in Comedy or Farce, and would become

altogether disgusting in Tragedy. I have besides, in some degree, introduced this latter passion into the work already by making it a companion or rather a component part of Hatred. Of all our passions, Remorse and Jealousy appear to me to be the best fitted for representation. If this be the case, it is fortunate for me that I have reserved them for the end of my task ; and that they have not been already published, read, and very naturally laid aside as unfit for the stage, because they have not been produced upon it.

My Reader may likewise wish to know why, having so many years ago promised to go on publishing this work, I should now intend to leave it off, though I still mean to continue writing till it shall be completed ; and this supposed wish I think myself bound to gratify.—The Series of Plays was originally published in the hope that some of the pieces it contains, although first given to the Public from the press, might in time make their way to the stage, and there be received and supported with some degree of public favour. But the present situation of dramatic affairs is greatly against every hope of this kind ; and should they ever become more favourable, I have now good reason to believe that the circumstance of these plays having been already published would operate strongly against their being received upon the stage. I am therefore strongly of opinion that I ought to reserve the remainder of the work in manuscript, if I would not run the risk of entirely frustrating my original design. Did I believe that their having been already published would not afterwards obstruct their way to the stage, the untowardness of present circumstances should not prevent me from continuing to publish.

Having thus given an account of my views and intentions regarding this work, I hope that, should no more of it be published in my lifetime, it will not be supposed I have abandoned or become weary of my occupation, which is in truth as interesting and pleasing to me now as it was at the beginning.

But when I say, present circumstances are unfavourable for the reception of these plays upon the stage, let it not be supposed that I mean to throw any reflection upon the prevailing taste for dramatic amusements. The Public have now to choose between what we shall suppose are well-written and well-acted plays, the words of which are not heard, or heard but imperfectly by two-thirds of the audience, while the finer and more pleasing traits of the acting are by a still greater proportion lost altogether ; and splendid pantomime, or pieces whose chief object is to produce striking scenic effect, which can be seen and comprehended by the whole. So situated, it would argue, methinks, a very pedantic love indeed for what is called legitimate drama, were we to prefer the former. A

love for active, varied movement, in the objects before us; for striking contrasts of light and shadow; for splendid decorations and magnificent scenery; is as inherent in us as the interest we take in the representation of the natural passions and characters of men: and the most cultivated minds may relish such exhibitions, if they do not, when both are fairly offered to their choice, prefer them. Did our ears and our eyes permit us to hear and see distinctly in a theatre so large as to admit of chariots and horsemen, and all the "pomp and circumstance of war," I see no reason why we should reject them. They would give variety and an appearance of truth to the scenes of heroic tragedy, that would very much heighten its effect. We ought not then to find fault with the taste of the public for preferring an inferior species of entertainment, good of its kind, to a superior one, faintly and imperfectly given.

It has been urged, as a proof of this supposed bad taste in the Public, by one whose judgment on these subjects is and ought to be high authority, that a play, possessing considerable merit, was produced some years ago on Drury-Lane stage, and notwithstanding the great support it received from excellent acting and magnificent decoration, entirely failed. It is very true that, in spite of all this, it failed, during the eight nights it continued to be acted, to produce houses sufficiently good to induce the managers to revive it afterwards. But it ought to be acknowledged, that that piece had defects in it as an acting play, which served to counterbalance those advantages; and likewise that, if any supposed merit in the writing ought to have redeemed those defects, in a theatre, so large and so ill calculated to convey sound as the one in which it was performed, it was impossible this could be felt or comprehended by even a third part of the audience.

The size of our theatres then is what I chiefly allude to when I say, present circumstances are unfavourable for the production of these plays. While they continue to be of this size, it is a vain thing to complain either of want of taste in the Public, or want of inclination in managers to bring forward new pieces of merit, taking it for granted that there are such to produce. Nothing can be truly relished by the most cultivated audience that is not distinctly heard and seen, and managers must produce what will be relished. Shakspeare's Plays, and some of our other old plays, indeed, attract full houses, though they are often repeated, because, being familiar to the audience, they can still understand and follow them pretty closely, though but imperfectly heard; and surely this is no bad sign of our public taste. And besides this advantage, when a piece is familiar to the audience, the expression of the actors' faces is much better understood, though seen imperfectly; for the stronger marked traits of feeling which even in a

large theatre may reach the eyes of a great part of the audience, from the recollection of finer and more delicate indications, formerly seen so delightfully mingled with them in the same countenances during the same passages of the play, will, by association, still convey them to the mind's eye, though it is the mind's eye only which they have reached.

And this thought leads me to another defect in large theatres, that ought to be considered.

Our great tragic actress, Mrs. Siddons, whose matchless powers of expression have so long been the pride of our stage, and the most admired actors of the present time, have been brought up in their youth in small theatres, where they were encouraged to enter thoroughly into the characters they represented, and to express in their faces that variety of fine fleeting emotion which nature in moments of agitation assumes, and the imitation of which we are taught by nature to delight in. But succeeding actors will only consider expression of countenance as addressed to an audience removed from them to a greater distance, and will only attempt such strong expression as can be perceived and have effect at a distance. It may easily be imagined what exaggerated expression will then get into use; and I should think, even this strong expression will not only be exaggerated but false: for, as we are enabled to assume the outward signs of passion, not by mimicking what we have beheld in others, but by internally assuming, in some degree, the passion itself; a mere outline of it cannot, I apprehend, be given as an outline of figure frequently is, where all that is delineated is true, though the whole is not filled up. Nay, besides having it exaggerated and false, it will perpetually be thrust in where it ought not to be. For real occasions of strong expression not recurring often enough, and weaker being of no avail, to avoid an apparent barrenness of countenance, they will be tempted to introduce it where it is not wanted, and thereby destroy its effect where it is. — I say nothing of expression of voice, to which the above observations obviously apply. This will become equally, if not in a greater degree, false and exaggerated, in actors trained from their youth in a large theatre.

But the department of acting that will suffer most under these circumstances, is that which particularly regards the gradual unfolding of the passions, and has, perhaps, hitherto been less understood than any other part of the art — I mean Soliloquy. What actor in his senses will then think of giving to the solitary musing of a perturbed mind, that muttered, imperfect articulation, which grows by degrees into words; that heavy, suppressed voice, as of one speaking through sleep; that rapid burst of sounds which often succeeds the slow languid tones of distress; those sudden, untuned exclamations, which, as if frightened at their own discord, are struck

again into silence as sudden and abrupt, with all the corresponding variety of countenance that belongs to it;—what actor so situated will attempt to exhibit all this? No; he will be satisfied, after taking a turn or two across the front of the stage, to place himself directly in the middle of it; and there, spreading out his hands, as if he were addressing some person whom it behoved him to treat with great ceremony, to tell to himself, in an audible, uniform voice, all the secret thoughts of his own heart. When he has done this, he will think, and he will think rightly, that he has done enough.

The only valuable part of acting that will then remain to us will be expression of gesture, grace, and dignity, supposing that these also shall not become affected by being too much attended to and studied.

It may be urged against such apprehensions, that, though the theatres of the metropolis should be large, they will be supplied with actors who have been trained to the stage in small country theatres. An actor of ambition (and all actors of genius are such) will practise with little heart in the country what he knows will be of no use to him on a London stage; not to mention that the style of acting in London will naturally be the fashionable and prevailing style elsewhere. Acting will become a less respectable profession than it has continued to be from the days of Garrick; and the few actors who add to the natural advantages requisite to it, the accomplishments of a scholar and a gentleman, will soon be weeded away by the hand of time, leaving nothing of the same species behind them to spring from a neglected and sapless root.

All I have said on this subject may still in a greater degree be applied to actresses; for the features and voice of a woman being naturally more delicate than those of a man, she must suffer in proportion from the defects of a large theatre.

The great disadvantage of such over-sized buildings to natural and genuine acting, is, I believe, very obvious; but they have other defects which are not so readily noticed, because they in some degree run counter to the common opinion of their great superiority in every thing that regards general effect. The diminutive appearance of individual figures, and the straggling poverty of grouping, which unavoidably takes place when a very wide and lofty stage is not filled by a great number of people, is very injurious to general effect. This is particularly felt in Comedy, and all plays on domestic subjects; and in those scenes also of the grand drama, where

* The objections above do not apply to scenes where sieges are represented; for then the more diminished the actors appear, the greater is the importance and magnitude given to the walls or castle which they attack, while the towers and buttresses, &c. sufficiently occupy the width and height of the stage, and conceal the want of numbers and general activity in the combatants. And the managers of our present large theatres have, in my opinion, shown great judgment in introducing into their mixed pieces of late so many good

two or three persons only are produced at a time. To give figures who move upon it proper effect, there must be depth as well as width of stage; and the one must bear some proportion to the other, if we would not make every closer or more confined scene appear like a section of a long passage, in which the actors move before us, apparently in one line, like the figures of a magic lantern.

It appears to me, that when a stage is of such a size that as many persons as generally come into action at one time in our grandest and best-peopled plays, can be produced on the front of it in groups, without crowding together more than they would naturally do any where else for the convenience of speaking to one another, all is gained in point of general effect that can well be gained. When modern gentlemen and ladies talk to one another in a spacious saloon, or when ancient warriors and dames conversed together in an old baronial hall, they do not, and did not stand further apart than when conversing in a room of common dimensions; neither ought they to do so on the stage. All width of stage beyond what is convenient for such natural grouping, is lost; and worse than lost, for it is injurious. It is continually presenting us with something similar to that which always offends us in a picture, where the canvass is too large for the subject; or in a face, where the features are too small for the bald margin of cheeks and forehead that surrounds them.

Even in the scenes of professed show and spectacle, where nothing else is considered, it appears to me that a very large stage is in some degree injurious to general effect. Even when a battle is represented in our theatres, the great width of the stage is a disadvantage; for as it never can nor ought to be represented but partially, and the part which is seen should be crowded and confused, opening a large front betrays your want of numbers; or should you be rich enough in this respect to fill it sufficiently, imposes upon you a difficulty seldom surmounted, viz. putting the whole mass sufficiently in action to sustain the deception.* When a moderate number of combatants, so as to make one connected group, are fighting on the front of a moderately wide stage, which they sufficiently occupy, it is an easy thing, through the confusion of their brandished weapons and waving banners, to give the appearance of a deep active battle beyond them, seen, as it were, through a narrow pass; and beholding all the tumult of battle in the small view opened before us, our imagination supplies what is

scenes of this kind, that have, to my fancy at least, afforded a grand and animating show. Nor do they fairly apply to those combats or battles into which horses are introduced; for a moderate number of those noble animals may be made to occupy and animate, in one connected group, the front of the widest stage that we are in danger of having, and to conceal the want of a numerous host and tumultuous battle behind them.

hid. If we open a wider view, we give the imagination less to do, and supply what it would have done less perfectly. In narrowing our battle, likewise, we could more easily throw smoke or an appearance of dust over the background, and procure for our fancy an unlimited space.

In processions, also, the most pleasing effect to our imaginations is, when the marshalled figures are seen in long perspective, which requires only depth of stage; and the only advantage a wide stage has on such occasions is containing the assembled mass of figures, when the moving line stops and gathers itself together on the front. The rich confusion of such a crowd is indeed very brilliant and pleasing for a short time, but it is dearly purchased at the price of many sacrifices.

On those occasions too, when many people are assembled on the front of the stage to give splendour and importance to some particular scene, or to the conclusion of a piece, the general effect is often injured by great width of stage: for the crowd is supposed to be attracted to the spot by something which engages their attention; and, as they must not surround this object of attention (which would be their natural arrangement), lest they should conceal it from the audience, they are obliged to spread themselves out in a long straight line on each side of it: now the less those lines or wings are spread out from the centre figures, the less do they offend against natural arrangement, and the less artificial and formal does the whole scene appear.

In short, I scarcely know of any advantage which a large stage possesses over one of a moderate size,

* That strong light cast up from lamps on the front of the stage which has long been in use in all our theatres, is certainly very unfavourable to the appearance and expression of individual actors, and also to the general effect of their grouped figures. When a painter wishes to give intelligence and expression to a face, he does not make his lights hit upon the under part of his chin, the nostrils, and the under curve of the eye-brows, turning of course all the shadows upwards.

He does the very reverse of all this; that the eye may look hollow and dark under the shade of its brow; that the shadow of the nose may shorten the upper lip, and give a greater character of sense to the mouth; and that any fulness of the under chin may be the better concealed. From this disposition of the light in our theatres, whenever an actor, whose features are not particularly sharp and pointed, comes near the front of the stage, and turns his face fully to the audience, every feature immediately becomes shortened, and less capable of any expression, unless it be of the ludicrous kind. This at least will be the effect produced to those who are seated under or on the same level with the stage, making now a considerable proportion of an audience; while to those who sit above it, the lights and shadows, at variance with the natural bent of the features, will make the whole face appear confused, and compared to what it would have been with light thrown upon it from another direction) unintelligible.

— As to the general effect of grouped figures: close groups or crowds, ranged on the front of the stage, when the light is thrown up upon them, have a harsh flaring appearance; for the foremost figures catch the light, and are too much distinguished from those behind, from whom it is intercepted. But when the light is thrown down upon the objects, this cannot be the case: for then it will glance along the heads of the whole crowd, even to the very bottom of the stage, presenting a varied harmonious mass of figures to the eye, deep, mellow, and brilliant.

without great abatements, even in regard to general effect, unless it be when it is empty, and scenery alone engages our attention, or when figures appear at a distance on the background only. Something in confirmation of what I have been saying has perhaps been felt by most people on entering a grand cathedral, where figures moving in the long aisles at a distance add grandeur to the building by their diminished appearance; but in approaching near enough to become themselves distinct objects of attention, look stunted and mean, without serving to enlarge by comparison its general dimensions.

It is also, I apprehend, more difficult on a very wide and lofty stage, to produce variety of light and shadow; and this often occasions the more solemn scenes of Tragedy to be represented in a full, staring, uniform light that ought to be dimly seen in twilight uncertainty; or to have the objects shown by partial gleams only, while the deepened shade around gives a sombre indistinctness to the other parts of the stage, particularly favourable to solemn or terrific impressions. And it would be more difficult, I imagine, to throw down light upon the objects on such a stage, which I have never indeed seen attempted in any theatre, though it might surely be done in one of moderate dimensions with admirable effect. In short, a great variety of pleasing effects from light and shadow might be more easily produced on a smaller stage, that would give change and even interest to pieces otherwise monotonous and heavy; and would often be very useful in relieving the exhausted strength of the chief actors, while want of skill in the inferior could be craftily concealed.*

It may, perhaps, be objected to these last observations, that the most popular of our night-scenes in nature, and those which have been most frequently imitated by the painter, are groups of figures with strong light thrown up upon them, such as gypsies or banditti round a fire, or villagers in a smith's forge, &c. But the striking and pleasing effect of such scenes is owing to the deep darkness which surrounds them; while the ascending smoke, tinged with flame-colour in the one case, and the rafters or higher parts of the wall catching a partial gleam in the other, connect the brilliant colouring of the figures with the deep darkness behind them, which would else appear hard and abrupt, and thus at the same time produce strong contrast with harmonious gradation. I need scarcely mention, for it is almost too obvious, that the effect of the light so thrown on the faces of those figures abundantly confirms my first observations, regarding the features and expression of individuals' faces. Yet I do not mean to say that light thrown up from the front of a stage, where light is also admitted from many other quarters, can have so strong an effect upon the countenances as in such situations.

Groups of gypsies, &c. are commonly composed but of one circle of figures: for did they amount to any thing like a deepened group or crowd, the figures behind would be almost entirely lost. But those grand night-scenes containing many figures which we admire in nature or in painting, — processions by torch-light or in an illuminated street, — crowds gathered to behold a conflagration, &c. always have the light thrown down upon them. — It may be urged, indeed, that the greater part of our stage-scenes are meant to represent day and not night, so that the observations above are but partially applicable. It is very true that stage-scenes generally are supposed to be seen by day-light; but day-light comes from heaven, not from the earth; even within-doors our whitened ceilings are made to throw down reflected light

On this part of the subject, however, I speak with great diffidence, not knowing to what perfection machinery for the management of light may be brought in a large theatre. But at the same time, I am certain that, by a judicious use of light and scenery, an artificial magnitude may be given to a stage of a moderate size, that would, to the eye, as far as distance in perspective is concerned, have an effect almost equal to any thing that can be produced on a larger stage: for that apparent magnitude, arising from succession of objects, depends upon the depth of the stage, much more than its width and loftiness, which are often detrimental to it; and a small or moderate sized theatre may have, without injury to proportion, a very deep stage.

It would be, I believe, impertinent to pursue this subject any farther: and I beg pardon for having

upon us, while our pavements and carpets are of a darker colour.

In what way this great defect of all our theatres could be rectified, I am not at all competent to say. Yet, I should suppose, that by bringing forward the roof of the stage as far as its boards or floor, and placing a row of lamps with reflectors along the inside of the wooden front-piece, such a light as is wanted might be procured. The green curtain in this case ought not to be let down, as it now is, from the front-piece, but some feet within it; and great care taken that nothing should be placed near the lamps capable of

obtruded it so far, where it may not appear naturally to be called for. I plead in my excuse an almost irresistible desire to express my thoughts, in some degree, upon what has occupied them considerably; and a strong persuasion that I ought not, how unimportant soever they may be, entirely to conceal them.

I must now beg leave to return my thanks to the Public for that indulgent favour which for so many years has honoured and cheered my labour; and whether more or less liberally dealt to me, has at all times been sufficient to prevent me from laying down my pen in despair. Favour, which has gratified me the more sensibly, because I have shared it with cotemporary writers of the highest poetic genius, whose claims to such distinction are so powerful.

catching fire. If this were done, no boxes, I suppose, could be made upon the stage; but the removal of stage-boxes would in itself be a great advantage. The front-piece at the top; the boundary of the stage from the orchestra at the bottom; and the pilasters on each side, would then represent the frame of a great moving picture, entirely separated and distinct from the rest of the theatre: whereas, at present, an unnatural mixture of audience and actors, of house and stage, takes place near the front of the stage, which destroys the general effect in a very great degree.

O R R A :

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

HUGHERT, *Count of Aldenberg.*
 GLOTTENBAL, *his son.*
 THEOBALD OF FALKENSTEIN, *a nobleman of reduced fortune, and co-burgher of Basle.*
 RUDIGERE, *a knight, and commander of one of the free companies returned from the wars, and bastard of a branch of the family of ALDENBERG.*
 HARTMAN, *friend of THEOBALD, and Banneret of Basle.*
 URSTON, *a confessor.*
 FRANKO, *chief of a band of outlaws.*
 MAURICE, *an agent of RUDIGERE's.*
 Soldiers, vassals, outlaws, &c.

WOMEN.

ORRA, *heirss of another branch of the family of ALDENBERG, and ward to HUGHERT.*
 ELEANORA, *wife to HUGHERT.*
 CATHERINA, } *ladies attending on ORRA.*
 ALICE, }

Scene, Switzerland, in the canton of Basle, and afterwards on the borders of the Black Forest in Suabia.

Time, towards the end of the 14th century.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

An open space before the walls of a castle, with wild mountains beyond it; enter GLOTTENBAL, armed as from the lists, but bare-headed and in disorder, and his arms soiled with earth or sand, which an Attendant is now and then brushing off, whilst another follows bearing his helmet; with him enters MAURICE, followed by RUDIGERE, who is also armed, and keeps by himself, pacing to and fro at the bottom of the stage, whilst the others come forward.

Glott. (speaking as he enters, loud and boastingly). Ay, let him triumph in his paltry honours,

Won by mere trick and accident. Good faith!
It were a shame to call it strength or skill,
Were it not, Rudigere?

[*Calling to RUDIGERE, who answers not.*

Maur. His brow is dark, his tongue is lock'd, my
lord;

There come no words from him; he hears it not
So manfully as thou dost, noble Glottenbal.

Glot. Fy on't! I mind it not.

Maur. And wherefore shouldst thou? This same
Theobald,

Count and co-burgher—mixture most unseemly
Of base and noble,—know we not right well
What powers assist him? Mark'd you not, my
lord,

How he did turn him to the witchy north,
When first he mounted; making his fierce steed,
That paw'd and rear'd and shook its harness'd neck
In generous pride, bend meekly to the earth
Its maned crest, like one who made obeisance?

Glot. Ha! didst thou really see it?

Maur. Yes, brave Glottenbal,
I did right truly; and besides myself,
Many observ'd it.

Glot. Then 'tis manifest

How all this foil hath been. Who e'er before
Saw one with such advantage of the field,
Lose it so shamefully? By my good fay!
Barring foul play and other dev'lish turns,
I'd keep my coursers back with any lord,
Or knight, or squire, that e'er bestrode a steed.
Thinkst thou not, honest Maurice, that I could?

Maur. Who doubts it, good my lord? This
Falkenstein

Is but a clown to you.

Glot. Well let him boast.

Boasting I scorn; but I will shortly show him
What these good arms, with no foul play against
them,
Can honestly achieve.

Maur. Yes, good my lord; but choose you well
your day:

A moonless Friday luck did never bring
To honest combatant.

Glot. Ha! blessing on thee! I ne'er thought of
this:

Now it is clear how our mischance befell.
Be sure thou tell to every one thou meetst,
Friday and a dark moon suit Theobald.

Ho there! Sir Rudigere! hearest thou not this?

Rud. (*as he goes off, aside to MAUR.*) Flatter
the fool awhile and let me go,

I cannot join thee now. [*Exit.*

Glot. (*looking after RUD.*) Is he so crestfallen?

Maur. He lacks your noble spirit.

Glot. Fye upon't!

I heed it not. Yet, by my sword and spurs!
'Twas a foul turn, that for my rival earn'd
A branch of victory from Orra's hand.

Maur. Ay, foul indeed! My blood boil'd high
to see it.

Look where he proudly comes.

*Enter THEOBALD armed, with attendants, having a
green sprig stuck in his helmet.*

Glot. (*going up to THEOBALD.*) Comest thou to
face me so? Audacious burgher!

The Lady Orra's favour suits thee not,
Though for a time thou hast upon me gain'd
A seeming 'vantage.

Theo. A seeming 'vantage!—Then it is not true,
That thou, unhors'd, layst rolling in the dust,
Asking for quarter?—Let me crave thy pardon;
Some strange delusion hung upon our sight
That we believed it so.

Glot. Off with thy taunts!
And pull that sprig from its audacious perch:
The favour of a dame too high for thee.

Theo. Too high indeed; and hadst thou also
added,

Too good, too fair, I had assented to it.
Yet, be it known unto your courteous worth,
That were this sprig a queen's gift, or receiv'd
From the brown hand of some poor mountain
maid;

Yea, or bestow'd upon my rambling head,
As in the hairy sides of browsing kid
The wild rose sticks a spray, unpriz'd, unbidden,
I would not give it thee.

Glot. Dost thou so face me out? Then I will
have it. [*Snatching at it with rage.*

Enter HARTMAN.

Hart. (*separating them.*) What! Malice! after
fighting in the lists

As noble courteous knights!

Glot. (*to HARTMAN.*) Go, paltry banneret! Such
friends as thou

Become such lords as he, whose ruin'd state
Seeks the base fellowship of restless burghers;
Thinking to humble still, with envious spite,
The great and noble houses of the land.
I know ye well, and I defy you both,
With all your damned witchery to boot.

[*Exit grumbling, followed by MAURICE, &c.*

Manent THEOBALD and HARTMAN.

Theo. How fierce the creature is, and full of folly!
Like a shent cur to his own door retired,
That bristles up his furious back, and there
Each passenger annoys.—And this is he,
Whom sordid and ambitious Hughobert,
The guardian in the selfish father sunk,
Destines for Orra's husband.—O foul shame!

The carrion-crow and royal eagle join'd,
Make not so cross a match.—But thinkst thou,
Hartman,

She will submit to it?

Hart. That may be as thou pleasest, Falkenstein.

Theo. Away with mockery!

Hart. I mock thee not.

Theo. Nay, banneret, thou dost. Saving this favour,

Which every victor in these listed combats
From ladies' hands receives, nor then regards
As more than due and stated courtesy,
She ne'er hath honour'd me with word or look
Such hope to warrant.

Hart. Wait not thou for looks.

Theo. Thou wouldst not have me to a dame like this,

With rich domains and titled rights encompass'd,
These simple limbs, girt in their soldier's gear,
My barren hills and ruin'd tower present,
And say, "Accept—these will I nobly give
In fair exchange for thee and all thy wealth."
No, Rudolph Hartman, woo the maid thyself,
If thou hast courage for it.

Hart. Yes, Theobald of Falkenstein, I will,
And win her too; but all for thy behoof.
And when I do present, as thou hast said,
Those simple limbs, girt in their soldier's gear,
Adding thy barren hills and ruin'd tower,
With some few items more of gen'rous worth,
And native sense and manly fortitude,
I'll give her in return for all that she
Or any maid can in such barter yield,
Its fair and ample worth.

Theo. So dost thou reckon.

Hart. And so will Orra. Do not shake thy head.
I know the maid: for still she has receiv'd me
As one who knew her noble father well,
And in the bloody field in which he died
Fought by his side, with kind familiarity:
And her stern guardian, viewing these grey hairs
And this rough visage with no jealous eye
Hath still admitted it.—I'll woo her for thee.

Theo. I do in truth believe thou meanst me well.

Hart. And this is all thou sayst? Cold frozen words!

What has bewitch'd thee, man? Is she not fair?

Theo. O fair indeed as woman need be form'd
To please and be belov'd! Though, to speak honestly,

I've fairer seen; yet such a form as Orra's
For ever in my busy fancy dwells,
Whene'er I think of wiving my lone state.

It is not this; she has too many lures;
Why wilt thou urge me on to meet her scorn?
I am not worthy of her.

Hart. (*pushing him away with gentle anger*). Go to!
I praised thy modesty short-while,
And now with dull and senseless perseverance,
Thou wouldst o'erlay me with it. Go thy ways!
If through thy fault, thus shrinking from the onset,
She should with this untoward cub be match'd,

'Twill haunt thy conscience like a damning sin,
And may it gnaw thee shrewdly! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A small apartment in the castle. Enter RUDIGERE musing gloomily, and muttering to himself some time before he speaks aloud.

Rud. No, no; it is to formless air dissolv'd,
This cherish'd hope, this vision of my brain!

[*Pacing to and fro, and then stopping and musing as before.*]

I daily stood contrasted in her sight
With an ungainly fool; and when she smiled,
Methought—But wherefore still upon this thought,

Which was perhaps but a delusion then,
Brood I with ceaseless torment? Never, never!
O never more on me, from Orra's eye.
Approving glance shall light, or gentle look!
This day's disgrace mars all my goodly dreams.
My path to greatness is at once shut up.
Still in the dust my grov'ling fortune lies.

[*Striking his breast in despair.*]

Tame thine aspiring spirit, luckless wretch!
There is no hope for thee!
And shall I tame it? No, by saints and devils!
The laws have cast me off from every claim
Of house and kindred, and within my veins
Turn'd noble blood to baseness and reproach:
I'll cast them off: why should they be to me
A bar, and no protection?

[*Pacing again to and fro, and muttering low for some time before he speaks aloud.*]

Ay; this may still within my toils enthrall her;
This is the secret weakness of her mind
On which I'll clutch my hold.

Enter CATHRINA behind him, laying her hand upon him.

Cath. Ha! speak thou to thyself?

Rud. (*starting*). I did not speak.

Cath. Thou didst; thy busy mind gave sound to thoughts

Which thou didst utter with a thick harsh voice,
Like one who speaks in sleep. Tell me their meaning.

Rud. And dost thou so presume? Be wise; be humble. [*After a pause.*]

Has Orra oft of late requested thee
To tell her stories of the restless dead,
Of spectres rising at the midnight watch
By the lone traveller's bed?

Cath. Wherefore of late dost thou so oft inquire

Of what she says and does?

Rud. Be wise, and answer what I ask of thee;
This is thy duty now.

Cath. Alas, alas ! I know that one false step
Has o'er me set a stern and ruthless master.

Rud. No, madam ; 'tis thy grave and virtuous
seeming ;

Thy saint-like carriage, rigid and demure,
On which thy high repute so long has stood,
Endowing thee with right of censorship
O'er every simple maid, whose cheerful youth
Wears not so thick a mask, that o'er thee sets
This ruthless master. Hereon rests my power :
I might expose, and therefore I command thee.

Cath. Hush, hush ! approaching steps !
They'll find me here !

I'll do whate'er thou wilt.

Rud. It is but Maurice : hie thee to thy closet,
Where I will shortly come to thee. Be thou
My faithful agent in a weighty matter,
On which I now am bent, and I will prove
Thy stay and shelter from the world's contempt.

Cath. Maurice to find me here ! Where shall I
hide me ?

Rud. Nowhere, but boldly pass him as he enters.
I'll find some good excuse ; he will be silent :
He is my agent also.

Cath. Dost thou trust him ?
Rud. Avarice his master is, as shame is thine :
Therefore I trust to deal with both. — Away !

Enter MAURICE, passing CATHRINA as she goes out.

Maur. What, doth the grave and virtuous
Cathrina
Vouchsafe to give thee of her company ?

Rud. Yes, rigid saint ! she has bestow'd upon me
Some grave advice to bear with pious meekness
My late discomfiture.

Maur. Ay, and she call'd it,
I could be sworn ! heaven's judgment on thy pride.

Rud. E'en so : thou'st guess'd it. — Shall we to
the ramparts

And meet the western breeze ? [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*A spacious apartment. Enter HUGHOBERT and
URSTON.*

Hugh. (*speaking with angry gesticulation as he
enters.*) I feed and clothe these drones, and
in return

They cheat, deceive, abuse me ; nay, belike,
Laugh in their sleeve the while. By their advice,
This cursed tourney I proclaim'd ; for still
They puff'd me up with praises of my son —
His grace, his skill in arms, his horsemanship —
Count Falkenstein to him was but a clown —
And so in Orra's eyes to give him honour,
Full surely did I think — I'll hang them all :
I'll starve them in a dungeon shut from light :

I'll heap my boards no more with dainty fare
To feed false flatterers.

Urst. That indeed were wise :
But art thou sure, when men shall speak the truth,
That thou wilt feed them for it ? I but hinted
In gentle words to thee, that Glottenbal
Was praised with partial or affected zeal,
And thou receiv'dst it angrily.

Hugh. Ay, true indeed : but thou didst speak
of him

As one bereft of all capacity.
Now though, God wot ! I look on his defects
With no blind love, and even in my ire
Will sometimes call him fool ; yet ne'ertheless,
He still has parts and talents, though obscur'd
By some untoward failings. — Heaven be praised !
He wants not strength at least and well turn'd
limbs,

Had they but taught him how to use them.
Knaves !

They have neglected him.

*Enter GLOTTENBAL, who draws back on seeing his
father.*

Advance, young sir : art thou afraid of me,
That thus thou shrinkest like a skulking thief
To make disgrace the more apparent on thee ?

Glott. Yes, call it then disgrace, or what you
please ;

Had not my lance's point somewhat awry
Glanced on his shield —

Hugh. E'en so ; I doubt it not ;
Thy lance's point, and every thing about thee
Hath glanced awry. Go, rid my house, I say,
Of all those feasting flatterers that deceive thee ;
They harbour here no more : dismiss them quickly.

Glott. Do it yourself, my lord ; you are, I trow,
Angry enough to do it sharply.

Hugh. (*turning to URSTON.*) Faith !
He gibes me fairly here ; there's reason in't ;
Fools speak not thus. (*To GLOTTENBAL.*) Go to ! if
I am angry,

Thou art a graceless son to tell me so.

Glott. Have you not bid me still to speak the
truth ?

Hugh. (*to URSTON.*) Again thou hearest he makes
an apt reply.

Urst. He wants not words.

Hugh. Nor meaning neither, father.

Enter ELEANORA.

Well, dame ; where hast thou been ?

El. I came from Orra.

Hugh. Hast thou been pleading in our son's
excuse ?

And how did she receive it ?

El. I tried to do it, but her present humour
Is jest and merriment. She is behind me,

Stopping to stroke a hound, that in the corridor
Came to her fawningly to be caress'd.

Glot. (listening). Ay, she is coming; light and
quick her steps;

So sound they when her spirits are unruly:
But I am bold; she shall not mock me now.

*Enter ORRA, tripping gaily, and playing with the
folds of her scarf.*

Methinks you trip it briskly, gentle dame.

Orra. Does it offend you, noble knight?

Glot. Go to!
I know your meaning. Wherefore smile you so?

Orra. Because, good sooth! with tired and aching
sides

I have not power to laugh.

Glot. Full well I know why thou so merry art.
Thou thinkst of him to whom thou gav'st that
sprig

Of hopeful green, his rusty casque to grace,
While at thy feet his honour'd glave he laid.

Orra. Nay, rather say, of him, who at my feet,
From his proud courser's back, more gallantly
Laid his most precious self: then stole away,
Through modesty, unthank'd, nor left behind
Of all his gear that flutter'd in the dust,
Or glove, or band, or fragment of torn hose,
For dear remembrance-sake, that in my sleeve
I might have placed it. O! thou wrongst me
much,

To think my merriment a reference hath
To any one but him. *(Laughing.)*

El. Nay, Orra; these wild fits of uncurb'd
laughter,

Athwart the gloomy tenor of your mind,
As it has low'r'd of late, so keenly cast,
Unsuited seem and strange.

Orra. O nothing strange, my gentle Eleanora!
Didst thou ne'er see the swallow's veering breast,
Winging the air beneath some murky cloud
In the sunn'd glimpses of a stormy day,
Shiver in silv'ry brightness:

Or boatman's oar, as vivid lightning flash
In the faint gleam, that like a spirit's path
Tracks the still waters of some sullen lake:
Or lonely tower, from its brown mass of woods,
Give to the parting of a wintry sun
One hasty glance in mockery of the night
Closing in darkness round it? — Gentle friend!
Chide not her mirth, who was sad yesterday,
And may be so to-morrow.

Glot. And wherefore art thou sad, unless it is
From thine own wayward humour? Other dames,
Were they so courted, would be gay and happy.

Orra. Wayward it needs must be, since I am sad
When such perfection woos me.

Pray, good Glottenbal,
How didst thou learn with such a wondrous grace
So high in air to toss thine armed heels,

And clutch with outspread hands the slipp'ry sand?
I was the more amaz'd at thy dexterity,
As this, of all thy many gallant feats
Before-hand promised, most modestly
Thou didst forbear to mention.

Glot. Gibe away!
I care not for thy gibling. With fair lists,
And no black arts against me —

*Hugh. (advancing angrily from the bottom of the
stage to GLOTTENBAL).* Hold thy peace!

(To ORRA.) And, madam, be at least somewhat
restrain'd

In your unruly humour.

Orra. Pardon, my lord; I knew not you were
near me.

My humour is unruly; with your leave,
I will retire till I have curb'd it better.

(To ELEANORA.) I would not lose your company,
sweet countess.

El. We'll go together, then.

*[Exeunt ORRA and ELEANORA. Manet HUGH-
BERT; who paces angrily about the stage,
while GLOTTENBAL stands on the front, thump-
ing his legs with his sheathed rapier.]*

Hugh. There is no striving with a forward girl,
Nor pushing on a fool. My harass'd life
Day after day more irksome grows. Curs'd bane!
I'll toil no more for this untoward match.

Enter RUDIGERE, stealing behind, and listening.

Rud. You are disturb'd, my lord.

Hugh. What, is it thou? I am disturb'd in sooth.

Rud. Ay, Orra has been here; and some light
words

Of girlish levity have mov'd you. How!
Toil for this match no more! What else remains,
If this should be abandon'd, noble Aldenberg,
That can be worth your toil?

Hugh. I'll match the cub elsewhere.

Rud. What call ye matching?

Hugh. Surely for him some other virtuous maid
Of high descent, though not so richly dower'd,
May be obtain'd.

Rud. Within your walls, perhaps,
Some waiting gentlewoman, who perchance
May be some fifty generations back
Descended from a king, he will himself
Ere long obtain, without your aid, my lord.

Hugh. Thou mak'st me mad! the dolt! the
senseless dolt!

What can I do for him? I cannot force

A noble maid entrusted to my care:
I, the sole guardian of her helpless youth!

Rud. That were indeed unfit; but there are
means

To make her yield consent.

Hugh. Then by my faith, good friend, I'll call
thee wizard,

If thou canst find them out. What means already,

Short of compulsion, have we left untried ?
And now the term of my authority
Wears to its close.

Rud. I know it well ; and therefore powerful
means,

And of quick operation, must be sought.

Hugh. Speak plainly to me.

Rud. I have watch'd her long.

I've seen her cheek, flush'd with the rosy glow

Of jocund spirits, deadly pale become

At tale of nightly sprite or apparition,

Such as all hear, 'tis true, with greedy ears,

Saying, "Saints save us !" but forget as quickly.

I've marked her long ; she has with all her shrewd-
ness

And playful merriment, a gloomy fancy,

That broods within itself on fearful things.

Hugh. And what doth this avail us ?

Rud. Hear me out.

Your ancient castle in the Suabian forest

Hath, as too well you know, belonging to it,

Or false or true, frightful reports. There hold her

Strictly confin'd in sombre banishment ;

And doubt not but she will, ere long, full gladly

Her freedom purchase at the price you name.

Hugh. On what pretence can I confine her there ?

It were most odious.

Rud. Can pretence be wanting ?

Has she not favour shown to Theobald,

Who in your neighbourhood, with his sworn friend

The Banneret of Basle, suspiciously

Prolongs his stay ? A poor and paltry count,

Unmeet to match with her. And want ye then

A reason for removing her with speed

To some remoter quarter ? Out upon it !

You are too scrupulous.

Hugh. Thy scheme is good, but cruel.

[*GLOTTENBAL has been drawing nearer to them,
and attending to the last part of their dis-
course.*

Glot. O much I like it, dearly wicked Rudigere !

She then will turn her mind to other thoughts

Than scornful gibes at me.

Hugh. I to her father swore I would protect her :

I must fulfil his will.

Rud. And, in that will, her father did desire

She might be match'd with this your only son :

Therefore you're firmly bound all means to use

That may the end attain.

Hugh. Walk forth with me, we'll talk of this at
large.

[*Exeunt HUGH. and RUD. Manet GLOTTENBAL,
who comes forward from the bottom of the stage
with the action of a knight advancing to the
charge.*

Glot. Yes, thus it is ; I have the sleight o't now ;

And were the combat yet to come, I'd show them

I'm not a whit behind the bravest knight,

Cross luck excepted.

Enter MAURICE.

Maur. My lord, indulge us of your courtesy.

Glot. In what, I pray ?

Maur. Did not Fernando tell you ?

We are all met within our social bower ;

And I have wager'd on your head, that none

But you alone, within the count's domains,

Can to the bottom drain the chased horn.

Come do not linger here when glory calls you.

Glot. Thinkst thou that Theobald could drink
so stoutly ?

Maur. He, paltry chief ! he herds with sober
burghers ;

A goblet, half its size, would conquer him. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*A garden with trees, and shrubs, &c. ORRA, THEO-
BALD, and HARTMAN, are discovered in a shaded
walk at the bottom of the stage, speaking in dumb
show, which they cross, disappearing behind the
trees ; and are presently followed by CATHRINA and
ALICE, who continue walking there. ORRA, THEO.,
and HART. then appear again, entering near the
front of the stage.*

Orra (talking to *HART. as she enters*). And so,
since fate has made me, woe the day !

That poor and good-for-nothing, helpless being.

Woman yclept, I must consign myself

With all my lands and rights into the hands

Of some proud man, and say, "Take all, I pray,

And do me in return the grace and favour

To be my master."

Hart. Nay, gentle lady, you constrain my words.

And load them with a meaning harsh and foreign

To what they truly bear.—A master ! No ;

A valiant gentle mate, who in the field

Or in the council will maintain your right :

A noble, equal partner.

Orra (shaking her head). Well I know,

In such a partnership, the share of power

Allotted to the wife. See, noble Falkenstein

Hath silent been the while, nor spoke one word

In aid of all your specious arguments.

(*To THEO.*) What's your advice, my lord ?

Theo. Ah, noble Orra,

'Twere like self-murder to give honest counsel ;

Then urge me not. I frankly do confess

I should be more heroic than I am.

Orra. Right well I see thy head approves my plan,

And by-and-bye so will thy gen'rous heart.

In short, I would, without another's leave,

Improve the low condition of my peasants,

And cherish them in peace. E'en now, methinks,

Each little cottage of my native vale

Swells out its earthen sides, up-heaves its roof,
Like to a hillock mov'd by lab'ring mole,
And with green trail-weeds clamb'ring up its walls,
Roses and ev'ry gay and fragrant plant,
Before my fancy stands, a fairy bower:
Ay, and within it too do fairies dwell.

[*Looking playfully through her fingers like a show-glass.*]

Peep through its wreathed window, if indeed
The flowers grow not too close, and there within
Thou'lt see some half a dozen rosy brats
Eating from wooden bowls their dainty milk; —
Those are my mountain elves. Seest thou not
Their very forms distinctly?

Theo. Distinctly; and most beautiful the sight!
A sight which sweetly stirreth in the heart
Feelings that gladden and ennoble it,
Dancing like sun-beams on the rippled sea;
A blessed picture! Foul befall the man
Whose narrow, selfish soul would shade or mar it!

Hart. To this right heartily I say Amen!
But if there be a man whose gen'rous soul

[*Turning to ORRA.*]

Like ardour fills; who would with thee pursue
Thy gen'rous plan; who would his harness don —
Orra (*putting her hand on him in gentle inter-
ruption*). Nay, valiant banneret, who would,
an't please you,

His harness doff: all feuds, all strife forbear,
All military rivalship, all lust
Of added power, and live in steady quietness,
A mild and fost'ring lord. Know you of one
That would so share my task? — You answer not;
And your brave friend, methinks, casts on the ground
A thoughtful look: wots he of such a lord?

[*To THEO.*]

Theo. Wot I of such a lord? No, noble Orra,
I do not; nor does Hartman, though perhaps
His friendship may betray his judgment. No;
None such exist: we are all fierce, contentious,
Restless and proud, and prone to vengeful feuds;
The very distant sound of war excites us,
Like the curb'd courser list'ning to the chase,
Who paws, and frets, and bites the rein. Trust
none

To cross thy gentle, but most princely purpose,
Who hath on head a circling helmet worn,
Or ever grasp'd a glove. — But ne'ertheless
There is — I know a man. — Might I be bold?

Orra. Being so honest, boldness is your right.

Theo. Permitted then, I'll say, I know a man,
Though most unworthy Orra's lord to be,
Who, as her champion, friend, devoted soldier,
Might yet commend himself; and, so received,
Who would at her command, for her defence
His sword right proudly draw. An honour'd sword,
Like that which at the gate of Paradise
From steps profane the blessed region guarded.

Orra. Thanks to the gen'rous knight! I also know

The man thou wouldst commend; and when my
Such service needeth, to no sword but his [state
Will I that service owe.

Theo. Most noble Orra! greatly is he honour'd;
And will not murmur that a higher wish,
Too high, and too presumptuous, is repress'd.

[*Kissing her hand with great respect.*]

Orra. Nay, Rudolph Hartman, clear that cloudy
And look on Falkenstein and on myself [brow,
As two co-burgers of thy native city
(For such I mean ere long to be), and claiming
From thee, as cadets from an elder born,
Thy cheering equal kindness.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The count is now at leisure to receive
The lord of Falkenstein, and Rudolph Hartman.

Hart. We shall attend him shortly.

[*Exit servant.*]

(*Aside to THEO.*) Must we now
Our purpos'd suit to some pretended matter
Of slighter import change?

Theo. (*to HART. aside*). Assuredly. —

Madam, I take my leave with all devotion.

Hart. I with all friendly wishes.

[*Exeunt THEO. and HART. CATHERINA and
ALICE now advance through the shrubs, &c.
at the bottom of the stage, while ORRA remains,
wrapped in thought, on the front.*]

Cath. Madam, you're thoughtful; something
Your busy mind. [*occupies*]

Orra. What was't we talk'd of, when the worthy
banneret

With Falkenstein upon our converse broke?

Cath. How we should spend our time, when in
your castle

You shall maintain your state in ancient splendour,
With all your vassals round you.

Orra. Ay, so it was.

Al. And you did say, my lady,
It should not be a cold unsocial grandeur:
That you would keep, the while, a merry house.

Orra. O doubt it not! I'll gather round my board
All that heav'n sends to me of way-worn folks,
And noble travellers, and neighb'ring friends,
Both young and old. Within my ample hall,
The worn-out man of arms (of whom too many,
Nobly descended, rove like reckless vagrants
From one proud chieftain's castle to another,
Half chid, half honour'd) shall o' tiptoe tread,
Tossing his grey locks from his wrinkled brow
With cheerful freedom, as he boasts his feats
Of days gone by. — Music we'll have; and oft
The bick'ring dance upon our oaken floors
Shall, thund'ring loud, strike on the distant ear
Of nighted travellers, who shall gladly bend
Their doubtful footsteps tow'rd's the cheering din.
Solemn, and grave, and cloister'd, and demure
We shall not be. Will this content ye, damsels?

Al. O passing well ! 'twill be a pleasant life ;
Free from all stern subjection ; blithe and fanciful ;
We'll do what'er we list.

Cath. That right and prudent is, I hope thou
meanest.

Al. Why ever so suspicious and so strict ?
How couldst thou think I had another meaning ?
(*To ORRA.*) And shall we ramble in the woods full oft
With hound and horn ? — that is my dearest joy.

Orra. Thou runn'st me fast, good Alice. Do not
doubt

This shall be wanting to us. Ev'ry season
Shall have its suited pastime : even Winter
In its deep noon, when mountains piled with snow,
And chok'd up valleys from our mansion bar
All entrance, and nor guest, nor traveller
Sounds at our gate ; the empty hall forsaking,
In some warm chamber, by the crackling fire
We'll hold our little, snug, domestic court,
Plying our work with song and tale between.

Cath. And stories too, I ween, of ghosts and spirits,
And things unearthly, that on Michael's eve
Rise from the yawning tombs. [truly

Orra. Thou thinkest then one night o' th' year is
More horrid than the rest.

Cath. Perhaps 'tis only silly superstition :
But yet it is well known the count's brave father
Would rather on a glacier's point have lain,
By angry tempests rock'd, than on that night
Sunk in a downy couch in Brunier's castle.

Orra. How, pray ? What fearful thing did scare
him so ?

Cath. Hast thou ne'er heard the story of Count
Hugo,

His ancestor, who slew the hunter-knight ?

Orra (eagerly). Tell it, I pray thee.

Al. Cathrina, tell it not ; it is not right :
Such stories ever change her cheerful spirits
To gloomy pensiveness ; her rosy bloom
To the wan colour of a shrouded corse.

(*To ORRA.*) What pleasure is there, lady, when thy
hand,

Cold as the valley's ice, with hasty grasp
Seizes on her who speaks, while thy shrunk form
Cow'ring and shiv'ring stands with keen turn'd ear
To catch what follows of the pausing tale ?

Orra. And let me cow'ring stand, and be my touch
The valley's ice : there is a pleasure in it.

Al. Sayst thou indeed there is a pleasure in it ?

Orra. Yea, when the cold blood shoots through
every vein :

When every pore upon my shrunken skin
A knotted knoll becomes, and to mine ears
Strange inward sounds awake, and to mine eyes
Rush stranger tears, there is a joy in fear.

[*Catching hold of CATHRINA.*

Tell it, Cathrina, for the life within me
Beats thick, and stirs to hear
He slew the hunter-knight ?

Cath. Since I must tell it, then, the story goes
That grim Count Aldenberg, the ancestor
Of Hughobert, and also of yourself,
From hatred or from envy, to his castle
A noble knight, who hunted in the forest,
Well the Black Forest named, basely decoy'd,
And there, within his chamber, murder'd him——

Orra. Merciful Heaven ! and in my veins there runs
A murderer's blood. Saidst thou not, *murder'd him?*

Cath. Ay ; as he lay asleep, at dead of night.

Orra. A deed most horrible !

Cath. It was on Michael's eve ; and since that
time,

The neighb'ring hinds oft hear the midnight yell
Of spectre-hounds, and see the spectre shapes
Of huntsmen on their sable steeds, with still
A nobler hunter riding in their van
To cheer the chase, shown by the moon's pale beams,
When wanes its horn in long October nights.

Orra. This hath been often seen ?

Cath. Ay, so they say.

But, as the story goes, on Michael's eve,
And on that night alone of all the year,
The hunter-knight himself, having a horn
Thrice sounded at the gate, the castle enters ;
And, in the very chamber where he died,
Calls on his murd'rer, or in his default
Some true descendant of his house, to loose
His spirit from its torment ; for his body
Is laid i' the earth unblest'd, and none can tell
The spot of its interment.

Orra. Call on some true descendant of his race !
It were to such a fearful interview.

But in that chamber, on that night alone——
Hath he elsewhere to any of the race
Appeared ? or hath he power——

Al. Nay, nay, forbear :
See how she looks. (*To ORRA.*) I fear thou art not
well.

Orra. There is a sickly faintness come upon me.

Al. And didst thou say there is a joy in fear ?

Orra. My mind of late has strange impressions
I know not how it is. [ta'en.

Al. A few nights since,
Scaling o' tiptoe, softly through your chamber,
Towards my own——

Orra. O heaven defend us ! didst thou see aught
there ?

Al. Only your sleeping self. But you appear'd
Distress'd and troubled in your dreams ; and once
I thought to wake you ere I left the chamber,
But I forbore.

Orra. And glad I am thou didst.
It is not dreams I fear ; for still with me
There is an indistinctness o'er them cast,
Like the dull gloom of misty twilight, where
Before mine eyes pass all incongruous things,
Huge, horrible, and strange, on which I stare
As idiots do upon this changeful world,

With nor surprise nor speculation. No ;
 Dreams I fear not : it is the dreadful waking,
 When, in deep midnight stillness, the roused fancy
 Takes up th' imperfect shadows of its sleep,
 Like a marr'd speech snatch'd from a bungler's
 mouth,

Shaping their forms distinctively and vivid
 To visions horrible :— this is my bane ;—
 It is the dreadful waking that I fear.

Al. Well, speak of other things. There in good
 time

Your ghostly father comes with quicken'd steps,
 Like one who bears some tidings good or ill.
 Heaven grant they may be good !

Enter URSTON.

Orra. Father, you seem disturb'd.

Urst. Daughter, I am in truth disturb'd. The
 count

All o' the sudden, being much enraged
 That Falkenstein still lingers near these walls,
 Resolves to send thee hence, to be awhile
 In banishment detain'd, till on his son
 Thou lookst with better favour.

Orra. Ay, indeed !
 That is to say perpetual banishment :
 A sentence light or heavy, as the place
 Is sweet or irksome he would send me to.

Urst. He will contrive to make it, doubt him not,
 Irksome enough. Therefore I would advise thee
 To feign at least, but for a little time,
 A disposition to obey his wishes.
 He's stern, but not relentless ; and his dame,
 The gentle Eleanor, will still befriend you,
 When fit occasion serves.

Orra. What saidst thou, father ?
 To feign a disposition to obey !
 I did mistake thy words.

Urst. No, gentle daughter ;
 So press'd, thou mayest feign and yet be blameless.
 A trusty guardian's faith with thee he holds not,
 And therefore thou art free to meet his wrongs
 With what defence thou hast.

Orra (proudly). Nay, pardon me ; I, with an un-
 shorn crown,

Must hold the truth in plain simplicity,
 And am in nice distinctions most unskilful.

Urst. Lady, have I deserv'd this sharpness ? oft
 Thine infant hand has strok'd this shaven crown :
 Thou'st ne'er till now reproach'd it.

Orra (bursting into tears). Pardon, O pardon me,
 my gentle Urston !

Pardon a wayward child, whose eager temper
 Doth sometimes mar the kindness of her heart.
 Father, am I forgiven ? (*Hanging on him.*)

Urst. Thou art, thou art :

Thou art forgiven ; more than forgiven, my child.

Orra. Then lead me to the count, I will myself
 Learn his stern purpose.

Urst. In the hall he is,
 Seated in state, and waiting to receive you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*A spacious apartment, or baron's hall, with a chair
 of state. HUGHOBERT, ELEANORA, and GLOT-
 TENBAL enter near the front, speaking as they
 enter ; and afterwards enter Vassals and Atten-
 dants, who range themselves at the bottom of the
 stage.*

Hugh. Cease, dame ! I will not hear ; thou striv'st
 in vain

With thy weak pleadings. Orra hence must go
 Within the hour, unless she will engage
 Her plighted word to marry Glottenbal.

Glott. Ay, and a mighty hardship, by the mass !

Hugh. I've summon'd her in solemn form before
 me,

That these my vassals should my act approve,
 Knowing my right of guardianship ; and also
 That her late father, in his dying moments,
 Did will she should be married to my son ;
 Which will, she now must promise to obey,
 Or take the consequence.

El. But why so hasty ?

Hugh. Why, sayst thou ? Falkenstein still in these
 parts

Lingers with sly intent. Even now he left me,
 After an interview of small importance,
 Which he and Hartman, as a blind pretence
 For seeing Orra, formally requested.
 I say again she must forthwith obey me,
 Or take the consequence of wayward will.

El. Nay, not for Orra do I now entreat
 So much as for thyself. Bethink thee well
 What honour thou shalt have, when it is known
 Thy ward from thy protecting roof was sent ;
 Thou who shouldst be to her a friend, a father.

Hugh. But do I send her unprotected ? No !
 Brave Rudigere conducts her with a band
 Of trusty spearmen. In her new abode
 She will be safe as here.

El. Ha ! Rudigere !
 Putst thou such trust in him ? Alas, my lord !
 His heart is full of cunning and deceit.

Wilt thou to him the flower of all thy race
 Rashly intrust ? O be advised, my lord !

Hugh. Thy ghostly father tells thee so, I doubt
 not.

Another priest confesses Rudigere,
 And Urston likes him not. But canst thou think,
 With aught but honest purpose, he would choose
 From all her women the severe Cathrina,
 So strictly virtuous, for her companion ?
 This puts all doubt to silence. Say no more,
 Else I shall think thou pleadst against my son,
 More with a step-dame's than a mother's feelings.

Glott. Ay, marry does she, father! And forsooth! Regards me as a fool. No marvel then That Orra scorns me; being taught by her,— How should she else?—So to consider me!

Hugh. (to *GLOTTENBAL*). Tut! hold thy tongue.

El. He wrongs me much, my lord.

Hugh. No more, for here she comes.

Enter ORRA, attended by URSTON, ALICE, and CATHARINA, whilst HUGHOBERT seats himself in his chair of state, the vassals, &c. ranging themselves on each side.

Hugh. (to *ORRA*). Madam and ward, placed under mine authority

And to my charge committed by my kinsman, Ulric of Aldenberg, thy noble father: Having all gentle means essay'd to win thee To the fulfilment of his dying will, That did decree his heiress should be married With Glottenbal my heir; I solemnly Now call upon thee, ere that rougher means Be used for this good end, to promise truly Thou wilt, within a short and stated time, Before the altar give thy plighted faith To this my only son. I wait thine answer. Orra of Aldenberg, wilt thou do this?

Orra. Count of the same, my lord and guardian, I will not.

Hugh. Have a care, thou froward maid! 'Tis thy last opportunity: ere long Thou shalt, within a dreary dwelling pent, Count thy dull hours, told by the dead man's watch,

And wish thou hadst not been so proudly wilful.

Orra. And let my dull hours by the dead man's watch

Be told; yea, make me too the dead man's mate, My dwelling place the nailed coffin; still I would prefer it to the living lord Your goodness offers me.

Hugh. Art thou bewitch'd? Is he not young, well featured and well form'd? And dost thou put him in thy estimation With bones and sheeted clay? Beyond endurance is thy stubborn spirit. Right well thy father knew that all thy sex Stubborn and headstrong are; therefore, in wisdom, He vested me with power that might compel thee To what he will'd should be.

Orra. O not in wisdom! Say rather in that weak, but gen'rous faith, Which said to him, the cope of heaven would fall And smother in its cradle his swath'd babe, Rather than thou, his mate in arms, his kinsman, Who by his side in many a field had fought, Shouldst take advantage of his confidence For sordid ends, —

My brave and noble father! A voice comes from thy grave and cries against it,

And bids me to be bold. Thine awful form Rises before me, — and that look of anguish On thy dark brow! — O no! I blame thee not.

Hugh. Thou seemst beside thyself with such wild gestures

And strangely-flashing eyes. Repress these fancies, And to plain reason listen. Thou hast said, For sordid ends I have advantage ta'en. Since thy brave father's death, by war and compact, Thou of thy lands hast lost a third; whilst I, By happy fortune, in my heir's behalf, Have doubled my domains to what they were When Ulric chose him as a match for thee.

Orra. O, and what speaketh this, but that my father

Domains regarded not; and thought a man Such as the son should be of such a man As thou to him appear'dst, a match more honourable

Than one of ampler state. Take thou from Glottenbal

The largely added lands of which thou boastest, And put, in lieu thereof, into his stores Some weight of manly sense and gen'rous worth, And I will say thou keepst faith with thy friend: But as it is, although a king's domains Inceas'd thy wealth, thou poorly wouldst deceive him.

Hugh. (rising from his chair in anger). Now, madam, be all counsel on this matter Between us closed. Prepare thee for thy journey.

El. Nay, good my lord! consider.

Hugh. (to *ELEANORA*). What, again! Have I not said thou hast an alien's heart From me and mine. Learn to respect my will: — Be silent, as becomes a youthful dame.

Urst. For a few days may she not still remain?

Hugh. No, priest; not for an hour. It is my pleasure

That she for Brunier's castle do set forth Without delay.

Orra (with a faint starting movement). In Brunier's castle!

Hugh. Ay; And doth this change the colour of thy cheek, And give thy alter'd voice a feebler sound?

[*Aside to GLOTTENBAL.* She shrinks, now to her, boy; this is thy time.

Glott. (to *ORRA*). Unless thou wilt, thou needst not go at all.

There is full many a maiden would right gladly Accept the terms we offer, and remain.

(*A pause.*) Wilt thou not answer me?

Orra. I heard thee not. — I heard thy voice, but not thy words. What saidst thou?

Glott. I say, there's many a maiden would right gladly

Accept the terms we offer, and remain.

The daughter of a king hath match'd ere now
With mine inferior. We are link'd together
As 'twere by right and natural property.
And as I've said before I say again,
I love thee too : what more couldst thou desire ?

Orra. I thank thee for thy courtship, though un-
couth ;

For it confirms my purpose : and my strength
Grows as thou speakest, firm like the deep-bas'd rock.
(*To HUGHOBERT.*) Now for my journey when you
will, my lord !

I'm ready.

Hugh. Be it so ! on thine own head
Rest all the blame ! [*Going from her.*

Perverse past all belief !

[*Turning round to her sternly.*

Orra of Aldenberg, wilt thou obey me ?

Orra. Count of that noble house, with all respect,
Again I say I will not.

[*Exit HUGHOBERT in anger, followed by GLOT-
TENBAL, URSTON, &c. Manent only ELEANORA,
CATHERINA, ALICE, and ORRA, who
keeps up with stately pride till HUGHOBERT and
all attendants are gone out, and then throwing
herself into the arms of ELEANORA, gives vent
to her feelings.*

El. Sweet *Orra* ! be not so depress'd ; thou goest
For a short term, soon to return again ;
The banishment is mine, who stay behind.
But I will beg of heaven with ceaseless prayers
To have thee soon restored : and, when I dare,
Will plead with *Hughobert* in thy behalf ;
He is not always stern. [*doth ring*

Orra. Thanks, gentle friend ! Thy voice to me
Like the last tones of kindly nature ; dearly
In my remembrance shall they rest. — What sounds,
What sights, what horrid intercourse I may,
Ere we shall meet again, be doom'd to prove,
High heaven alone doth know. — If that indeed
We e'er shall meet again !

[*Falls on her neck and weeps.*

El. Nay, nay ! come to my chamber. There
await

Compose your spirits. Be not so depress'd.

[*Exeunt.*

[*RUDIGERE, who has appeared, during the last
part of the above scene, at the bottom of the stage,
half concealed, as if upon the watch, now comes
forward, speaking as he advances.*

Hold firm her pride till fairly from these walls
Our journey is begun ; then fortune hail !
Thy favours are secured. [*Looking off the stage.*
Ho, Maurice there !

Enter MAURICE.

My faithful Maurice, I would speak with thee.
I leave thee here behind me ; to thy care,
My int'rests I commit ; be it thy charge
To counteract thy lady's influence,

Who will entreat her lord the term to shorten
Of *Orra*'s absence, maiming thus my plan,
Which must, belike, have time to be effected.
Be vigilant, be artful ; and be sure
Thy services I amply will repay.

Maur. Ay, thou hast said so, and I have believ'd
thee.

Rud. And dost thou doubt ?

Maur. No ; yet meantime, good sooth !
If somewhat of thy bounty I might finger,
'Twere well : I like to have some actual proof.
Didst thou not promise it ?

Rud. 'Tis true I did,
But other pressing calls have drain'd my means.

Maur. And other pressing calls my ebbing faith
May also drain, and change my promis'd purpose.

Rud. Go to ! I know thou art a greedy leech,
Though ne'ertheless thou lov'st me.

[*Taking a small case from his pocket, which he
opens.*

Seest thou here ?

I have no coin ; but look upon these jewels :
I took them from a knight I slew in battle.
When I am *Orra*'s lord, thou shalt receive,
Were it ten thousand crowns, whate'er their worth
Shall by a skilful lapidary be
In honesty esteem'd. [*Gives him the jewels.*

Maur. I thank thee, but methinks their lustre's
dim.

I've seen the stones before upon thy breast
In gala days, but never heard thee boast
They were of so much value.

Rud. I was too prudent : I had lost them else.
To no one but thyself would I entrust
The secret of their value.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir *Rudigere*, the spearmen are without,
Waiting your further orders, for the journey.

Rud. (*to servant.*) I'll come to them anon.

[*Exit servant.*

Before I go, I'll speak to thee again.

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*A forest with a half-ruined castle in the background,
seen through the trees by moonlight. FRANKO and
several Outlaws are discovered sitting on the ground,
round a fire, with flagons, &c. by them, as if they
had been drinking.*

Song of several voices.

The chough and crow to roost are gone,
The owl sits on the tree,

The hush'd wind wails with feeble moan,
Like infant charity.
The wild-fire dances on the fen,
The red star sheds its ray,
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men !
It is our op'ning day.

Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
And clos'd is every flower,
And winking tapers faintly peep
High from my lady's bower ;
Bewilder'd hinds with shorten'd ken
Shrink on their murky way,
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men !
It is our op'ning day.

Nor board nor garner own we now,
Nor roof nor latched door,
Nor kind mate, bound by holy vow
To bless a good man's store ;
Noon lulls us in a gloomy den,
And night is grown our day,
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men !
And use it as ye may.

Franko (to *1st out.*). How lik'st thou this, Fer-
nando ?

1st out. Well sung i' faith ! but serving ill our
turn,

Who would all trav'lers and benighted folks
Scare from our precincts. Such sweet harmony
Will rather tempt invasion.

Franko. Fear not, for mingled voices, heard afar,
Through glade and glen and thicket, stealing on
To distant list'ners, seem wild-goblin-sounds ;
At which the lonely trav'ler checks his steed,
Pausing with long-drawn breath and keen-turn'd
ear,

And twilight pilferers cast down in haste
Their ill-got burthens, while the homeward hind
Turns from his path, full many a mile about,
Through bog and mire to grope his blund'ring
way.

Such, to the startled ear of superstition,
Were seraph's song, could we like seraphs sing.

Enter 2d outlaw, hastily.

2d out. Disperse ye diff'rent ways : we are un-
done.

Franko. How sayst thou, shrinking poltroon ? we
undone !

Outlaw'd and ruin'd men, who live by daring !

2d out. A train of armed men, some noble dame
Escorting (so their scatter'd words discover'd
As, unperceiv'd, I hung upon their rear),
Are close at hand, and mean to pass the night
Within the castle.

Franko. Some benighted travellers,
Bold from their numbers, or who ne'er have heard
The ghostly legend of this dreaded place.

1st out. Let us keep close within our vaulted
haunts ;

The way to which is tangled and perplex'd,
And cannot be discover'd : with the morn
They will depart.

Franko. Nay, by the holy mass ! within those
walls

Not for a night must trav'lers quietly rest,
Or few or many. Would we live securely,
We must uphold the terrors of the place :
Therefore, let us prepare our midnight rouse.
See, from the windows of the castle gleam

[*Lights seen from the castle.*

Quick passing lights, as though they moved within
In hurried preparation ; and that bell, [*Bell heard.*
Which from yon turret its shrill 'larum sends,
Betokens some unwonted stir. Come, hearts !
Be all prepared, before the midnight watch,
The fiend-like din of our infernal chace
Around the walls to raise. — Come ; night advances.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*A Gothic room in the castle, with the stage dark-
ened. Enter CATHRINA, bearing a light, followed
by ORRA.*

Orra (catching her by the robe and pulling her
back). Advance no further : turn, I pray !
This room

More dismal and more ghastly seems than that
Which we have left behind. Thy taper's light,
As thus aloft thou wav'st it to and fro,
The fretted ceiling gilds with feeble brightness ;
While over-head its carved ribs glide past
Like edgy waves of a dark sea, returning
To an eclipsed moon its sullen sheen.

Cath. To me it seems less dismal than the other.
See, here are chairs around the table set,
As if its last inhabitants had left it
Scarcely an hour ago.

[*Setting the light upon the table.*

Orra. Alas ! how many hours and years have past
Since human forms around this table sat,
Or lamp or taper on its surface gleam'd !
Methinks I hear the sound of time long past
Still murm'ring o'er us in the lofty void
Of those dark arches, like the ling'ring voices
Of those who long within their graves have slept.
It was their gloomy home ; now it is mine.

[*Sits down, resting her arm upon the table, and
covering her eyes with her hand.*

*Enter RUDIGERE, beckoning CATHRINA to come to
him ; and speaks to her in a low voice at the corner
of the stage.*

Go and prepare thy lady's chamber ; why
Dost thou for ever closely near her keep ?

Cath. She charged me so to do.

Rud. I charge thee also
With paramount authority, to leave her :
I for awhile will take thy station here.

Thou art not mad ? Thou dost not hesitate ?

[*Fixing his eyes on her with a fierce threatening look, from which she shrinks.* *Exit CATH.*

Orra. This was the home of bloody lawless power.
The very air rests thick and heavily
Where murder hath been done.

(*Sighing heavily.*) There is a strange oppression in
my breast :

Dost thou not feel a close unwholesome vapour ?

Rud. No ; ev'ry air to me is light and healthful,
That with thy sweet and heavenly breath is mix'd.

Orra (*starting up*). Thou here ! (*Looking round.*)
Cathrina gone ?

Rud. Does Orra fear to be alone with one,
Whose weal, whose being on her favour hangs ?

Orra. Retire, Sir Knight. I choose to be alone.

Rud. And dost thou choose it, here, in such a
place,

Wearing so near the midnight hour ? — Alas !
How loath'd and irksome must my presence be !

Orra. Dost thou deride my weakness ?

Rud. I deride it !
No, noble maid ! say rather that from thee
I have a kindred weakness caught. In battle
My courage never shrank, as my arm'd heel
And erected helm do fairly testify :
But now when midnight comes, I feel by sympathy,
With thinking upon thee, fears rise within me
I never knew before.

Orra (*in a softened kindlier voice*). Ha ! dost
thou too

Such human weakness own ?

Rud. I plainly feel
We are all creatures, in the wakeful hour
Of ghastly midnight, form'd to cower together,
Forgetting all distinctions of the day,
Beneath its awful and mysterious power.

[*Stealing closer to her as he speaks, and putting
his arms round her.*

Orra (*breaking from him*). I pray thee hold thy
parley further off :

Why dost thou press so near me ?

Rud. And art thou so offended, lovely Orra ?
Ah ! wherefore am I thus presumptuous deem'd ?
The blood that fills thy veins enriches mine ;
From the same stock we spring ; though by that
glance

Of thy disdainful eye, too well I see
My birth erroneously thou countest base.

Orra. Erroneously !

Rud. Yes, I will prove it so.
Longer I'll not endure a galling wrong
Which makes each word of tenderness that bursts
From a full heart, bold and presumptuous seem,
And severs us so far.

Orra. No, subtle snake !

It is the baseness of thy selfish mind,
Full of all guile, and cunning, and deceit,
That severs us so far, and shall do ever.

Rud. Thou prov'st how far my passion will endure
Unjust reproaches from a mouth so dear.

Orra. Out on hypocrisy ! who but thyself
Did Hughobert advise to send me hither ?
And who the jailor's hateful office holds
To make my thralldom sure ?

Rud. Upbraid me not for this : had I refused,
One less thy friend had ta'en th' ungracious task.
And, gentle Orra ! dost thou know a man,
Who might in ward all that his soul holds dear
From danger keep, yet would the charge refuse,
For that strict right such wardship doth condemn ?
O ! still to be with thee ; to look upon thee ;
To hear thy voice, makes even this place of hor-
rors, —

Where, as 'tis said, the spectre of a chief,
Slain by our common grandsire, haunts the night,
A paradise — a place where I could live
In penury and gloom, and be most bless'd.
Ah ! Orra ! if there's misery in thralldom,
Pity a wretch who breathes but in thy favour :
Who till he look'd upon that beauteous face,
Was free and happy. — Pity me or kill me !

[*Kneeling and catching hold of her hand.*

Orra. Off, fiend ! let snakes and vipers cling to me
So thou dost keep aloof.

Rud. (*rising indignantly*). And is my love with
so much hatred met ?

Madam, beware lest scorn like this should change
me

E'en to the baleful thing your fears have fancied.

Orra. Dar'st thou to threaten me ?

Rud. He, who is mad with love and gall'd with
scorn,

Dares any thing. — But O ! forgive such words
From one who rather, humbled at your feet,
Would of that gentleness, that gen'rous pity,
The native inmate of each female breast,
Receive the grace on which his life depends.
There was a time when thou didst look on me
With other eyes.

Orra. Thou dost amaze me much.

Whilst I believ'd thou wert an honest man,
Being no fool, and an adventurous soldier,
I look'd upon thee with good-will ; if more
Thou didst discover in my looks than this,
Thy wisdom with thine honesty, in truth,
Was fairly match'd.

Rud. Madam, the proud derision of that smile
Deceives me not. It is the lord of Falkenstein,
Who better skill'd than I in tourney-war,
Though not in th' actual field more valiant found,
Engrosses now thy partial thoughts. And yet
What may he boast which, in a lover's suit,
I may not urge ? He's brave, and so am I.

In birth I am his equal ; for my mother,
As I shall prove, was married to Count Albert,
My noble father, though for reasons tedious
Here to be stated, still their secret nuptials
Were unacknowledg'd, and on me hath fallen
A cruel stigma which degrades my fortunes.
But were I—O forgive th' aspiring thought!—
But were I Orra's lord, I should break forth
Like the unclouded sun, by all acknowledg'd
As ranking with the highest in the land.

Orra. Do what thou wilt when thou art Orra's
lord ;

But being as thou art, retire and leave me :
I choose to be alone. (*Very proudly.*)

Rud. Then be it so.
Thy pleasure, mighty dame, I will not balk.
This night, to-morrow's night, and every night,
Shalt thou in solitude be left ; if absence
Of human beings can secure it for thee.

[*Pauses and looks on her, while she seems struck
and disturbed.*]

It wears already on the midnight hour ;
Good night !

[*Pauses again, she still more disturbed.*]
Perhaps I understood too hastily
Commands you may retract.

Orra (*recovering her state*). Leave me, I say ;
that part of my commands
I never can retract.

Rud. You are obey'd. [*Exit.*]
Orra (*paces up and down hastily for some time,
then stops short, and after remaining a little
while in a thoughtful posture*). Can spirit from
the tomb, or fiend from hell,

More hateful, more malignant be than man—
Than villainous man ? Although to look on such,
Yea, even the very thought of looking on them,
Makes natural blood to curdle in the veins,
And loosen'd limbs to shake,
There are who have endur'd the visitation
Of supernatural beings.—O forefend it !
I would close couch me to my deadliest foe
Rather than for a moment bear alone
The horrors of the sight.

Who's there ? who's there ? [*Looking round.*]
Heard I not voices near ? That door ajar
Sends forth a cheerful light. Perhaps my women,
Who now prepare my chamber. Grant it be !

[*Exit, running hastily to a door from which a
light is seen.*]

SCENE III.

*A chamber, with a small bed or couch in it. Enter
RUDIGERE and CATHRINA, wrangling together.*

Rud. I say begone, and occupy the chamber
I have appointed for thee : here I'm fix'd,
And here I pass the night.

Cath. Thou saidst my chamber

Should be adjoining that which Orra holds ?
I know thy wicked thoughts : they meditate
Some devilish scheme ; but think not I'll abet it.

Rud. Thou wilt not !—angry, restive, simple
fool !

Dost thou stop short and say, "I'll go no further ?"
Thou, whom concealed shame hath bound so fast,—
My tool,—my instrument ?—Fulfil thy charge
To the full bent of thy commission, else
Thee, and thy bantling too, I'll from me cast
To want and infamy.

Cath. O, shameless man !
Thou art the son of a degraded mother

As low as I am, yet thou hast no pity.
Rud. Ay, and dost thou reproach my bastardy
To make more base the man who conquer'd thee,
With all thy virtue, rigid and demure ?
Who would have thought less than a sovereign
prince

Could e'er have compass'd such achievement ?
Mean

As he may be, thou'st given thyself a master,
And must obey him.—Dost thou yet resist ?
Thou know'st my meaning.

[*Tearing open his vest in vehemence of action.*]
Cath. Under thy vest a dagger !—Ah ! too well,
I know thy meaning, cruel, ruthless man !

Rud. Have I discovered it ?—I thought not
of it :

The vehemence of gesture hath betray'd me.
I keep it not for thee, but for myself ;
A refuge from disgrace. Here is another :
He who with high, but dangerous fortune grapples,
Should he be foil'd, looks but to friends like these.

[*Pulling out two daggers from his vest.*]
This steel is strong to give a vig'rous thrust ;
The other on its venom'd point hath that
Which, in the feeblest hand, gives death as certain,
As though a giant smote the destin'd prey.

Cath. Thou desp'rate man ! so arm'd against
thyself !

Rud. Ay ; and against myself with such resolves,
Consider well how I shall deal with those
Who may withstand my will or mar my purpose.
Thinkest thou I'll feebly—

Cath. O be pacified.
I will begone : I am a humbled wretch.

On whom thou tramplest with a tyrant's cruelty.

[*Exit.*]
Rud. (*looks after her with a malignant laugh, and
then goes to the door of an adjoining chamber,
to the lock of which he applies his ear*). All
still within.—I'm tired and heavy grown :

I'll lay me down to rest. She is secure :
No one can pass me here to gain her chamber.
If she hold parley now with any thing,
It must in truth be ghost or sprite.—Heigh ho !
I'm tir'd, and will to bed.

[*Lays himself on the couch and falls asleep.*]

The cry of hounds is then heard without at a distance, with the sound of a horn; and presently ORRA enters, bursting from the door of the adjoining chamber, in great alarm.

Orra. Cathrina! sleepest thou? Awake! awake!

[*Running up to the couch and starting back on seeing RUDIGERE.*

That hateful viper here!

Is this my nightly guard? Detested wretch!
I will steal back again.

[*Walks softly on tiptoe to the door of her chamber, when the cry of hounds, &c. is again heard without, nearer than before.*

O no! I dare not.

Though sleeping, and most hateful when awake,
Still he is natural life and may be rous'd.

[*Listening again.*

'Tis nearer now: that dismal thrilling blast!

I must awake him.

[*Approaching the couch and shrinking back again.*

O no! no, no!

Upon his face he wears a horrid smile

That speaks bad thoughts.

[*RUD. speaks in his sleep.*

He mutters too my name.—

I dare not do it.

[*Listening again.*

The dreadful sound is now upon the wind,
Sullen and low, as if it wound its way
Into the cavern'd earth that swallow'd it.
I will abide in patient silence here;
Though hateful and asleep, I feel me still
Near something of my kind.

[*Crosses her arms, and leans in a covering posture over the back of a chair at a distance from the couch; when presently the horn is heard without, louder than before, and she starts up.*

O it returns! as though the yawning earth

Had given it up again, near to the walls.

The horribly mingled din! 'tis nearer still:

'Tis close at hand: 'tis at the very gate!

[*Running up to the couch.*

Were he a murd'rer, clenching in his hands

The bloody knife, I must awake him.—No!

That face of dark and subtle wickedness!

I dare not do it. (*Listening again.*) Ay; 'tis at
the gate—

Within the gate.—

What rushing blast is that

Shaking the doors? Some awful visitation

Dread entrance makes! O mighty God of Heav'n!

A sound ascends the stairs.

Ho, Rudigere!

Awake, awake! Ho! wake thee, Rudigere!

Rud. (*waking.*) What cry is that so terribly
strong?—Ha! Orra!

What is the matter?

[*hear it?*

Orra. It is within the walls. Didst thou not

Rud. What? The loud voice that called me?

Orra. No, it was mine.

Rud.

It sounded in my ears

With more than human strength.

Orra.

Did it so sound?

There is around us, in this midnight air,

A power surpassing nature. List, I pray:

Although more distant now, dost thou not hear

The yell of hounds; and the spectre-huntsman's horn?

Rud. I hear, indeed, a strangely mingled sound:

The wind is howling round the battlements.

But rest secure where safety is, sweet Orra!

Within these arms, nor man nor fiend shall harm thee.

[*Approaching her with a softened winning voice, while she pushes him off with abhorrence.*

Orra. Vile reptile! touch me not.

Rud. Ah! Orra! thou art warp'd by prejudice,

And taught to think me base; but in my veins

Lives noble blood, which I will justify.

Orra. But in thy heart, false traitor! what lives
there?

Rud. Alas! thy angel-faultlessness conceives not

The strong temptations of a soul impassion'd

Beyond control of reason.—At thy feet—

[*Kneeling.*

O spurn me not!

Enter several Servants, alarmed.

Rud. What, all these fools upon us! Staring
knaves,

What brings ye here at this untimely hour?

1st serv. We have all heard it—'twas the yell
of hounds

And clatt'ring steeds, and the shrill horn between.

Rud. Out on such folly!

2d serv. In very truth it pass'd close to the
walls;

Did not your honour hear it?

Rud. Ha! sayst thou so? thou art not wont to
join

In idle tales.—I'll to the battlements

And watch it there: it may return again.

[*Exeunt severally, RUDIGERE followed by servants, and ORRA into her own chamber.*

SCENE IV.

The Outlaws' cave. Enter THEOBALD.

Theo. (*looking round.*) Here is a place in which
some traces are

Of late inhabitants. In yonder nook

The embers faintly gleam, and on the walls

Hang spears and ancient arms: I must be right.

A figure through the gloom moves towards me.

Ho! there! Whoe'er you are: Holla! good friend!

Enter an Outlaw.

Out. A stranger! Who art thou, who art thus
bold,

To hail us here unbidden?

Theo. That thou shalt shortly know. Thou art,
I guess,

One of the outlaw'd band who haunt this forest.

Out. Be thy conjecture right or wrong, no more
Shalt thou return to tell where thou hast found us.
Now for thy life! [*Drawing his sword.*]

Theo. Hear me, I do entreat thee.

Out. Nay, nay! no foolish pleadings; for thy
life

Is forfeit now; have at thee!

[*Falls fiercely upon THEOBALD, who also draws
and defends himself bravely, when another
outlaw enters and falls likewise upon him.*
*THEO. then recedes, fighting, till he gets his
back to the wall of the cavern, and there
defends himself stoutly.*]

Enter FRANKO.

Franko. Desist, I charge you! Fighting with a
stranger,

Two swords to one—a solitary stranger!

1st out. We are discover'd; had he master'd me,
He had return'd to tell his mates above
What neighbours in these nether caves they have.
Let us despatch him.

Franko. No, thou hateful butcher!
Despatch a man alone and in our power!
Who art thou, stranger, who dost use thy sword
With no mean skill; and in this perilous case
So bold an air and countenance maintainest?
What brought thee hither?

Theo. My name is Theobald of Falkenstein;
To find the valiant captain of these bands,
And crave assistance of his gen'rous arm:
This is my business here.

Franko (struck and agitated, to his men). Go, join
your comrades in the further cave.

[*Exeunt outlaws.*
And thou art Falkenstein? In truth thou art.

And who thinkest thou am I?

Theo. Franko, the gen'rous leader of those out-
laws.

Franko. So am I call'd, and by that name alone
They know me. Sporting on the mountain's side,
Where Garva's wood waves green, in other days,
Some fifteen years ago, they call'd me Albert.

Theo. (rushing into his arms). Albert; my play-
mate Albert! Woe the day!

What cruel fortune drove thee to this state?

Franko. I'll tell thee all! but tell thou first to me
What is the aid thou camest here to ask.

Theo. Ay, thou wert ever thus: still forward bent
To serve, not to be serv'd.

But woe was this.

Last night a lady to the castle came,
In thralldom by a villain kept, whom I
E'en with my life would rescue. Of armed force
At present destitute, I come to thee
Craving thy aid in counsel and in arms.

Franko. When didst thou learn that outlaws
harbour here,

For 'tis but lately we have held these haunts?

Theo. Not till within the precincts of the forest,
Following the traces of that villain's course,
One of your band I met, and recogniz'd
As an old soldier, who, some few years back,
Had under my command right bravely serv'd.
Seeing himself discover'd, and encouraged
By what I told him of my story, freely
He offer'd to conduct me to his captain.
But in a tangled path some space before me,
Alarm'd at sight of spearmen through the brake,
He started from his way, and so I miss'd him,
Making my way alone to gain your cave.

Franko. Thou'rt welcome here: and gladly I'll
assist thee,

Though not by arms, the force within the castle
So far out-numbering mine.

But other means may serve thy purpose better.

Theo. What other means, I pray? [ground

Franko. From these low caves, a passage under
Leads to the castle—to the very tower
Where, as I guess, the lady is confin'd. [way.

When sleep has still'd the house, we'll make our

Theo. Ay, by my faith it is a noble plan!
Guarded or not, we will may overcome

The few that may compose her midnight guard.
Franko. We shall not shrink from that.—But
by my fay!

To-morrow is St. Michael's eve: 'twere well
To be the spectre-huntsman for a night,
And bear her off, without pursuit or hindrance.

Theo. I comprehend thee not.

Franko. Thou shalt ere long.
But stand not here; an inner room I have,

Where thou shalt rest and some refreshment take,
And then we will more fully talk of this,

Which, slightly mention'd, seems chimerical.

Follow me. [*Turning to him as they go out.*]

Hast thou still upon thine arm
That mark which from mine arrow thou receiv'dst
When sportively we shot? The wound was deep,
And gall'd thee much, but thou mad'st light of it.

Theo. Yes, here it is.

[*Pulling up his sleeve as they go out, and
Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*The ramparts of the castle. Enter ORRA and
CATHRINA.*

*Cath. (after a pause, in which ORRA walks once
or twice across the stage, thoughtfully).* Go in,
I pray; thou wand'rest here too long.

[*A pause again.*]

The air is cold ; behind those further mountains
The sun is set. I pray thee now go in.

Orra. Ha ! sets the sun already ? Is the day
Indeed drawn to its close ?

Cath. Yes, night approaches.
See, many a gather'd flock of cawing rooks
Are to their nests returning.

Orra (solemnly). Night approaches ! —
This awful night which living beings shrink from ;
All now of every kind scour to their haunts,
While darkness, peopled with its hosts unknown,
Awful dominion holds. Mysterious night !
What things unutterable thy dark hours
May lap ! — What from thy teeming darkness burst
Of horrid visitations, ere that sun
Again shall rise on the enlighten'd earth !

[*A pause.*]
Cath. Why dost thou gaze intently on the sky ?
Seest thou aught wonderful ?

Orra. Look there, behold that strange gigantic
form

Which yon grim cloud assumes ; rearing aloft
The semblance of a warrior's plumed head,
While from its half-shaped arm a streamy dart
Shoots angrily ! Behind him too, far stretch'd,
Seems there not, verily, a serried line
Of fainter misty forms ?

Cath. I see, indeed,
A vasty cloud, of many clouds composed,
Towering above the rest ; and that behind
In misty faintness seen, which hath some likeness
To a long line of rocks with pine-wood crown'd :
Or, if indeed the fancy so incline,
A file of spearmen, seen through drifted smoke.

Orra. Nay, look how perfect now the form be-
comes :

Dost thou not see ? — Ay, and more perfect still.
O thou gigantic lord, whose robed limbs
Beneath their stride span half the heavens ! art thou
Of lifeless vapour formed ? Art thou not rather
Some air-clad spirit — some portentous thing —
Some mission'd being — Such a sky as this
Ne'er usher'd in a night of nature's rest.

Cath. Nay, many such I've seen ; regard it not.
That form, already changing, will ere long
Dissolve to nothing. Tarry here no longer.
Go in, I pray.

Orra. No ; while one gleam remains
Of the sun's blessed light, I will not go. [*warm,*]
Cath. Then let me fetch a cloak to keep thee
From chilly blows the breeze.

Orra. Do as thou wilt.
[*Exit CATH.*]

Enter an Outlaw, stealing softly behind her.

Out. (in a low voice). Lady ! — the Lady Orra !

Orra (starting). Heaven protect me !
Sounds it beneath my feet, in earth or air ?

[*He comes forward.*]

Welcome is aught that wears a human face.
Didst thou not hear a sound ?

Out. What sound, an't please you ?

Orra. A voice which call'd me now : it spoke,
methought,

In a low, hollow tone, suppress'd and low,
Unlike a human voice.

Out. It was my own.

Orra. What wouldst thou have ?

Out. Here is a letter, lady.

Orra. Who sent thee hither ?

Out. It will tell thee all. [*Gives a letter.*]

I must begone, your chieftain is at hand. [*Exit.*]

Orra. Comes it from Falkenstein ? It is his seal.
I may not read it here. I'll to my chamber.

[*Exit hastily, not perceiving RUDIGERE, who
enters by the opposite side, before she has time
to go off.*]

Rud. A letter in her hand, and in such haste !
Some secret agent here from Falkenstein ?

It must be so. [*Hastening after her, Exit.*]

SCENE II.

*The Outlaws cave. Enter THEOBALD and FRANKO
by opposite sides.*

Theo. How now, good captain ; draws it near
the time ?

Are those the keys ?

Franko. They are : this doth unlock

The entrance to the staircase, known alone

To Gomez, ancient keeper of the castle,

Who is my friend in secret, and deters

The neighbour'ing peasantry with dreadful tales

From visiting by night our wide domains.

The other doth unlock a secret door,

That leads us to the chamber where she sleeps.

Theo. Thanks, gen'rous friend ! thou art my
better genius.

Didst thou not say, until the midnight horn

Hath sounded thrice, we must remain conceal'd ?

Franko. Even so. And now I hear my men
without

Telling the second watch.

Theo. How looks the night ?

Franko. As we could wish : the stars do faintly
twinkle

Through sever'd clouds, and shed but light suffi-
cient

To show each nearer object closing on you

In dim unshapely blackness. Aught that moves

Across your path, or sheep or straggling goat,

Is now a pawing steed or grizzly bull,

Large and terrific ; every air-mov'd bush

Or jutting crag, some strange gigantic thing.

Theo. Is all still in the castle ?

Franko. There is an owl sits hooting on the
tower,

That answer from a distant mate receives,
Like the faint echo of his dismal cry ;
While a poor houseless dog by dreary fits
Sits howling at the gate. All else is still.

Theo. Each petty circumstance is in our favour,
That makes the night more dismal.

Franko. Ay, all goes well ; as I approach'd the
walls,

I heard two sentinels—for now, I ween,
The boldest spearman will not watch alone—
Together talk in the deep hollow voice
Of those who speak at midnight, under awe
Of the dead stillness round them.

Theo. Then let us put ourselves in readiness,
And heaven's good favour guide us ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A gloomy apartment. Enter ORRA and RUDIGERE.

Orra (aside). The room is darken'd : yesternight
a lamp

Did shed its light around on roof and walls,
And made the dreary space appear less dismal.

*Rud. (overhearing her, and calling to a servant
without).* Ho ! more lights here !

[*Servant enters with a light and exit.*]

Thou art obey'd : in aught

But in the company of human kind,
Thou shalt be gratified. Thy lofty mind
For higher superhuman fellowship,
If such there be, may now prepare its strength.

Orra. Thou ruthless tyrant ! They who have in
battle

Fought valiantly, shrink like a helpless child
From any intercourse with things unearthly.
Art thou a man ? And bearest thou in thy breast
The feelings of a man ? It cannot be !

Rud. Yes, madam ; in my breast I bear too
keenly

The feelings of a man—a man most wretched :
A scorn'd, rejected man.—Make me less miser-
able ;

Nay rather should I say, make me most blest ;
And then—

[*Attempting to take her hand, while she steps
back from him, drawing herself up with an air
stately and determined, and looking steadfastly
in his face.*]

I too am firm. Thou knowst my fix'd resolve :
Give me thy solemn promise to be mine.
This is the price, thou haughty, scornful maid,
That will redeem thee from the hour of terror !
This is the price—

Orra. Which never shall be paid.

[*Walks from him to the further end of the
apartment.*]

Rud. (after a pause). Thou art determin'd, then.
Be not so rash :

Bethink thee well what flesh and blood can bear :
The hour is near at hand.

[*She, turning round, waves him with her hand to
leave her.*]

Thou deignst no answer.
Well ; reap the fruits of thine unconquer'd pride. [*Exit.*]

MANET ORRA.

Orra. I am alone : that closing door divides me
From every being owning nature's life.—
And shall I be constrain'd to hold communion
With that which owns it not ?

[*After pacing to and fro for a little while.*
O that my mind

Could raise its thoughts in strong and steady fer-
vour

To HIM, the Lord of all existing things,
Who lives, and is where'er existence is ;
Grasping its hold upon His skirted robe,
Beneath whose mighty rule angels and spirits,
Demons and nether powers, all living things,
Hosts of the earth, with the departed dead
In their dark state of mystery, alike
Subjected are !—And I will strongly do it.—
Ah ! would I could ! Some hidden powerful hin-
drance

Doth hold me back, and mars all thought.—

[*After a pause, in which she stands fixed with
her arms crossed on her breast.*]

Dread intercourse !

O ! if it look on me with its dead eyes !
If it should move its lock'd and earthy lips,
And utterance give to the grave's hollow sounds !
If it stretch forth its cold and bony grasp—
O horror, horror !

[*Sinking lower at every successive idea, as she
repeats these four last lines, till she is quite
upon her knees on the ground.*]

Would that beneath these planks of senseless matter
I could, until the dreadful hour is past,
As senseless be ! [*Striking the floor with her hands.*]

O open and receive me,

Ye happy things of still and lifeless being,
That to the awful steps which tread upon ye
Unconscious are !

Enter CATHRINA behind her.

Who's there ? Is't any thing ?

Cath. 'Tis I, my dearest lady ; 'tis Cathrina.

Orra (embracing her). How kind ! such blessed
kindness keep thee by me ;

I'll hold thee fast ; an angel brought thee hither.

I needs must weep to think thou art so kind
In mine extremity.—Where wert thou hid ?

Cath. In that small closet, since the supper hour,
I've been conceal'd. For searching round the
chamber,

I found its door and enter'd. Fear not now,
I will not leave thee till the break of day.

Orra. Heaven bless thee for it! Till the break of day!

The very thought of daybreak gives me life.
If but this night were past, I have good hope
That noble Theobald will soon be here
For my deliv'rance.

Cath. Wherefore thinkst thou so?

Orra. A stranger, when thou lefst me on the ramparts,

Gave me a letter, which I quickly open'd,
As soon as I, methought, had gain'd my room
In privacy; but close behind me came
That demon, Rudigere, and, snatching at it,
Forced me to cast it to the flames, from which,
I struggling with him still, he could not save it.

Cath. You have not read it then?

Orra. No; but the seal
Was Theobald's, and I could swear ere long
He will be here to free me from this thraldom.

Cath. God grant he may! [time?]

Orra. If but this night were past! How goes the
Has it not enter'd on the midnight watch?

Cath. (*pointing to a small slab at the corner of the stage on which is placed a sand-glass.*) That glass I've set to measure it. As soon

As all the sand is run, you are secure;
The midnight watch is past.

Orra (*running to the glass, and looking at it eagerly.*) There is not much to run; O an't were finish'd!

But it so slowly runs!

Cath. Yes; watching it,
It seemeth slow. But heed it not; the while,
I'll tell thee some old tale, and ere I've finish'd,
The midnight watch is gone. Sit down, I pray.

[*They sit, ORRA drawing her chair close to CATHRINA.*]

What story shall I tell thee?

Orra. Something, my friend, which thou thyself hast known,

Touching the awful intercourse which spirits
With mortal men have held at this dread hour.
Didst thou thyself e'er meet with one whose eyes
Had look'd upon the spectred dead—had seen
Forms from another world?

Cath. Never but once.

Orra (*eagerly.*) Once then thou didst. O tell it! tell it me!

Cath. Well, since I needs must tell it, once I knew

A melancholy man, who did aver,
That journeying on a time o'er a wild waste,
By a fell storm o'erta'en, he was compell'd
To pass the night in a deserted tower,
Where a poor hind, the sole inhabitant
Of the sad place, prepared for him a bed;
And, as he told his tale, at dead of night,
By the pale lamp that in his chamber burn'd
As it might be an arm's-length from his bed—

Orra. So close upon him?

Cath. Yes.

Orra. Go on; what saw he?

Cath. An upright form, wound in a clotted shroud—

Clotted and stiff, like one swath'd up in haste
After a bloody death.

Orra. O horrible!

Cath. He started from his bed and gazed upon it.

Orra. And did he speak to it?

Cath. He could not speak.

Its visage was uncover'd, and at first
Seem'd fix'd and shrunk, like one in coffin'd sleep;
But, as he gaz'd, there came, he wist not how,
Into its beamless eyes a horrid glare,
And turning towards him, for it did move—
Why dost thou grasp me thus?

Orra. Go on, go on!

Cath. Nay, heaven forefend! Thy shrunk and sharpen'd features

Are of the corse's colour, and thine eyes
Are full of tears. How's this?

Orra. I know not how.

A horrid sympathy jarr'd on my heart,
And forced into mine eyes these icy tears.

A fearful kindredship there is between

The living and the dead—an awful bond!

Woe's me! that we do shudder at ourselves—

At that which we must be!—A dismal thought!

Where dost thou run? thy story is not told.

[*Seeing CATH. go towards the sand-glass.*]

Cath. (*showing the glass.*) A better story I will tell thee now;

The midnight watch is past.

Orra. Ha! let me see.

Cath. There's not one sand to run.

Orra. But it is barely past.

Cath. 'Tis more than past.

For I did set it later than the hour,

To be assur'dly sure.

Orra. Then it is gone indeed. O heaven be praised!

The fearful gloom gone by!

[*Holding up her hands in gratitude to heaven, and then looking round her with cheerful animation.*]

In truth, already

I feel as if I breath'd the morning air;

I'm marvellously lighten'd.

Cath. Ne'ertheless,

Thou art forespent; I'll run to my apartment,

And fetch some cordial drops that will revive thee.

Orra. Thou needst not go; I've ta'en thy drops already;

I'm bold and buoyant grown.

[*Bounding lightly from the floor.*]

Cath. I'll soon return;

Thou art not fearful now?

Orra. No; I breathe lightly;
Valour within me grows most powerfully,
Wouldst thou but stay to see it, gentle Cathrine!
Cath. I will return to see it, ere thou canst
Three times repeat the letters of thy name.

[Exit hastily by the concealed door.

Orra. (alone). This burst of courage shrinks most shamefully.

I'll follow her.— [Striving to open the door.

'Tis fast; it will not open.

I'll count my footsteps as I pace the floor

Till she return again.

[Paces up and down, muttering to herself, when a horn is heard without, pausing and sounding three times, each time louder than before.

[ORRA runs again to the door.

Despair will give me strength; where is the door?

Mine eyes are dark, I cannot find it now.

O God! protect me in this awful pass!

[After a pause, in which she stands with her body bent in a covering posture, with her hands locked together, and trembling violently, she starts up and looks wildly round her.

There's nothing, yet I felt a chilly hand
Upon my shoulder press'd. With open'd eyes
And ears intent I'll stand. Better it is
Thus to abide the awful visitation,
Than cower in blinded horror, strain'd intensely
With ev'ry beating of my goaded heart.

[Looking round her with a steady sternness, but shrinking again almost immediately.

I cannot do it: on this spot I'll hold me
In awful stillness.

[Bending her body as before; then, after a momentary pause, pressing both her hands upon her head.

The icy scalp of fear is on my head;
The life stirs in my hair; it is a sense
That tells the nearing of unearthly steps,
Albeit my ringing ears no sounds distinguish.

[Looking round, as if by irresistible impulse, to a great door at the bottom of the stage, which bursts open, and the form of a huntsman, clothed in black, with a horn in his hand, enters and advances towards her. She utters a loud shriek, and falls senseless on the ground.

Theo. (running up to her, and raising her from the ground). No semblance, but real agony of fear.

Orra, oh, Orra! knowst thou not my voice?
Thy knight, thy champion, the devoted Theobald?
Open thine eyes and look upon my face:

[Unmasking.

I am no fearful waker from the grave.
Dost thou not feel? 'Tis the warm touch of life.
Look up, and fear will vanish.—Words are vain!
What a pale countenance of ghastly strength
By horror chang'd! O idiot that I was
To hazard this — The villain hath deceiv'd me:

My letter she has ne'er receiv'd. O fool!
That I should trust to this!

[Beating his head distractedly.

Enter FRANKO, by the same door.

Franko. What is the matter? what strange turn is this?

Theo. O cursed sanguine fool! could I not think—
She moves, she moves!—rouse thee, my gentle Orra!

'Tis no strange voice that calls thee; 'tis thy friend.

Franko. She opens now her eyes.

Theo. But, oh, that look!

Franko. She knows thee not, but gives a stifled groan,

And sinks again in stupor.

Make no more fruitless lamentation here,
But bear her hence: the cool and open air
May soon restore her. Let us, while we may,
Occasion seize, lest we should be surprised.

[Exeunt: ORRA borne off in a state of insensibility.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The great hall of the castle. Enter RUDIGERE, CATHRINA, and Attendants, by different doors.

Rud. (to attend.) Return'd again! Is any thing discover'd?

Or door or passage, garment dropt in haste,
Or footstep's track, or any mark of flight?

1st att. No, by my faith! though we have search'd the castle

From its high turret to its deepest vault.

Cath. 'Tis vain to trace the marks of trackless feet.

If that in truth it hath convey'd her hence,
The yawning earth has yielded them a passage,
Or else, through rifted roofs, the buoyant air.

Rud. Fools! search again. I'll raze the very walls

From their foundations, but I will discover
If door or pass there be to us unknown.

Ho! Gomez, there! [Calling off the stage.

He keeps himself aloof;
Nor aids the search with true and hearty will.

I am betray'd — Ho! Gomez, there, I say!
He shrinks away: go, drag the villain hither,
And let the torture wring confession from him.

[A loud knocking heard at the gate.
Ha! who seeks entrance at this early hour

In such a desert place?

Cath. Some hind, perhaps,
Who brings intelligence. Heaven grant it be!

Enter an armed Vassal.

Rud. Ha! one from Aldenberg! what brings thee hither?

Vass. (seizing RUD.) Thou art my prisoner. *(To attendants.)* Upon your peril, Assist me to secure him.

Rud. Audacious hind! by what authority Speakst thou such bold commands? Produce thy warrant.

Vass. 'Tis at the gate, and such as thou must yield to:

Count Hughobert himself, with armed men,
A goodly band, his pleasure to enforce.

[*Secures him.*]

Rud. What sudden freak is this? am I suspected Of aught but true and honourable faith?

Vass. Ay, by our holy saints! more than suspected.

Thy creature Maurice, whom thou thought'st to bribe

With things of seeming value, hath discover'd
The cunning fraud; on which his tender conscience,
Good soul! did o' the sudden so upbraid him,
That to his lord forthwith he made confession
Of all the plots against the Lady Orra,
In which thy wicked arts had tempted him.
To take a wicked part. All is discover'd.

Cath. (aside.) All is discover'd! Where then shall I hide me?

(Aloud to vass.) What is discover'd?

Vass. Ha! most virtuous lady!
Art thou alarm'd? Fear not: the world well knows

How good thou art; and to the countess shortly,
Who with her lord is near, thou wilt no doubt
Give good account of all that thou hast done.

Cath. (aside, as she retires in agitation.) O heaven forbid! What hole o' th' earth will hide me!

[*Exit.*]

Enter by the opposite side, HUGHOBERT, ELEANORA, ALICE, GLOTTENBAL, URSTON, MAURICE, and Attendants.

Hugh. (speaking as he enters.) Is he secured?

Vass. He is, my lord; behold!
[*Pointing to RUD.*]

Hugh. (to RUD.) Black, artful traitor! Of a sacred trust,

Blindly reposed in thee, the base betrayer
For wicked ends; full well upon the ground
Mayst thou decline those darkly frowning eyes,
And gnaw thy lip in shame.

Rud. And rests no shame with him, whose easy faith

Entrusts a man unprovoked; or, having proved him,
Lets a poor hireling's unsupported testimony
Shake the firm confidence of many years?

Hugh. Here the accuser stands; confront him boldly,

And spare him not. [*Bringing forward MAURICE.*]
Maur. (to RUD.) Deny it if thou canst. Thy brazen front,

All brazen as it is, denies it not.

Rud. (to MAUR.) Fool! that of prying curiosity
And a'rice art compounded! I in truth
Did give to thee a counterfeited treasure
To bribe thee to a counterfeited trust;
Meet recompense! Ha, ha! Maintain thy tale,
For I deny it not. [*With careless derision.*]

Maur. O, subtle traitor!
Dost thou so varnish it with seeming mirth?

Hugh. Sir Rudigere, thou dost, I must confess,
Outface him well. But call the Lady Orra;
If towards her thou hast thyself comporting
In honesty, she will declare it freely.

(To attendant.) Bring Orra hither.

1st att. Would that we could; last night 't the midnight watch

She disappear'd; but whether man or devil
Hath borne her hence, in truth we cannot tell.

Hugh. O both! Both man and devil together join'd.

(To RUD. furiously.) Fiend, villain, murderer!
Produce her instantly.

Dead or alive, produce thy hapless charge.

Rud. Restrain your rage, my lord; I would right gladly

Obey you, were it possible: the place,
And the mysterious means of her retreat,
Are both to me unknown.

Hugh. Thou liest! thou liest!

Glot. (coming forward.) Thou liest, beast, villain,
traitor! thinkst thou still

To fool us thus? Thou shalt be forced to speak.

(To HUGH.) Why lose we time in words when other means

Will quickly work? Straight to those pillars bind him,

And let each sturdy varlet of your train
Inflict correction on him.

Maur. Ay, this alone will move him.

Hugh. Thou sayst well:
By heaven it shall be done!

Rud. And will Count Hughobert degrade in me
The blood of Aldenberg to shame himself?

Hugh. That plea avails thee not; thy spurious birth

Gives us full warrant, as thy conduct varies,
To reckon thee or noble or debased.

(To att.) Straight bind the traitor to the place of shame.

[*As they are struggling to bind RUD. he gets one of his hands free, and, pulling out a dagger from under his clothes, stabs himself.*]

Rud. Now, take your will of me, and drag my corse

Through mire and dust; your shameless fury now
Can do me no disgrace.

Urston (advancing). Rash, daring, thoughtless
wretch! dost thou so close

A wicked life in hardy desperation? [sins

Rud. Priest, spare thy words: I add not to my
That of presumption, in pretending now
To offer up to heaven the forced repentance
Of some short moments for a life of crimes.

Urst. My son, thou dost mistake me: let thy
heart

Confession make——

Glot. (interrupting URST.) Yes, dog! Confession
make

Of what thou'st done with Orra; else I'll spurn
thee,

And cast thy hateful carcass to the kites.

*Hugh. (pulling back GLOT. as he is going to spurn
RUD. with his foot, who is now fallen upon the
ground).* Nay, nay, forbear; such outrage is
unmanly.

[*ELEANORA, who with ALICE had retired from
the shocking sight of RUDIGERE, now comes
forward to him.*

El. Oh, Rudigere! thou art a dying man,
And we will speak to thee without upbraiding.
Confess, I do entreat thee, ere thou goest
To thy most awful change, and leave us not
In this our horrible uncertainty.

Is Orra here conceal'd?

Al. Thou hast not slain her?

Confession make, and heaven have mercy on thee!

Rud. Yes, ladies; with these words of gentle
meekness
My heart is changed; and that you may perceive
How greatly changed, let Glottenbal approach me;
Spent am I now, and can but faintly speak—
E'en unto him in token of forgiveness
I'll tell what ye desire.

El. Thank heaven, thou art so changed!

Hugh. (to GLOT.) Go to him, boy.

[*GLOTTENBAL goes to RUDIGERE, and stooping
over him to hear what he has to say, RUDI-
GERE, taking a small dagger from his bosom,
strikes GLOTTENBAL on the neck.*

Glot. Oh, he has wounded me!—Detested traitor!

Take that and that; would thou hadst still a life
For every thrust. [Killing him.

Hugh. (alarmed). Ha! has he wounded thee, my
son?

Glot. A scratch;

'Tis nothing more. He aim'd it at my throat,
But had not strength to thrust.

Hugh. Thank God, he had not!

[*A trumpet sounds without.*

Hark! martial notice of some high approach!

(*To attendants.*) Go to the gate.

[*Exeunt attendants.*

El. Who may it be? This castle is remote
From every route which armed leaders take.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The Banneret of Basle is at the gate.

Hugh. Is he in force?

Serv. Yes, through the trees his distant bands are
seen

Some hundreds strong, I guess; though with him-
self

Two followers only come.

Enter HARTMAN attended.

Hugh. Forgive me, banneret, if I receive thee
With more surprise than courtesy. How is it?
Com'st thou in peace?

Hart. To you, my lord, I frankly will declare
The purpose of my coming: having heard it,
It is for you to say if I am come,
As much I wish, in peace.

(*To EL.*) Countess, your presence much emboldens
me

To think it so shall be.

Hugh. (impatiently). Proceed, I beg.

When burghers gentle courtesy affect,
It chafes me more than all their sturdy boasting.

Hart. Then with a burgher's plainness, Hugh-
bert,

I'll try my tale to tell,—nice task I fear!

So that it may not gall a baron's pride,
Brave Theobald, the lord of Falkenstein,
Co-burgher also of our ancient city,

Whose cause of course is ours, declares himself
The suitor of thy ward, the Lady Orra;
And learning that within these walls she is,
By thine authority, in durance kept,
In his behalf I come to set her free;
As an oppressed dame, such service claiming
From ev'ry gen'rous knight. What is thy answer?
Say, am I come in peace? Wilt thou release her?

Hugh. Ah, would I could! In faith thou gall'st
me shrewdly.

Hart. I've been inform'd of all that now disturbs
you,

By one who held me waiting at the gate.

Until the maid be found, if 'tis your pleasure,
Cease enmity.

Hugh. Then let it cease. A traitor has deceived
me,

And there he lies. [Pointing to the body of RUD.

Hart. (looking at the body). A ghastly smile of
fell malignity

On his distorted face death has arrested.

[Turning again to HUGH.

And has he died, and no confession made?

All means that may discover Orra's fate
Shut from us?

Hugh. Ah! the fiend hath utter'd nothing
That could betray his secret. If she lives——

El. Alas, alas! think you he murder'd her?

Al. Merciful heaven forefend!

Enter a Soldier in haste.

Sold. O, I have heard a voice, a dismal voice!

Ommes. What hast thou heard?

El. What voice?

Sold. The Lady Orra's.

El. Where? Lead us to the place.

Hugh. Where didst thou hear it, soldier?

Sold. In a deep-tangled thicket of the wood,
Close to a ruin'd wall, o'ergrown with ivy,
That marks the ancient outworks of the castle.

Hugh. Haste; lead the way.

[*Exeunt all eagerly, without order, following the soldier, GLOTTENBAL and one attendant accepted.*]

Att. You do not go, my lord?

Glot. I'm sick, and strangely dizzy grows my head,

And pains shoot from my wound. It is a scratch,
But from a devil's fang.—There's mischief in it.
Give me thine arm, and lead me to a couch:
I'm very faint.

Att. This way, my lord; there is a chamber near.

[*Exit GLOTTENBAL, supported by the attendant.*]

SCENE II.

The forest near the castle; in front a rocky bank crowned with a ruined wall overgrown with ivy, and the mouth of a cavern shaded with bushes. Enter FRANKO, conducting HUGHOBERT, HARTMAN, ELEANORA, ALICE, and URSTON, the Soldier following them.

Franko (to HUGH). This is the entry to our secret haunts.

And now, my lord, having inform'd you truly
Of the device, well meant, but most unhappy,
By which the Lady Orra from her prison
By Falkenstein was ta'en, myself, my outlaws,
Unhappy men—who better days have seen,
Driv'n to this lawless life by hard necessity,
Are on your mercy cast.

Hugh. Which shall not fail you, valiant Franko.

Much

Am I indebted to thee: hadst thou not
Of thine own free good will become our guide,
As wand'ring here thou foundst us, we had ne'er
The spot discover'd; for this honest soldier,
A stranger to the forest, sought in vain
To thread the tangled path.

El. (to FRANKO). She is not well, thou sayst, and
from her swoon

Imperfectly recover'd.

Franko. When I left her,
She so appear'd.—But enter not, I pray,

Till I give notice.—Holla, you within!

Come forth and fear no ill.

[*A shriek heard from the cave.*]

Ommes. What dismal shriek is that?

Al.

'Tis Orra's voice.

El. No, no! it cannot be! It is some wretch,

In maniac's fetters bound. [mind!]

Hart. The horrid thought that bursts into my
Forbidden it, righteous Heaven!

[*Running into the cave, he is prevented by THEOBALD, who rushes out upon him.*]

Theo. Hold, hold! no entry here but o'er my
corse,

When ye have master'd me.

Hart. My Theobald,

Dost thou not know thy friends?

Theo. Ha! thou, my Hartman! Art thou come
to me?

Hart. Yes, I am come. What means that look
of anguish?

She is not dead!

Theo. Oh, no! it is not death!

Hart. What meanst thou? Is she well?

Theo. Her body is.

Hart. And not her mind?—Oh! direst wreck
of all!

That noble mind!—But 'tis some passing seizure,
Some powerful movement of a transient nature;
It is not madness?

Theo. (shrinking from him, and bursting into tears). 'Tis heaven's infliction; let us call it
so;

Give it no other name. [Covering his face.]

El. (to THEO.) Nay, do not thus despair: when
she beholds us,

She'll know her friends, and, by our kindly soothing,

Be gradually restored.

Al. Let me go to her.

Theo.

Nay, forbear, I pray thee;

I will myself with thee, my worthy Hartman,

Go in and lead her forth.

[*THEOBALD and HARTMAN go into the cavern, while those without wait in deep silence, which is only broken once or twice by a scream from the cavern and the sound of THEOBALD'S voice speaking soothingly, till they return, leading forth ORRA, with her hair and dress disordered, and the appearance of wild distraction in her gait and countenance.*]

Orra (shrinking back as she comes from under the shade of the trees, &c. and dragging THEOBALD and HARTMAN back with her). Come
back, come back! The fierce and fiery light!

Theo. Shrink not, dear love! it is the light of
day.

Orra. Have cocks crow'd yet?

Theo.

Yes; twice I've heard already

Their matin sound. Look up to the blue sky;

Is it not daylight there? And these green boughs
Are fresh and fragrant round thee: every sense
Tells thee it is the cheerful early day.

Orra. Ay, so it is; day takes his daily turn,
Rising between the gulfy dells of night
Like whiten'd billows on a gloomy sea; [dark,
Till glow-worms gleam, and stars peep through the
And will-o'-the-wisp his dancing taper light,
They will not come again.

[*Bending her ear to the ground.*

Hark, hark! Ay, hark!

They are all there: I hear their hollow sound
Full many a fathom down. [return:

Theo. Be still, poor troubled soul! they'll ne'er
They are for ever gone. Be well assured
Thou shalt from henceforth have a cheerful home
With crackling faggots on thy midnight fire,
Blazing like day around thee; and thy friends—
Thy living, loving friends still by thy side,
To speak to thee and cheer thee.—See, my Orra!
They are beside thee now; dost thou not know
them? (*Pointing to ELEANORA and ALICE.*)

Orra (*gazing at them with her hand held up to shade
her eyes*). No, no! athwart the wav'ring
garish light,

Things move and seem to be, and yet are nothing.

El. (*going near her*). My gentle Orra! hast thou
then forgot me?

Dost thou not know my voice?

Orra. 'Tis like an old tune to my ear return'd.
For there be those, who sit in cheerful halls,
And breathe sweet air, and speak with pleasant
sounds;

And once I liv'd with such; some years gone by;
I wot not now how long.

Hugh. Keen words that rend my heart!—Thou
hadst a home,

And one whose faith was pledged for thy protection.
Urst. Be more composed, my lord, some faint
remembrance

Returns upon her with the well-known sound
Of voices once familiar to her ear.

Let Alice sing to her some fav'rite tune,
That may lost thoughts recall.

[*ALICE sings an old tune, and ORRA, who listens
eagerly and gazes on her while she sings, after-
wards bursts into a wild laugh.* [bravely.

Orra. Ha, ha! the witch'd air sings for thee
Hoot owls through mantling fog for matin birds?
It lures not me.—I know thee well enough:
The bones of murder'd men thy measure beat,
And fleshless heads nod to thee.—Off, I say!
Why are ye here?—That is the blessed sun.

El. Ah, Orra! do not look upon us thus!

These are the voices of thy loving friends
That speak to thee: this is a friendly hand
That presses thee so kindly.

[*Putting her hand upon ORRA's, who gives a
loud shriek, and shrinks from her with horror.*

Hart. O grievous state. (*Going up to her.*) What
terror seizes thee?

Orra. Take it away! It was the swathed dead!
I know its clammy, chill, and bony touch.

[*Fixing her eyes fiercely on ELEANORA.*
Come not again; I'm strong and terrible now:
Mine eyes have look'd upon all dreadful things;
And when the earth yawns, and the hell-blast
sounds,

I'll 'bide the trooping of unearthly steps
With stiff-clench'd, terrible strength.

[*Holding her clenched hands over her head with
an air of grandeur and defiance.*

Hugh. (*beating his breast*). A murd'rer is a guilt-
less wretch to me.

Hart. Be patient; 'tis a momentary pitch;
Let me encounter it.

[*GOES up to ORRA, and fixes his eyes upon her,
which she, after a moment, shrinks from and
seeks to avoid, yet still, as if involuntarily,
looks at him again.*

Orra. Take off from me thy strangely-fasten'd
eye:

I may not look upon thee, yet I must.

[*Still turning from him, and still snatching a
hasty look at him as before.*

Unfix thy baleful glance: art thou a snake?
Something of horrid power within thee dwells.
Still, still that powerful eye doth suck me in
Like a dark eddy to its wheeling core.

Spare me! O spare me, being of strange power,
And at thy feet my subject head I'll lay!

[*Kneeling to HARTMAN and bending her head
submissively.*

El. Alas the piteous sight! to see her thus;
The noble, generous, playful, stately Orra!

Theo. (*running to HARTMAN, and pushing him
away with indignation*). Out on thy hateful
and ungenerous guile!

Thinkst thou I'll suffer o'er her wretched state
The slightest shadow of a base control?

[*Raising ORRA from the ground.*
No, rise thou stately flower with rude blasts
rent:

As honour'd art thou with thy broken stem,
And leaflets strew'd, as in thy summer's pride.

I've seen thee worshipp'd like a regal dame
With every studied form of mark'd devotion,
Whilst I in distant silence, scarcely proffer'd
E'en a plain soldier's courtesy; but now,
No liege-man to his crowned mistress sworn,
Bound and devoted is, as I to thee;
And he who offers to thy alter'd state
The slightest seeming of diminish'd reverence,
Must in my blood—(*To HARTMAN.*) O pardon
me, my friend!

Thou'st wrung my heart.

Hart. Nay, do thou pardon me: I am to blame:
Thy nobler heart shall not again be wrung.

But what can now be done? O'er such wild ravings

There must be some control.

Theo. O none! none, none! but gentle sympathy
And watchfulness of love.

My noble Orra!

Wander where'er thou wilt; thy vagrant steps
Shall follow'd be by one, who shall not weary,
Nor e'er detach him from his hopeless task;
Bound to thee now as fairest, gentlest beauty
Could ne'er have bound him.

Al. See how she gazes on him with a look,
Subsiding gradually to softer sadness,
Half saying that she knows him.

El. There is a kindness in her changing eye.
Yes, Orra, 'tis the valiant Theobald,
Thy knight and champion, whom thou gazest on.

Orra. The brave are like the brave; so should it
be.

He was a goodly man — a noble knight.

(*To THEOBALD.*) What is thy name, young soldier?
— Woe is me!

For prayers of grace are said o'er dying men,
Yet they have laid thy clay in unblest earth —
Shame! shame! not with the still'd and holy dead.
This shall be rectified; I'll find it out;
And masses shall be said for thy repose;
Thou shalt not troop with these.

El. 'Tis not the dead, 'tis Theobald himself,
Alive and well, who standeth by thy side.

Orra (*looking wildly round*). Where, where? All
dreadful things are near me, round me,
Beneath my feet and in the loaded air.
Let him begone! The place is horrible!
Baneful to flesh and blood. — The dreadful blast!
Their hounds now yell below 'i' the centre gulph;
They may not rise again till solemn bells
Have giv'n the stroke that severs night from morn.

El. O rave not thus! Dost thou not know us,
Orra?

Orra (*hastily*). Ay, well enough I know ye.
Urst. Ha! think ye that she does?

El. It is a terrible smile of recognition,
If such it be.

Hart. Nay, do not thus your restless eye-balls
move,

But look upon us steadily, sweet Orra.

Orra. Away! your faces waver to and fro;
I'll know you better in your winding-sheets,
When the moon shines upon you.

Theo. Give o'er, my friends; you see it is in vain;
Her mind within itself holds a dark world
Of dismal phantasies and horrid forms!
Contend with her no more.

Enter an attendant in an abrupt disturbed manner.

Att. (*to ELEANORA, aside*). Lady, I bring to you
most dismal news:

Too grievous for my lord, so suddenly
And unprepar'd to hear.

El. (*aside*). What is it? Speak.

Att. (*aside to EL.*) His son is dead, all swell'd
and rack'd with pain;

And on the dagger's point, which the sly traitor
Still in his stiffen'd grasp retains, foul stains,
Like those of limed poison, show full well
The wicked cause of his untimely death.

Hugh. (*overhearing them*). Who speaks of death?
What didst thou whisper there?

How is my son? — What look is that thou
wearest?

He is not dead? — Thou dost not speak! O God!
I have no son.

I am bereft! — But this!

But only him! — Heaven's vengeance deals the
stroke.

Urst. Heaven oft in mercy smites, e'en when the
blow

is most severe.

Hugh. I had no other hope.

Fell is the stroke, if mercy in it be!

Could this — could this alone atone my crime?

Urst. Submit thy soul to Heaven's all-wise de-
cree.

Perhaps his life had blasted more thy hopes
Than e'en his grievous end.

Hugh. He was not all a father's heart could wish;
But, oh! he was my son! — my only son;
My child — the thing that from his cradle grew,
And was before me still. — Oh, oh! Oh, oh!

[*Beating his breast and groaning deeply.*]

Orra (*running up to him*). Ha! dost thou groan,
old man? art thou in trouble?

Out on it! though they lay him in the mould,
He's near thee still. — I'll tell thee how it is:

A hideous burst hath been: the damn'd and holy,
The living and the dead, together are
In horrid neighbourhood — 'Tis but thin vapour,
Floating around thee, makes the wav'ring bound.

Pooh! blow it off, and see th' uncurtain'd reach.
See! from all points they come; earth casts them
up!

In grave-clothes swath'd are those but new in death;
And there be some half bone, half cased in shreds
Of that which flesh hath been; and there be some
With wicker'd ribs, through which the darkness
scovls.

Back, back! — They close upon us. — Oh! the void
Of hollow unball'd sockets staring grimly,
And lipless jaws that move and clatter round us
In mockery of speech! — Back, back, I say!
Back, back!

[*Catching hold of HUGHOBERT and THEOBALD,
and dragging them back with her in all the
wild strength of frantic horror, whilst the
curtain drops.*]

THE DREAM:

A TRAGEDY, IN PROSE, IN THREE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

OSTERLOO, *an imperial general.*
Prior of the monastery.
 BENEDICT, }
 JEROME, } *monks.*
 PAUL, }
 MORAND, }
 WOVELREID, } *officers in the service of the prior.*
The imperial ambassador.
 Officers serving under OSTERLOO.
 Sexton, monks, soldiers, peasants, &c.

WOMEN.

LEONORA.
 AGNES.

*Scene: the monastery of St. Maurice in Switzerland;
 a castle near it.*

Time, the middle of the 14th century.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A court within the monastery, with a grated iron gate opening into an outer court, through which are seen several peasants waiting; JEROME is discovered on the front of the stage, walking backwards and forwards in a disturbed manner, then stopping and speaking to himself.

Jer. Twice in one night the same awful vision repeated! And Paul also terrified with a similar visitation! This is no common accidental mimicry of sleep: the shreds and remnants of our day-thoughts, put together at night in some fantastic incongruous form, as the drifting clouds of a broken-up storm piece themselves again into uncertain shapes of rocks and animals. No, no! there must be some great and momentous meaning in this.

Enter BENEDICT behind him.

Ben. Some great and momentous meaning in this! What art thou musing upon?

Jer. Be satisfied! be satisfied! It is not always fitting that the mind should lay open the things it is busy withal, though an articulate sound may sometimes escape it to set curiosity on the rack. Where is brother Paul? Is he still at his devotions?

Ben. I believe so. But look where the poor peasants are waiting without: it is the hour when they expect our benefactions. Go, and speak to them: thou hast always been their favourite confessor, and they want consolation.

[*Beckoning the peasants, who thereupon advance through the gate, while JEROME stretches out his hand to prevent them.*

Jer. Stop there! come not within the gates! I charge you advance no farther. (*To BENEDICT, angrily.*) There is death and contagion in every one of them, and yet thou wouldst admit them so near us. Dost thou indeed expect a miracle to be wrought in our behalf? Are we not flesh and blood? and does not the grave yawn for us as well as other men? (*To the peasants still more vehemently.*) Turn, I charge you, and retire without the gate.

1st peas. Oh! be not so stern with us, good father! There are ten new corpses in the village since yesterday, and scarcely ten men left in it with strength enough to bury them. The best half of the village are now under ground, who, but three weeks gone by, were all alive and well. O, do not chide us away!

2d peas. God knows if any of us shall ever enter these gates again; and it revives us to come once a day to receive your blessings, good fathers.

Jer. Well, and you shall have our blessing, my children; but come not so near us; we are mortal men like yourselves, and there is contagion about you.

1st peas. Ah! no, no! Saint Maurice will take care of his own; there is no fear of you, fathers.

Jer. I hope he will; but it is presumptuous to tempt danger. Retire, I beseech you, and you shall have relief given to you without the gates. If you have any love for us, retire. [*The peasants retire.*

Ben. Well, I feel a strong faith within me, that our saint, or some other good spirit, will take care of us. How is it that thou art so alarmed and so vehement with those good people? It is not thy usual temper.

Jer. Be satisfied, I pray thee: I cannot tell thee now. Leave me to myself a little while.—Would to God brother Paul were come to me! Ha! here he is.

Enter PAUL; and JEROME, after waiting impatiently till BENEDICT retires, advances to him eagerly.

Was it to a spot near the black monument in the stranger's burying vault, that it pointed?

Paul. Yes, to the very spot described by thee yesterday morning, when thou first toldst me thy dream : and, indeed, every circumstance of my last night's vision strongly resembled thine ; or rather, I should say, was the same. The fixed frown of its ghastly face—

Jer. Ay, and the majestic motion of its limbs. Did it not wear a mantle over its right shoulder, as if for concealment rather than grace ?

Paul. I know not ; I did not mark that ; but it strode before me as distinctly as ever mortal man did before my waking sight ; and yet as no mortal man ever did before the waking sight.

Jer. But it appeared to thee only once ?

Paul. Only once ; for I waked under such a deep horror, that I durst not go to sleep again.

Jer. When it first appeared to me, as I told thee, the night before last, the form, though distinctly, was but faintly imaged forth, and methought it rose more powerfully to my imagination as I told it to thee, than in the dream itself. But last night, when it returned, it was far more vivid than before. I waked indeed as thou didst, impressed with a deep horror, yet irresistible sleep seized upon me again ; and O, how it appeared to me the third time, like a palpable, horrid reality ! (*After a pause.*) What is to be done ?

Paul. What can be done ? We can stop no division of the imperial army till one shall really march by this pass.

Jer. And this is not likely ; for I received a letter from a friend two days ago, by an express messenger, who says, he had delayed sending it, hoping to have it conveyed to me by one of Count Osterloo's soldiers, who, with his division, should have marched through our pass, but was now, he believed, to conduct them by a different route.

Paul. What noise and commotion is that near the gate ? (*Calling to those without.*) Ho there ! What is the matter ?

1st peas. (without). Nothing, father ; but we hear a trumpet at a distance, and they say, there is an army marching among the mountains.

Jer. By all our holy saints, if it be so — (*Calling again to the 1st peas.*) Are ye sure it is trumpets ye hear ?

1st peas. As sure as we ever heard any sound ; and here is a lad too, who saw from the topmost crag, with his own eyes, their banners waving at a distance.

Jer. (to PAUL). What thinkst thou of it ?

Paul. We must go to the prior, and reveal the whole to him directly. Our own lives and those of the whole brotherhood depend upon it ; there can be no hesitation now.

Jer. Come then ; lose no time. We have a solemn duty imposed upon us. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

An open space by the gate of the monastery, with a view of the building on one side, while rocks and mountains, wildly grand, appear in every other direction, and a narrow pass through the mountains opening to the bottom of the stage. Several peasants, both men and women, are discovered waiting, as if to see some sight ; a trumpet and warlike music heard at a little distance.

1st peas. Hear how it echoes among the rocks : it is your true warlike sound, that makes a man's heart stir within him, and his feet beat the ground to its measure.

2d peas. Ah ! what have our hearts to do with it now, miserable as we are !

1st peas. What have we to do with it ? Speak for thyself. Were I to be laid in the grave this very night, it would rouse me to hear those sounds, which remind me of the battle of Laupen.

2d peas. Well ; look not so proudly at me : though I have not yet fought for my country, I am of a good stock, nevertheless : my father lost his life at Morgarten. (*Calling up to MORAND, who now appears scrambling down the sides of the rocks.*) Are they near us, lieutenant ?

Mor. They'll be here in a trice. I know their ensigns already : they are those brave fellows under the command of Count Osterloo, who did such good service to the emperor in his last battle.

3d peas. (woman). Ay ; they be goodly men, no doubt, and bravely accoutred, I warrant ye.

4th peas. (old woman). Ay, there be many a brave man among them I trow, returning to his mother again. My Hubert never returned.

2d peas. (to MOR.) Count Osterloo ! Who is he ?

Mor. Didst thou never hear of him ? He has been in as many battles as thou hast been in harvest fields.

2d peas. And won them too ?

Mor. Nay, some of them he has won, and some he has lost ; but whether his own side were fighting or flying, he always kept his ground, or retreated like a man. The enemy never saw his back.

1st peas. True, lieutenant ; I once knew an old soldier of Osterloo's who boasted much of his general ; for his men are proud of him, and would go through flood and flame for his sake.

Mor. Yes, he is affable and indulgent to them, although passionate and unreasonable when provoked ; and has been known to punish even his greatest favourites severely for a slight offence. I remember well, the officer I first served under, being a man of this sort, and—

1st peas. Hist, hist ! the gates are thrown open, and yonder come the monks in procession with the prior at their head.

Enter Prior and monks from the monastery, and range themselves on one side of the stage.

Prior (to the peasants). Retire, my children, and don't come so near us. Don't stand near the soldiers as they pass neither, but go to your houses.

1st woman. O bless St. Maurice and your holy reverence! We see nothing now but coffins and burials, and hear nothing but the ticking of the death-watch, and the tolling of bells: do let us stand here and look at the brave sight. Lord knows if any of us may be above ground to see such another, an' it were to pass this way but a week hence.

Prior. Be it so then, daughter; but keep at a distance on the rocks, where you may see every thing without communicating infection.

[*The peasants retire, climbing amongst the rocks: then enter by the narrow pass at the bottom of the stage, soldiers marching to martial music, with officers and OSTERLOO.*

Prior (advancing, and lifting up his hands with solemnity). Soldiers and officers, and the noble chief commanding this band! in the name of our patron St. Maurice, once like yourselves a valiant soldier upon earth, now a holy powerful saint in heaven, I conjure you to halt.

1st offi. (in the foremost rank). Say you so, reverend prior, to men pressing forward as we do, to shelter our heads for the night, and that cold wintry sun going down so fast upon us?

1st sold. By my faith! if we pass the night here among the mountains, it will take something beside prayers and benedictions to keep us alive.

2d sold. Spend the night here among chanois and eagles! Some miracle no doubt will be wrought for our accommodation.

1st offi. Murmur not, my friends: here comes your general, who is always careful of you.

Ost. (advancing from the rear). What is the matter?

Prior (to Ost.). You are the commander-in-chief?

Ost. Yes, reverend father: and, with all respect and deference, let me say, the night advances fast upon us. Martigny is still at a good distance, and we must not be detained. With many thanks, then, for your intended civilities, we beg your prayers, holy prior, with those of your pious monks, and crave leave to pass on our way.

Prior (lifting his hands as before). If there be any piety in brave men, I conjure you, in the name of St. Maurice, to halt! The lives of our whole community depend upon it; men who for your lives, have offered to heaven many prayers.

Ost. How may this be, my lord? Who will attack your sacred walls, that you should want any defence?

Prior. We want not, general, the service of your arms: my own troops, with the brave captain who commands them, are sufficient to defend us from mortal foes.

Soldiers (murmuring). Must we fight with devils then?

Ost. Be quiet, my good comrades. (*To prior.*) Well, my lord, proceed.

Prior. A fatal pestilence rages in this neighbourhood; and by command of a vision, which has appeared three times to the senior of our order, and also to another of our brotherhood, threatening, in case of disobedience, that the whole community shall fall victims to the dreadful disease, we are compelled to conjure you to halt.

Ost. And for what purpose?

Prior. That we may choose by lot from the first division of the imperial army which marches through this pass, (so did the vision precisely direct us,) a man who shall spend one night within the walls of our monastery; there to undergo certain penances for the expiation of long-concealed guilt.

Ost. This is very strange. By lot, did you say? It will be tedious. There are a hundred of my men who will volunteer the service.—What say ye, soldiers?

1st sold. Willingly, general, if you desire it. Yet I marvel what greater virtue there can be in beleaguering the war-worn hide of a poor soldier, than the fat sides of a well-fed monk.

Ost. Wilt thou do it, then?

1st sold. Ay; and more than that, willingly, for my general. It is not the first time a cat-o'-nine-tails has been across my back for other men's misdeeds. Promise me a good flask of brandy when I'm done with it, and I warrant ye I'll never wince. As to the saying of Pater-nosters, if there be any thing of that kind tacked to it, I let you to wit my dexterity is but small.

Ost. Then be it as thou wilt, my good friend; yet I had as lief my own skin should smart for it as thine, thou art such a valiant fellow.

Prior. No, noble general, this must not be; we must have our man chosen by lot. The lives of the whole community depending upon it; we must strictly obey the vision.

Ost. It will detain us long.

Prior. Nay, my lord; the lots are already prepared. In the first place, six men only shall draw; four representing the soldiers, and two the officers. If the soldiers are taken, they shall draw by companies, and the company that is taken shall draw individually; but if the lot falls to the officers, each of them shall draw for himself.

Ost. Let it be so; you have arranged it well. Produce the lots.

[*The prior giving the sign, a monk advances, bearing a stand, on which are placed three vases, and sets it near the front of the stage.*

Prior. Now, brave soldiers, let four from your body advance.

[*Ost. points to four men, who advance from the ranks.*

Ost. And two from the officers, my lord?

Prior. Even so, noble count.

[*Ost. then points to two officers, who, with the four soldiers, draw lots from the smallest vase directed by the prior.*

1st sold. (speaking to his comrades as the others are drawing). This is strange mummery, i' faith! but it would have been no joke, I suppose, to have offended St. Maurice.

Prior (after examining the lots). Soldiers, ye are free; it is your officers who are taken.

1st sold. (as before). Ha! the vision is dainty it seems; it is not vulgar blood like ours, that will serve to stain the ends of his holy lash.

[*A monk having removed two of the vases, the prior beckons the officers to draw from the remaining one.*

Prior. Stand not on order; let him who is nearest put in his hand first.

1st sold. (aside to the others as the officers are drawing). Now by these arms! I would give a month's pay that the lot should fall on our prim, pompous lieutenant. It would be well worth the money to look in at one of their narrow windows, and see his dignified back-bone wincing under the hands of a good brawny friar.

Ost. (aside, unrolling his lot). Mighty heaven! Is fate or chance in this?

1st offi. (aside to Ost.). Have you drawn it, general? Change it for mine if you have.

Ost. No, no, my noble Albert; let us be honest; but thanks to thy generous friendship!

Prior. Now show the lots. (*All the officers show their lots, excepting OSTERLOO, who continues gloomy and thoughtful.*) Has no one drawn the sable scroll of election? (*To OSTERLOO.*) You are silent, my lord: of what colour is your lot?

Ost. (holding out his scroll). Black as midnight.

[*Soldiers quit their ranks and crowd round OSTERLOO, tumultuously.*

1st sold. Has it fallen upon our general? 'tis a damned lot—an unfair lot.

2d sold. We will not leave him behind us, though a hundred St. Maurices commanded it.

3d sold. Get within your walls again, ye cunning friars.

1st sold. An' we should lie i' the open air all night, we will not leave brave Osterloo behind us.

Prior (to Ost.). Count, you seem gloomy and irresolute: have the goodness to silence these clamours. I am in truth as sorry as any of your soldiers can be, that the lot has fallen upon you.

1st offi. (aside to Ost.). Nay, my noble friend, let me fulfil this penance in your stead. It is not

now a time for scruples: the soldiers will be mutinous.

Ost. Mutinous! Soldiers, return to your ranks. (*Looking at them sternly as they seem unwillingly to obey.*) Will you brave me so far that I must repeat my command? (*They retire.*) I thank thee, dear Albert. (*To 1st offi.*) Thou shalt do something in my stead; but it shall not be the service thou thinkest of. (*To prior.*) Reverend father, I am indeed somewhat struck at being marked out by fate from so many men; but, as to how I shall act thereupon, nowise irresolute. (*To the sold.*) Continue your march. The brave Albert shall conduct you to Martigny: and there you will remain under his command, till I join you again.

1st sold. God preserve you then, my noble general! and if you do not join us again by to-morrow evening, safe and sound, we will not leave one stone of that building standing on another.

Many soldiers at once. So swear we all! So swear, &c.

Ost. (assuming a cheerful look). Go to, foolish fellows! Were you to leave me in a den of lions, you could not be more apprehensive. Will watching all night by some holy shrine, or walking bare-foot through their midnight aisles, be such a hardship to one, who has passed so many nights with you all on the cold field of battle? Continue your march without delay; else these good fathers will count you no better than a band of new-raised city troops, with some jolly tankard-chief for your leader. A good march to you, my friends, with kind hostesses and warm fire-sides where you are going.

1st sold. Ah! what good will our fire-sides do us, when we think how our general is lodged?

Ost. Farewell! March on as quickly as you may: you shall all drink my health to-morrow evening in a good hogshhead of Rhenish.

1st sold. (with others). God grant we may! (*1st to prior.*) Look to it, reverend prior: if our general be not with us by to-morrow's sunset, St. Maurice shall neither have monastery nor monks on this mountain.

Ost. No more! (*Embracing 1st offi. and shaking hands with others.*) Farewell! Farewell!

[*The soldiers, after giving him a loud cheer, march off with their officers to martial music, and exeunt OSTERLOO, prior, and monks into the monastery, while the peasants disappear amongst the rocks. Manent MORAND and AGNES, who has for some time appeared, looking over a crag.*

Ag. Morand, Morand!

Mor. Ha! art thou there? I might have guessed indeed, that so brave a sight would not escape thee. What made thee perch thyself like an eagle upon such a crag as that?

Ag. Chide not, good Morand, but help me down.

lest I pay a dearer price for my sight than thou, with all thy grumbling, wouldst wish.

[*He helps her down.*]

Mor. And now thou art going no doubt to tell the Lady Leonora, what a band of gallant fellows thou hast seen.

Ag. Assuredly, if I can find in my heart to speak of any but their noble leader!—What is his name? What meaning had all that drawing of lots in it? What will the monks do with him? Walk with me a little way towards the castle, brave Morand, and tell me what thou knowest.

Mor. I should walk to the castle and miles beyond it too, ere I could answer so many questions, and I have duty in the monastery besides.

Ag. Come with me a little way at least.

Mor. Ah, witch! thou knowest too well that I must always do what thou biddest me. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The refectory of the monastery, with a small table, on which are placed refreshments, discovered in one corner. Enter OSTERLOO, Prior, BENEDICT, JEROME, and PAUL, &c.

Prior. Noble Osterloo, let me welcome you here, as one appointed by heaven to purchase our deliverance from this dreadful malady; and I hope the price to be paid for it will not be a heavy one. Yet ere we proceed further in this matter, be entreated, I pray, to take some refreshment after your long march.

[*The table is placed near the front of the stage.*]

Ost. I thank you, my lord; this is a gentle beginning to my penance: I will, then, by your leave. [*Sitting down at the table.*] I have fasted long, and am indeed somewhat exhausted. [*After taking some refreshment.*] Ah! My poor soldiers! You must still endure two hours' weary march, before you find such indulgence. Your wine is good, reverend father.

Prior. I am glad you find it so; it is old.

Ost. [*cheerfully.*] And your viands are good too; and your bread is delicious. [*Drinking another cup.*] I shall have vigour now for any thing.—Pray tell me something more of this wonderful vision: was it a saint or an angel that appeared to the senior brother?

Prior [*pointing to JEROME.*] He will answer for himself, and [*pointing to PAUL.*] this man saw it also.

Jer. It was neither angel nor saint, noble count, but a mortal form most majestic.

Ost. And it appeared to you in the usual manner of a dream?

Jer. It did; at least I know no sensible distinction. A wavy envelopment of darkness preceded it, from which appearances seemed dimly to wake

into form, till all was presented before me in the full strength of reality.

Paul. Nay, brother, it broke upon me at once; a vivid distinct apparition.

Ost. Well, be that as it may; what did appear to you? A mortal man, and very majestic?

Jer. Yes, general. Methought I was returning from mass, through the cloisters that lead from the chapel, when a figure, as I have said, appeared to me, and beckoned me to follow it. I did follow it; for at first I was neither afraid, nor even surprised; but so wonderfully it rose in stature and dignity as it strode before me, that, ere it reached the door of the stranger's burying vault, I was struck with unaccountable awe.

Ost. The stranger's burying vault!

Prior. Does any sudden thought strike you, count?

Ost. No, no! here's your health, fathers! [*Drinking.*] Your wine is excellent.

Prior. But that is water you have just now swallowed: this is the wine.

Ost. Ha! is it? No matter, no matter! it is very good too.

[*A long pause; OSTERLOO with his eyes fixed thoughtfully on the ground.*]

Prior. Shall not our brother proceed with his story, general?

Ost. Most certainly: I have been listening for it.

Jer. Well, then, as I have said, at the door of the stranger's burying vault it stopped, and beckoned me again. It entered, and I followed it. There, through the damp mouldering tombs, it strode still before me, till it came to the farther extremity, as nearly as I could guess, two yards westward from the black marble monument; and then stopping and turning on me its fixed and ghastly eyes, it stretched out its hands—

Ost. Its hands! Did you say, its hands?

Jer. It stretched out one of them; the other was covered with its mantle; and in a voice that sounded—I know not how it sounded—

Paul. Ay, brother; it was something like a voice, at least it conveyed words to the mind, though it was not like a voice neither.

Jer. Be that as you please: these words it solemnly uttered,—“Command the brothers of this monastery, on pain of falling victims to the pestilence now devastating the country, to stop on its way the first division of the imperial army that shall march through your mountain pass; and choose from it, by lot, a man who shall abide one night within these walls, to make expiation for long-concealed guilt. Let the suffering be such as the nature of the crime and the connection of the expiator therewith shall dictate. This spot of earth shall reveal—” It said no more, but bent its eyes steadfastly upon me with a stern threatening frown, which became, as it looked, keener than the looks of any mortal being, and vanished from my sight.

Paul. Ay, that look; that last terrible look! it awoke me with terror, and I know not how it vanished.

Jer. This has been repeated to me three times; last night twice in the course of the night, while brother Paul here was at the same time terrified with a similar apparition.

Prior. This, you will acknowledge, count, was no common visitation, and could not but trouble us.

Ost. You say well. — Yet it was but a dream.

Prior. True; it was but a dream, and as such these pious men strove to consider it; when the march of your troops across our mountains, a thing so unlikely to happen, compelled them to reveal to me, without loss of time, what had appeared to them.

Ost. A tall figure, you say, and of a noble aspect?

Jer. Like that of a king, though habited more in the garb of a foreign soldier of fortune than of a state so dignified.

[*OSTERLOO rises from table agitated.*]

Prior. What is the matter, general? Will you not finish your repast?

Ost. I thank you; I have had enough. The night grows cold; I would rather walk than sit. (*Going hastily to the bottom of the stage, and pacing to and fro.*)

Jer. (*aside to PAUL and the prior.*) What think ye of this?

Prior (*aside to JEROME*). His countenance changed several times as he listened to you; there is something here different from common surprise on hearing a wonderful event.

Enter a peasant by the bottom of the stage, bearing a torch.

Peas. (*eagerly, as he enters.*) We have found it.

Ost. (*stopping short in his walk.*) What hast thou found?

Peas. What the prior desired us to dig for.

Ost. What is that?

Peas. A grave.

[*OSTERLOO turns from him suddenly, and paces up and down very rapidly.*]

Prior (*to peas.*). Thou hast found it?

Peas. Ay, please you, and in the very spot, near the black monument, where your reverence desired us to dig. And it is well you sent for my kinsman and me to do it, for there is not a lay-brother in the monastery strong enough to raise up the great stones that covered it.

Prior. In the very spot, sayst thou?

Peas. In the very spot.

Prior. Bear thy torch before us, and we'll follow thee.

Omnès (*eagerly, OSTERLOO excepted*). Let us go immediately!

Prior (*to OSTERLOO, who stands fixed to the spot*). Will not Count Osterloo go also? It is fitting that he should.

Ost. (*rousing himself*). O, most assuredly: I am perfectly ready to follow you. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A burying-vault, almost totally dark; the monuments and grave-stones being seen very dimly by the light of a single torch, placed by the side of a deep open grave, in which a sexton is discovered, standing leaning on his mattock, and MORAND, above ground, turning up, with his sheathed sword, the loose earth about the mouth of the grave.

Mor. There is neither skull nor bone amongst this earth: the ground must have been newly broken up, when that coffin was let down into it.

Sex. So one should think; but the earth here has the quality of consuming whatever is put into it in a marvellous short time.

Mor. Ay; the flesh and more consumable parts of a body; but hath it grinders in its jaws like your carnivorous animal, to craunch up bones and all? I have seen bones on an old field of battle, some hundred years after the action, lying whitened and hard in the sun.

Sex. Well, an't be new ground, I'll warrant ye somebody has paid money enough for such a good tenement as this: I could not wish my own father a better.

Mor. (*looking down*). The coffin is of an uncommon size: there must be a leaden one within it, I should think.

Sex. I doubt that: it is only a clumsy shell that has been put together in haste; and I'll be hanged if he who made it ever made another before it. Now it would pine me with vexation to think I should be laid in such a bungled piece of workmanship as this.

Mor. Ay; it is well for those who shall bury thee, sexton, that thou wilt not be a looker-on at thine own funeral. — Put together in haste, sayst thou! How long may it be since this coffin was laid in the ground?

Sex. By my fay, now, I cannot tell; though many a grave I have dug in this vault, instead of the lay-brothers, who are mighty apt to take a cholick or shortness of breath, or the like, when any thing of hard labour falls to their share. (*After pausing.*) Ha! now I have it. When I went over the mountain some ten years ago to visit my father-in-law, Baldwick, the stranger, who died the other day, after living so long as a hermit amongst the rocks, came here; and it was shrewdly suspected he had leave from our late prior, for a good sum of money, to bury a body privately in this vault. I was a fool not to think of it before. This, I'll be sworn for it, is the place.

Enter the Prior, OSTERLOO, JEROME, PAUL, BENEDICT, and other monks, with the peasant carrying light before them. They enter by an arch door at the bottom of the stage, and walk on to the front, when every one, but OSTERLOO, crowds eagerly to the grave, looking down into it.

Prior (to sexton). What hast thou found, friend?

Sex. A coffin, an't please you, and of a size, too, that might almost contain a giant.

Omnes (OSTERLOO excepted). The inscription — is there an inscription on it?

Sex. No, no! They who put these planks together had no time for inscriptions.

Omnes (as before). Break it open — break it open.

[They crowd more eagerly about the grave, when, after a pause, the sexton is heard wrenching open the lid of the coffin.]

Omnes (as before). What is there in it? What hast thou found, sexton?

Sex. An entire skeleton, and of no common size.

Ost. (in a quick hollow voice). Is it entire?

Sex. (after a pause). No, the right hand is wanting, and there is not a loose bone in the coffin.

[OST. shudders and steps back.]

Jer. (to prior after a pause). Will you not speak to him, father? His countenance is changed, and his whole frame seems moved by some sudden convulsion. *(The prior remains silent.)* How is this? You are also changed, reverend father. Shall I speak to him?

Prior. Speak thou to him.

Jer. (to OSTERLOO). What is the matter with you, general? Has some sudden malady seized you?

Ost. (to JEROME). Let me be alone with you, holy prior; let me be alone with you instantly.

Jer. (pointing). This is the prior. — He would be alone with you, father: he would make his confession to you.

Prior. I dare not hear him alone: there must be witnesses. Let him come with me to my apartment.

Jer. (to OSTERLOO, as they leave the grave). Let me conduct you, count. *(After walking from it some paces.)* Come on, my lord, why do you stop short?

Ost. Not this way — not this way, I pray you.

Jer. What is it you would avoid?

Ost. Turn aside, I pray you: I cannot cross over this.

Jer. Is it the grave you mean? We have left it behind us.

Ost. Is it not there? It yawns across our path, directly before us.

Jer. Indeed, my lord, it is some paces behind.

Ost. There is delusion in my sight then; lead me as thou wilt. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.

The private apartment of the prior. Enter BENEDICT, looking round as he enters.

Ben. Not yet come: ay, penitence is not very swift of foot. *(Speaking to himself as he walks up and down.)* Miserable man! — brave, goodly creature! — but alas, alas! most subdued; most miserable; and, I fear, most guilty!

Enter JEROME.

Jerome here! — Dost thou know, brother, that the prior is coming here immediately to confess the penitent?

Jer. Yes, brother: but I am no intruder; for he has summoned me to attend the confession as well as thyself.

Ben. Methinks some other person of our order, unconcerned with the dreaming part of this business, would have been a less suspicious witness.

Jer. Suspicious! Am I more concerned in this than any other member of our community? Heaven appoints its own agents as it listeth: the stones of these walls might have declared its awful will as well as the dreams of a poor friar.

Ben. True, brother Jerome; could they listen to confessions as he does, and hold reveries upon them afterwards.

Jer. What dost thou mean with thy reveries and confessions? Did not Paul see the terrible vision as well as I?

Ben. If thou hadst not revealed thy dream to him he would have slept sound enough, or, at worst, have but flown over the pinnales with his old mate, the horned serpent, as usual: and had the hermit Baldwick never made his death-bed confession to thee, thou wouldst never have had such a dream to reveal.

Jer. Thinkest thou so? Then what brought Osterloo and his troops so unexpectedly by this route? With all thy heretical dislike to miraculous interposition, how wilt thou account for this?

Ben. If thou hadst no secret intelligence of Osterloo's route, to set thy fancy a working on the story the hermit confessed to thee, I never wore cowl on my head.

Jer. Those, indeed, who hear thee speak so lightly of mysterious and holy things, will scarcely believe thee ever diligent. — But hush! the prior comes with his penitent; let us have no altercation now.

Enter Prior and OSTERLOO.

Prior (after a pause, in which he seems agitated). Now, Count Osterloo, we are ready to hear your confession. To myself and these pious monks; men appointed by our holy religion to search into the crimes of the penitent, unburthen your heart of its

terrible secret ; and God grant you afterwards, if it be His righteous will, repentance and mercy.

Ost. (making a sign, as if unable to speak, then uttering rapidly). Presently, presently.

Jer. Don't hurry him, reverend father ; he cannot speak.

Ben. Take breath awhile, noble Osterloo, and speak to us when you can.

Ost. I thank you.

Ben. He is much agitated. *(To OSTERLOO.)* Lean upon me, my lord.

Prior (to BENEDICT). Nay, you exceed in this. *(To OSTERLOO.)* Recollect yourself, general, and try to be more composed. You seem better now ; and endeavour to unburden your mind of its fatal secret ; to have it labouring within your breast is protracting a state of misery.

Ost. (feebly). I have voice now.

Jer. (to OSTERLOO). Give to heaven, then, as you ought—

Ben. Hush, brother Jerome ! no exhortations now ! let him speak it as he can. *(To OSTERLOO.)* We attend you most anxiously.

Ost. (after struggling for utterance). I slew him.

Prior. The man whose bones have now been discovered ?

Ost. The same : I slew him.

Jer. In the field, count ?

Ost. No, no ! many a man's blood has been on my hands there :—this is on my heart.

Prior. It is then premeditated murder you have committed.

Ost. (hastily). Call it so, call it so.

Jer. (to OSTERLOO, after a pause). And is this all ? Will you not proceed to tell us the circumstances attending it ?

Ost. Oh ! they were terrible !—But they are all in my mind as the indistinct horrors of a frenzied imagination. *(After a short pause.)* I did it in a narrow pass on St. Gothard, in the stormy twilight of a winter day.

Prior. You murdered him there ?

Ost. I felt him dead under my grasp ; but I looked at him no more after the last desperate thrust that I gave him. I hurried to a distance from the spot ; when a servant, who was with me, seized with a sudden remorse, begged leave to return and remove the body, that, if possible, he might bury it in consecrated ground, as an atonement for the part he had taken in the terrible deed.—I gave him leave, with means to procure his desire :—I waited for him three days, concealed in the mountains ;—but I neither saw him nor heard of him again.

Ben. But what tempted a brave man like Osterloo to commit such a horrible act ?

Ost. The torments of jealousy stung me to it. *(Hiding his face with his hands, and then uncovering*

it.) I loved her, and was beloved :—He came,—a noble stranger—

Jer. Ay, if he was in his mortal state, as I in my dream beheld him, he was indeed most noble.

Ost. (waving his hand impatiently). Well, well ! he did come, then, and she loved me no more.—With arts and enchantments he besotted her.—Even from her own lips I received—*(Tossing up his arms violently, and then covering his face as before.)* But what is all this to you ? Maimed as he was, having lost his right arm in a battle with the Turks, I could not defy him to the field.—After passing two nights in all the tossing agony of a damned spirit, I followed him on his journey 'cross the mountains.—On the twilight of the second day, I laid wait for him in a narrow pass ; and as soon as his gigantic form darkened the path before me—I have told you all.

Prior (eagerly). You have not told his name.

Ost. Did I not say Montera ? He was a noble Hungarian.

Prior (much agitated). He was so.—He was so. He was noble and beloved.

Jer. (aside to prior). What is the matter with you, reverend father ? Was he your friend ?

Prior (aside to JEROME). Speak not to me now, but question the murderer as ye will.

Ben. (overhearing the prior). He is indeed a murderer, reverend father, but he is our penitent.

Prior. Go to ! what are names ?—Ask him what questions you will, and finish the confession quickly.

Ben. (to OSTERLOO). But have you never till now confessed this crime : nor in the course of so many years reflected on its dreadful turpitude ?

Ost. The active and adventurous life of a soldier is most adverse to reflection : but often, in the stillness of midnight, the remembrance of this terrible deed has come powerfully upon me ; till morning returned, and the noise of the camp began, and the fortunes of the day were before me.

Prior (in a severe voice). Thou hast indeed been too long permitted to remain in this hardened state. But heaven, sooner or later, will visit the man of blood with its terrors. Sooner or later, he shall feel that he stands upon an awful brink ; and short is the step which engulfs him in that world, where the murdered and the murderer meet again, in the tremendous presence of HIM who is the Lord and Giver of life.

Ost. You believe then in such severe retribution ?

Prior. I believe in it as in my own existence.

Ost. (turning to JEROME and BENEDICT). And you, good fathers, you believe in this ?

Ben. Nature teaches this, as well as revelation : we must believe it.

Jer. Some presumptuous minds, dazzled with the sunshine of prosperity, have dared to doubt ; but to us in the sober shade of life, visited too as we have

now been by visions preternatural and awful, it is a thing of certainty rather than of faith.

Ost. A thing of certainty! it makes the brain confused and giddy.—These are tremendous thoughts!

[Leans his back against the wall, and gazes fixedly on the ground.]

Prior. Let us leave him to the bitterness of his thoughts. We now must deliberate with the brethren on what is to be done. There must be no delay; the night advances fast. Conduct him to another apartment. I must assemble a council of the whole order.

Jer. (to OSTERLOO). We must lead you to another apartment, count, while we consider what is to be done.

Ost. (roused). Ay, the expiation, you mean: let it be severe, if atonement in this world may be made. *(Turning to prior as JEROME leads him off.)* Let your expiation be severe, holy father; a slight penance matches not with such a crime as mine.

Prior. Be well assured it shall be what it ought.

Ost. (turning again, and catching hold of the prior's robe). I regard not bodily pain. In battle once, with the head of a broken arrow in my thigh, I led on the charge, and sustained all the exertions of a well-fought field, till night closed upon our victory. Let your penance be severe, my reverend father; I have been long acquainted with pain.

[Exit OSTERLOO and JEROME.]

Ben. You seem greatly moved, father; but it is not with pity for the wretched. You would not destroy such a man as this, though his crime is the crime of blood?

Prior. He shall die: ere another sun dawn on these walls, he shall die.

Ben. Oh, say not so! Think of some other expiation.

Prior. I would think of another, were there any other more dreadful to him than death.

Ben. He is your penitent.

Prior. He is the murderer of my brother.

Ben. Then Heaven have mercy on him if he must find none here!—Montera was your brother?

Prior. My only brother. It were tedious to tell thee now, how I was separated from him after the happy days of our youth.—I saw him no more; yet he was still the dearest object of my thoughts. After escaping death in many a battle, he was slain, as it was conjectured, by banditti, in travelling across the mountains. His body was never discovered. Ah! little did I think it was lying so near me!

Ben. It is indeed piteous, and you must needs feel it as a brother: but consider the danger we run, should we lay violent hands on an imperial general, with his enraged soldiers, within a few hours' march of our walls.

Prior. I can think of nothing but revenge. Speak

to me no more: I must assemble the whole order immediately. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III.

Another apartment. Enter OSTERLOO, as from a small recess at the bottom of the stage, pacing backwards and forwards several times in an agitated manner; then advancing slowly to the front, where he stands musing and muttering to himself for some moments, before he speaks aloud.

Ost. That this smothered horror should burst upon me at last! And there be really such things as the darkened fancy imageth to itself, when the busy day is stilled. An unseen world surrounds us: spirits and powers, and the invisible dead, hover near us; while we in unconscious security—Oh! I have slept upon a fearful brink! Every sword that threatened my head in battle, had power in its edge to send me to a terrible account.—I have slept upon a fearful brink.—Am I truly awake? *(Rubbing his eyes, then grasping several parts of his body, first with one hand and then with the other.)* Yes, yes! it is so!—I am keenly and terribly awake. *(Paces rapidly up and down, and then stopping short.)* Can there be virtue in penances suffered by the body to do away offences of the soul? If there be!—O if there be, let them channel my body with stripes, and swathe me round in one continued girth of wounds! Any thing that can be endured here is mercy compared to the dreadful abiding of what may be hereafter.

Enter WOVELREID behind, followed by soldiers, who range themselves at the bottom of the stage. OSTERLOO, turning round, runs up to him eagerly.

Ha! my dear Albert, returned to me again, with all my noble fellows at thy back.—Pardon me, I mistook you for one of my captains.

Wov. I am the prior's captain.

Ost. And those men too?

Wov. They are the prior's soldiers, who have been ordered from distant quarters to repair to the monastery immediately.

Ost. In such haste!

Wov. Ay, in truth: we received our orders after sunset, and have marched two good leagues since.

Ost. What may this mean?

Wov. Faith, I know not. My duty is to obey the prior, and pray to our good saint; and whether I am commanded to surprise the stronghold of an enemy, or protect an execution, it is the same thing to me.

Ost. An execution! can aught of this nature be intended?

Wov. You turn pale, sir: wearing the garb of a soldier, you have surely seen blood ere now.

Ost. I have seen too much blood.

Enter Prior, JEROME, PAUL, and monks, walking in order; the Prior holding a paper in his hand.

Prior (with solemnity). Count Osterloo, lieutenant-general of our liege lord the emperor, authorized by this deed, which is subscribed by all the brethren of our holy order here present, I pronounce to you our solemn decision, that the crime of murder, as, by the mysterious voice of heaven, and your own confession, your crime is proved to be, can only be expiated by death: you are therefore warned to prepare yourself to die this night. Before daybreak you must be with the inhabitants of another world, where may the great Maker of us all deal with you in mercy! (OSTERLOO staggers back from the spot where he stood, and remains silent.) It is a sentence, count, pronounced against you from necessity, to save the lives of our whole community, which you yourself have promised to submit to; have you any thing to say in reply to it?

Ost. Nothing: my thoughts are gone from me in the darkness of astonishment.

Prior. We are compelled to be thus hasty and severe: ere daybreak you must die.

Ost. Ere daybreak! not even the light of another sun to one so ill prepared for the awful and tremendous state into which you would thrust him! this is inhuman! it is horrible!

Prior. He was as ill prepared for it, who, with still shorter warning, was thrust into that awful state in the narrow pass of St. Gothard.

Ost. The guilt of murder was not on his soul.—Nay, nay, holy prior, consider this horrible extremity: let the pain of the executioner's stroke be twenty-fold upon me; but thrust me not forth to that state from which my soul recoils with unutterable horror!—Never but once, to save the life of a friend, did I bend the knee to mortal man in humble supplication. I am a soldier; in many battles I have bled for the service of my country: I am a noble soldier, and I was a proud one; yet do I thus—contemn not my extremity—my knee is on the ground.

Prior. Urge me no further. It must not be; no respite can be granted.

Ost. (starting up furiously from the ground, and drawing his sword). Then subdue as you may, stern priest, the strength of a desperate man.

[WOVELREID and soldiers rush forward, getting behind him, and surrounding him on every side, and after a violent struggle disarm him.

Wov. What a noble fellow this would be to defend a narrow breach, though he shrinks with such abhorrence from a scaffold. It is a pitious thing to see him so beset.

Prior (to WOVELREID). What sayst thou, fool?

Wov. Nay, it is no business of mine, my lord, I confess. Shall we conduct him to the prison chamber?

Prior. Do so; and see that he retain no concealed arms about him.

Wov. I obey, my lord: every thing shall be made secure.

[*Exit OSTERLOO, guarded by WOVELREID and soldiers; and at the same time enter BENEDICT, by the opposite side, who stands looking after him piteously.*

Prior (sternly to BENEDICT). What brings thee here? Dost thou repent having refused to concur with us in an act that preserves the community?

Ben. Say rather, reverend father, an act that revenges your brother's death, which the laws of the empire should revenge.

Prior. A supernatural visitation of heaven hath commanded us to punish it.—What! dost thou shake thy head? Thou art of a doubting and dangerous spirit; and beware lest, sooner or later, the tempter do not lure thee into heresy. If reason cannot subdue thee, authority shall.—Return again to thy cell; let me hear of this no more.

Ben. I will, reverend father. But, for the love of our holy saint, bethink you, ere it be too late, that though we may be saved from the pestilence by this bloody sacrifice, what will rescue our throats from the swords of Osterloo's soldiers when they shall return, as they have threatened, to demand from us their general?

Prior. Give thyself no concern about this. My own hands are already called in, and a messenger has been despatched to the Abbess Matilda; her troops, in defence of the church, will face the best soldiers of the empire.—But why lose we time in unprofitable contentions? Go, my sons, (*speaking to other monks*); the night advances fast, and we have much to do ere morning. (*Knocking heard without.*) Ha! who knocks at this untimely hour? Can the soldiers be indeed returned upon us?—Run to the gate, but open it to none.

[*Exeunt several monks in haste, and presently re-enter with a lay-brother.*

Lay-b. Please ye, reverend father; the marchioness has sent a messenger from the castle, beseeching you to send a confessor immediately to confess one of her women, who was taken ill yesterday, and is now at the point of death.

Prior. I'm glad it is only this.—What is the matter with the penitent?

Lay-b. I know not, please you: the messenger only said, she was taken ill yesterday.

Prior (shaking his head). Ay, this malady has gone there also.—I cannot send one of the brothers to bring infection immediately among us.—What is to be done? Leonora is a most noble lady; and the family have been great benefactors to our order.—I must send somebody to her. But he must stop well his nostrils with spicery, and leave his upper garment behind him, when he quits the infected apartment. Jerome, wilt thou go? Thou art the

favourite confessor with all the women at the castle.

Jer. Nay, father; I must attend on our prisoner here, who has most need of ghostly assistance.

Prior (to another monk). Go thou, Anselmo; thou hast given comfort to many a dying penitent.

Monk. I thank you, father, for the preference; but Paul is the best of us all for administering comfort to the dying; and there is a sickness come over my heart o' the sudden, that makes me unfit for the office.

Prior (to PAUL). Thou wilt go then, my good son.

Paul. I beseech you, don't send me, reverend father; I ne'er escaped contagion in my life, where malady or fever were to be had.

Prior. Who will go then? [*A deep silence.*]

Ben. What, has no one faith enough in the protection of St. Maurice, even purchased, as it is about to be, by the shedding of human blood, to venture upon this dangerous duty? I will go then, father, though I am sometimes of a doubting spirit.

Prior. Go, and St. Maurice protect thee! [*Exit BEN.*] Let him go; it is well that we get rid of him for the night, should they happily detain him so long at the castle.—He is a troublesome, close-searching, self-willed fellow. He hath no zeal for the order. Were a miser to bequeath his possessions to our monastery, he would assist the disappointed heir himself to find out a flaw in the deed.—But retire to your cells, my sons, and employ yourselves in prayer and devotion, till the great bell warn you to attend the execution. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III

An apartment in the castle. Enter LEONORA and AGNES, speaking as they enter.

Ag. But she is asleep now; and is so much and so suddenly better, that the confessor, when he comes, will be dissatisfied, I fear, that we have called him from his cell at such an unreasonable hour.

Leo. Let him come, nevertheless; don't send to prevent him.

Ag. He will be unwilling to be detained, for they are engaged in no common matters to-night at the monastery. Count Osterloo, as I told you before, is doing voluntary penance at the shrine of St. Maurice to stop the progress of this terrible malady.

Leo. I remember thou didst.

Ag. Ah, marchioness! you would not say so thus faintly, had you seen him march through the pass with his soldiers. He is the bravest and most graceful man, though somewhat advanced in years, that I ever beheld.—Ah, had you but seen him!

Leo. I have seen him, Agnes.

Ag. And I spoke of him all the while, yet you did not tell me this before! Ah, my noble mistress

and friend! the complexion of your check is altered; you have indeed seen him, and you have not seen him with indifference.

Leo. Think as thou wilt about this. He was the friend and fellow soldier of my lord, when we first married; though before my marriage I had never seen him.

Ag. Friend! Your lord was then in the decline of life; there must have been great disparity in their friendship.

Leo. They were friends, however; for the marquis liked society younger than himself; and I, who had been hurried into an unequal marriage, before I could judge for myself, was sometimes foolish enough to compare them together.

Ag. Ay, that was natural enough. [*Eagerly.*] And what happened then?

Leo. (offended). What happened then! [*Drawing herself up proudly.*] Nothing happened then, but subduing the foolish fancy of a girl, which was afterwards amply repaid by the self-approbation and dignity of a woman.

Ag. Pardon me, madam; I ought to have supposed all this. But you have been long a widow, and Osterloo is still unmarried; what prevented you when free?

Leo. I was ignorant what the real state of his sentiments had been in regard to me. But had this been otherwise; received, as I was, into the family of my lord, the undowered daughter of a petty nobleman; and left as I now am, by his confiding love, the sole guardian of his children and their fortunes; I could never think of supporting a second lord on the wealth entrusted to me by the first, to the injury of his children. As nothing, therefore, has ever happened in consequence of this weakness of my youth, nothing ever shall.

Ag. This is noble.

Leo. It is right.—But here comes the father confessor.

Enter BENEDICT.

You are welcome, good father! yet I am almost ashamed to see you; for our sick person has become suddenly well again, and is now in a deep sleep. I fear I shall appear to you capricious and inconsiderate in calling you up at so late an hour.

Ben. Be not uneasy, lady, upon this account: I am glad to have an occasion for being absent from the monastery for some hours, if you will permit me to remain here so long.

Leo. What mean you, Father Benedict? Your countenance is solemn and sorrowful: what is going on at the monastery? [*He shakes his head.*] Ha! will they be severe with him in a voluntary penance, submitted to for the good of the order?—What is the nature of the penance? It is to continue, I am told, but one night.

Ben. It will, indeed, soon be over.

Leo. And will he be gone on the morrow ?

Ben. His spirit will, but his body remains with us for ever.

Leo. (*uttering a shriek.*) Death, dost thou mean ? — O horror ! horror ! Is this the expiation ? Oh most horrible, most unjust !

Ben. Indeed I consider it as such. Though guilty, by his own confession, of murder, committed, many years since, under the frenzy of passion ; it belongs not to us to inflict the punishment of death upon a guilty soul, taken so suddenly and unprepared for its doom.

Leo. Murder ! didst thou say murder ? Oh Osterloo, Osterloo ! hast thou been so barbarous ? and art thou in this terrible state ? — Must thou thus end thy days, and so near me too !

Ben. You seem greatly moved, noble Leonora ; would you could do something more for him than lament.

Leo. (*catching hold of him eagerly.*) Can I do any thing ? Speak, father : O tell me how ! I will do any thing and every thing. — Alas, alas ! my vassals are but few, and cannot be assembled immediately.

Ben. Force were useless. Your vassals, if they were assembled, would not be persuaded to attack the sacred walls of a monastery.

Leo. I did indeed rave foolishly : but what else can be done ? — Take these jewels and everything of value in the castle, if they will bribe those who guard him, to let him escape. — Think of it. — O think well of it, good Benedict !

Ag. I have heard that there is a secret passage, leading from the prison chamber of the monastery under its walls, and opening to the free country at the bottom of the rocks.

Ben. By every holy saint, so there is ! and the most sordid of our brothers is entrusted with the key of it. But who will be his conductor ? None but a monk of the order may pass the soldiers who guard him ; and the monk who should do it, must fly from his country for ever, and break his sacred vows. I can oppose the weak fears and injustice of my brethren, for misfortunes and disgust of the world, not superstitious veneration for monastic sanctity, have covered my head with a cowl ; but this I cannot do.

Ag. There is the dress of a monk of your order in the old wardrobe of the castle, if some person were disguised in it.

Leo. Thanks to thee ! thanks to thee, my happy Agnes ! I will be that person. — I will put on the disguise. — Good father, your face gives consent to this.

Ben. If there be time ; but I left them preparing for the execution.

Leo. There is, there is ! — Come with me to the wardrobe, and we'll set out for the monastery forthwith. — Come, come ! a few moments will carry us there. [*Exit hastily, followed by AG. and BEN.*]

SCENE IV.

A wood near the castle ; the stage quite dark. Enter two servants with torches.

1st serv. This must surely be the entry to the path, where my lady ordered us to wait for those same monks.

2d serv. Yes ; I know it well, for yonder is the postern. It is the nearest path to the monastery, but narrow and difficult. The night is cold : I hope they will not keep us long waiting,

1st serv. I heard the sound of travellers coming up the eastern avenue, and they may linger belike ; for monks are marvellously fond of great people and of strangers ; at least the good fathers of our monastery are.

2d serv. Ay, in their late prior's time they lived like lords themselves ; and they are not very humble at present. — But there's light from the postern : here they come.

Enter BENEDICT, LEONORA disguised like a monk, and AGNES with a peasant's cloak thrown over her.

Leo. (*speaking as she enters.*) It is well thought of, good Benedict. Go thou before me to gain brother Baldwin, in the first place ; and I'll wait without on the spot we have agreed upon, until I hear the signal.

Ben. Thou comprehendest me completely, brother ; so God speed us both ! (*To 1st serv.*) Torchman, go thou with me. This is the right path, I trust ?

1st serv. Fear not, father ; I know it well.

[*Exit BEN. and 1st serv.*]

Leo. (*to AGNES, while she waves her hand to 2d servant to retire to a greater distance.*) After I am admitted to the monastery, fail not to wait for me at the mouth of the secret passage.

Ag. Fear not : Benedict has described it so minutely, I cannot fail to discover it.

Leo. What steps are those behind us ? Somebody following us from the castle ?

Enter 3d servant in haste.

3d serv. There are travellers arrived at the gate, and desire to be admitted for the night.

Leo. In an evil hour they come. Return, dear Agnes, and receive them. Benighted strangers, no doubt. Excuse my absence any how : go quickly.

Ag. And leave you to proceed alone ?

Leo. Care not for me : there is an energy within me now, that bids defiance to fear.

[*Beckons to 2d servant, who goes out before her with the torch, and Exit.*]

Ag. (*muttering to herself, as she turns to the castle.*) The evil spirit hath brought travellers to us at this moment : but I'll send them to their chambers right

quickly, and join her at the secret passage, notwithstanding. [Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The prison chamber of the monastery: OSTERLOO is discovered, sitting in a bending posture, with his clenched hands pressed upon his knees and his eyes fixed on the ground, JEROME standing by him.

Jer. Nay, sink not thus, my son; the mercy of heaven is infinite. Let other thoughts enter thy soul: let penitence and devotion subdue it.

Ost. Nothing but one short moment of division between this state of humanity and that which is to follow! The executioner lets fall his axe, and the dark veil is rent; the gulf is uncovered; the regions of anguish are before me.

Jer. My son, my son! this must not be; thine imagination overpowers thy devotion.

Ost. The dead are there; and what welcome shall the murderer receive from that assembled host? Oh, the terrible form that stalks forth to meet me! the stretching out of that hand! the greeting of that horrible smile! And it is thou, who must lead me before the tremendous majesty of my offended Maker! Incomprehensible and dreadful! What thoughts can give an image of that which overpowers all thought! (*Clasping his hands tightly over his head, and bending himself almost to the ground.*)

Jer. (*after a pause*). Art thou entranced? art thou asleep? art thou still in those inward agonies of imagination? (*Touching him softly.*) Speak to me.

Ost. (*starting up*). Are they come for me? They shall not yet: I'll strangle the first man that lays hold of me. (*Grasping JEROME by the throat.*)

Jer. Let go your hold, my lord; I did but touch you gently to rouse you from your stupor.

[OSTERLOO lets go his hold, and JEROME shrinks to a distance.

Ost. I have grasped thee, then, too roughly. But shrink not from me thus. Strong men have fallen by my arm, but a child might contend with me now. (*Throwing himself back again into his chair, and bursting into tears.*)

Jer. Forgive me, my son; there was a wildness in your eyes that made me afraid.

Ost. Thou needst not be afraid: thou art a good man, and hast days of life still before thee; thou needst not be afraid.—But, as thou art a good man, speak to me, I conjure thee, as a man, not as a monk: answer me as the true sense and reason of a man doth convince thee.

Jer. I will, my son.

Ost. Dost thou in truth believe, that the very instant after life has left the body, we are forthwith

awake and conscious in the world of spirits? No intermediate state of slumbering insensibility between?

Jer. It is indeed my belief. Death is but a short though awful pass; as it were a winking of the eyes for a moment. We shut them in this world and open them in the next: and there we open them with such increased vividness of existence, that this life, in comparison, will appear but as a state of slumber and of dreams.—But wherefore dost thou cross thine arms so closely on thy breast, and coil thyself together so wretchedly? What is the matter, my son? Art thou in bodily anguish?

Ost. The chilly night shoots icy coldness through me.

Jer. O regard not the poor feelings of a fleshly frame, which thou so soon must part withal: a little time will now put an end to every thing that nature can endure.

Ost. (*raising his head quickly*). Ha! how soon? Has the bell struck again since I listened to it last?

Jer. No; but it will soon strike, and daybreak is at hand. Rouse ye then, and occupy the few minutes that remain in acts of devotion becoming thine unhappy state. O, my son, pour out thy soul in penitent prayers to an offended but merciful God. We, too, will pray for thee. Months, nay years after thy death, masses shall be said for the repose of thy soul, that it may at last be received into bliss. O my unhappy son! pour forth thy spirit to God; and let thy prayers also ascend to our blessed saint and martyr, who will intercede for thee.

Ost. I cannot: I have not thoughts for prayer,—the gulf yawns before me—the unknown, the unbounded, the unfathomable!—Prayers! prayers! what prayers hath despair?

Jer. Hold, hold, refractory spirit! This obstinacy is destruction.—I must call in brother Bernard to assist me: I cannot be answerable alone, in a service of such infinite moment.

[Exit; and after a pause, in which OSTERLOO seems absorbed in the stupor of despair, enter LEONORA disguised.

Leo. (*coming eagerly forward, and then stopping short to look at him*). There is some mistake in this: it is not Osterloo.—It is, it is! but Oh, how changed! Thy hand, great God! has been upon him. (*Going closer to him*.) Osterloo! Osterloo!

Ost. I hear thee, father.

Leo. (*throwing aside her disguise*). Oh no! it is no father. Lift up thine eyes and see an old friend before thee, with deliverance in her hand. (*Holding out a key.*)

Ost. (*looking up wildly*). Is it a sound in my ears, or did any one say deliverance? (*Gazing on her*.) What thing art thou? A form of magic or delusion?

Leo. Neither, Count Osterloo; but an old friend, bringing this key in her hand for thy deliverance.

Yet much I fear thou hast not strength enough to rise and follow me.

Ost. (*bounding from his seat*). I have strength for any thing if there be deliverance in it.—Where go we? They will be upon us immediately.

Leo. (*lifting a small lamp from a table, and holding it to examine the opposite wall*). The door, as he described it, is to the right of a small projection of the wall.—Here—here it is! (*Opens a small door, and beckons OSTERLOO to follow her.*)

Ost. Yes, blessed being! I will follow thee.—Ha! they are coming!

[*Strides hastily to the door, while LEONORA holds up the lamp to light him into it, and then going in herself, shuts the door softly behind her.*

SCENE II.

An old ruinous vault, with a strong grated door on one side, through which the moon-beams are gleaming: on the other side, an old winding staircase, leading from the upper regions of the monastery, from which a feeble light is seen, increasing by degrees; and presently LEONORA appears, descending the stairs with a lamp in her hand, followed by OSTERLOO. As she enters, something on the wall catches her robe, and she turns round to disentangle it, bending her face close to the light.

Ost. (*stopping to assist her and then gazing on her*). Thou art something I have known and loved somewhere, though it has passed away from my mind with all my better thoughts.—Great power of heaven! art thou Leonora?

Leo. (*smiling*). Dost thou know me now?

Ost. I do, I do! My heart knew thee before, but my memory did not. (*Kneeling and kissing both her hands.*) And so it is to thee—thou whom I first loved—Pardon me, pardon me!—thou whom I loved, and dared not love; thou from whom I fled to be virtuous—thou art my deliverer. Oh! had I never loved another after thee, it had been well.—Knowest thou it is a murderer thou art saving?

Leo. Say no more of this: I know thy story, and I came—

Ost. O! thou camest like a blessed spirit to deliver me from many horrors. I was terribly beset: thou hast snatched me from a tremendous brink.

Leo. I hope so, if this key prove to be the right one.

Ost. (*alarmed*). Dost thou doubt it?

Leo. It seems to me smaller than it ought to be, when I consider that massive door.

Ost. Give it me.

[*Snatches the key from her, and runs to the door: then turns the key in the lock, and finding it too small, stamps with his feet, throws it from*

him, and holds up his clenched hands in despair.

Leo. Oh, cross fate! But I'll return again for the right one. Baldwin cannot be so wicked as to deceive me, and Benedict is still on the watch, near the door of the prison-chamber. Stay here till I return.

[*She ascends the stairs, whilst OSTERLOO leans his back to the wall, frequently moving his body up and down with impatient agitation: a bell tolls; OSTERLOO starts from his place, and LEONORA descends again, re-entering in great alarm.*

Leo. Oh! I cannot go now: that bell tolls to warn them to the great hall: I shall meet them on their way. What is to be done? The strength of three men could not force that heavy door, and thou art feeble and spent.

Ost. (*running furiously to the door*). Despair has strength for any thing.

[*Seizes hold of the door, and, making two or three terrible efforts, bursts it open with a loud jar.*

Leo. Supernatural strength has assisted thee: now thou art free.

[*As OSTERLOO and LEONORA are about to pass on through the door, WOVREID and three armed soldiers appear in the porch beyond it, and oppose their passage.*

Wov. Hold! we are the prior's soldiers, and will suffer no prisoner to escape.

Ost. Those who dare prevent me!

[*Wrests a sword from one of the soldiers, and, fighting furiously, forces his way past them all, they not daring to pursue him; when WOVREID seizing on LEONORA to prevent her from following him, she calls out.*

Leo. O let me pass! and I'll reward you nobly.

Ost. (*returning to rescue LEONORA*). Let go thine unhallowed grasp.

Leo. For heaven's sake care not for me! Save thyself—save thyself! I am in no danger. Turn not again to fight, when such terrible odds are against thee.

Ost. I have arms in my hand now, and my foes are before me!

[*Fights fiercely again, till MORAND, with a strong band of soldiers, entering the porch behind him, he is overpowered and secured; LEONORA sinks down by the wall in a swoon.*

Wov. Give me a rope. We must bind him securely; for the devil has put the strength of ten men into him, though, but half an hour ago, his face was as pale as a moonlight icicle, and he could scarcely walk without being supported.

Mor. Alas, alas! his face has returned to its former colour; his head sinks on his breast, and his limbs are again feeble and listless. I would rather see him fighting like a fiend than see him thus.

Wov. Let us move him hence; wouldst thou stop to lament over him?

Mor. It was base work in Baldwin to betray their plot to the prior, for he took their money first, I'll be sworn.

Wov. He had betrayed the prior then, and all the community besides.

Mor. Well, let us move him hence: this is no business of ours.

[*Exeunt MORAND, WOVELREID and soldiers leading out OSTERLOO.*]

Enter AGNES by the grated door, and discovers LEONORA on the ground.

Ag. O holy Virgin! On the ground, fainting and ill! Have the barbarians left her thus? (*Chafing her temples and hand.*) She begins to revive. It is I, my dearest lady: look up and see me: those men are all gone.

Leo. And Osterloo with them?

Ag. Alas, he is.

Leo. It is fated so. Let me lie where I am: I cannot move yet, my good Agnes.

Ag. Nay, do not yet despair of saving the count.

Leo. (*starting up and catching hold of her eagerly.*) How so? is it possible?

Ag. The travellers, arrived at the castle, are the imperial ambassador and his train. Night overtook them on the mountains, and they are now making merry in the hall.

Leo. Thank heaven for this! Providence has sent him hither. I'll go to him instantly, and conjure him to interpose his authority to save the life of Osterloo. Representing his liege lord, the emperor, the prior dare not disobey his commands, and the gates of the monastery will be opened at his call. Who comes here? Let us go.

Re-enter MORAND.

Mor. (*to LEONORA.*) You are revived again: I am glad to see it. Pardon me, lady, that I forgot you in your extremity, and let me conduct you safely to the castle.

Leo. I thank you, but my servants are without. Let me go. Don't follow me, I pray you.

Mor. Let me support you through the porch, and I'll leave you to their care, since you desire it.

[*Exeunt, LEONORA supported by MORAND and AGNES.*]

SCENE III.

A grand hall, prepared for the execution; soldiers are discovered drawn up on each side of the scaffold, with BENEDICT and several of the monks on the front of the stage. A bell tolls at measured intervals, with a deep pause between; after which enter MORAND, hanging his head sorrowfully.

Ben. (*to MOR.*) Is he come forth?

1st monk. Hast thou seen him?

Mor. They are leading him hither, but they move slowly.

1st monk. Thou hast seen him then; how does he look now?

Mor. I cannot tell thee. These few hours have done on him the work of many years: he seems broken and haggard with age, and his quenched eyes are fixed in their sockets, like one who walks in sleep.

Ben. Alas, alas! how changed in little time the bold and gallant Osterloo!

1st monk. Have I not told thee, Morand, that fear will sometimes couch under the brazen helmet as well as the woollen eowl?

Mor. Fear, dost thou call it? Set him this moment in the field of battle, with death threatening him from a hundred points at once, and he would brave it most valiantly.

Ben. (*preventing 1st monk from answering.*) Hush, brother! Be not so warm, good lieutenant; we believe what thou sayst most perfectly. The bravest mind is capable of fear, though it fears no mortal man. A brave man fears not man; and an innocent and brave man fears nothing.

Mor. Ay, now you speak reason: call it fear then, if you will.—But the prior comes; let us go to our places.

[*They arrange themselves; and then enter the prior, with a train of monks, who likewise arrange themselves; a pause, in which the bell tolls as before, and enter OSTERLOO, supported by JEROME and PAUL, WOVELREID and soldiers following.*]

Prior (*meeting him with solemnity.*) Count Osterloo, in obedience to the will of heaven, for our own preservation, and the just punishment of guilt, I am compelled with the monks of this monastery, over whom I preside, to see duly executed within the time prescribed, this dismal act of retribution.—You have, I trust, with the help of these holy men, as well as a few short moments would allow, closed your mortal account with heaven: if there be aught that rests upon your mind, regarding worldly concerns which you leave behind you unsettled, let me know your last will, and it shall be obeyed. (*To JEROME, after pausing for an answer.*) Dost thou think he understands me?

Jer. (*to OSTERLOO.*) Did you hear, my son, what the prior has been saying to you?

Ost. I heard words through a multitude of sounds.

Jer. It was the prior, desiring to know if you have any wishes to fulfil, regarding worldly affairs left behind you unsettled. — Perhaps to your soldiers you may —

Ost. (*interrupting him eagerly and looking wildly round*). My soldiers! are they here?

Jer. Ah, no! they are not here! they are housed for the night in their distant quarters: they will not be here till the setting of to-morrow's sun.

Ost. (*groaning deeply*). To-morrow's sun!

Jer. Is there any wish you would have conveyed to them? Are there any of your officers to whom you would send a message or token of remembrance?

Ost. Ye speak again imperfectly, through many ringing sounds.

[*JER.* repeats the question in a slow, distinct voice.

Ost. Ay, there is: these, these — (*Endeavouring to tear off his cincture and some military ornaments from his dress.*) I cannot hit upon these fastenings.

Jer. We'll assist you, my son.

[*Undoing his cincture or girdle, &c.*

Ost. (*still endeavouring to do it himself*). My sword too, and my daggers. — My last remembrance to them both.

Jer. To whom, my lord?

Ost. Both — all of them.

Ben. (*who has kept sorrowfully at some distance, now approaching eagerly*). Urge him no more: his officers will themselves know what names he would have uttered. (*Turning to Ost. with an altered voice.*) Yes, noble count! they shall be given as you desire, with your farewell affection to all your brave followers.

Ost. I thank ye.

Jer. And this is all?

Ost. Nay, nay.

Ben. What is there besides?

Prior (*angrily*). There is too much of this: and some sudden rescue may prevent us.

Ben. Nay, reverend father, there is no fear of this: you would not cut short the last words of a dying man?

Prior. And must I be guided by thy admonitions? Beware; though Baldwin has not named thee, I know it is thou who art the traitor.

Ben. There is but one object at present to be thought of, and, with your leave, reverend father, I will not be deterred from it. (*To Ost. again in a voice of tenderness.*) What is there besides, noble Osterloo, that you would wish us to do?

Ost. There is something.

Ben. What is it, my lord?

Ost. I wot not.

Ben. Then let it rest.

Ost. Nay, nay! This — this — (*Pulling a ring from his finger, which falls on the ground.*) My hands will hold nothing.

Ben. I have found it; and what shall I do with it?

Ost. (*in a faint hurried voice*). Leonora — Leonora.

Ben. I understand you, my lord.

Prior. I am under the necessity, Count Osterloo, of saying, your time is run to its utmost limit: let us call upon you now for your last exertion of nature. These good brothers must conduct you to the scaffold.

[*JER.* and *PAUL* support him towards the scaffold, while *BENEDICT* retires to a distance, and turns his back to it.

Jer. Rest upon me, my son, you have but a few paces to go.

Ost. The ground sinks under me; my feet tread upon nothing.

Jer. We are now at the foot of the scaffold, and there are two steps to mount: lean upon us more firmly.

Ost. (*stumbling*). It is dark; I cannot see.

Jer. Alas, my son! there is a blaze of torches round you. (*After they are on the scaffold.*) Now, in token of thy faith in heaven, and forgiveness of all men, raise up thy clasped hands. (*Seeing Ost. make a feeble effort, he raises them for him in a posture of devotion.*) And now to heaven's mercy we commit thee.

[*JEROME* and *PAUL* retire, and two executioners prepare him for the block, and assist him to kneel. He then lays down his head, and they hold his hands, while a third executioner stands with the raised axe.

1st ex. (*speaking close to his ear*). Press my hand when you are ready for the stroke. (*A long pause.*) He gives no sign.

2d ex. Stop, he will immediately. (*A second pause.*) Does he not?

1st ex. No.

Prior. Then give the stroke without it.

[*3d executioner prepares to give the stroke, when the imperial ambassador rushes into the hall, followed by LEONORA and AGNES, and a numerous train.*

Ambass. Stop the execution! In the name of your liege lord the emperor, I command you to stop upon your peril. My lord prior, this is a treacherous and clandestine use of your seigniorial power. This noble servant of our imperial master (*pointing to OSTERLOO*) I take under my protection; and you must first deprive an imperial ambassador of life, ere one hair of his head fall to the ground.

Ben. (*running to the scaffold*). Up, noble Osterloo! Raise up thy head: thou art rescued: thou art free!

Leo. Rise, noble Osterloo! dost thou not know the voice that calls thee?

Ben. He moves not; he is in a swoon.

[*Raises OSTERLOO from the block, whilst LEONORA bends over him with anxious tenderness*

Leo. He is ghastly pale: yet it surely can be but a swoon. Chafe his hands, good Benedict, while I bathe his temples. (*After trying to restore him.*) Oh, no, no! no change takes place. What thinkest thou of it? Is there any life here?

Ben. In truth I know not: this seems to me the fixed ghastly visage of complete death.

Leo. Oh, no, no! he will be restored. No stroke has fallen upon him: it cannot be death. Ha! is not that something? Did not his lips move?

Ben. No, lady; you but deceive yourself! they moved not: they are closed for ever.

Leo. (*wringing her hands.*) Oh it is so! it is so! —after all thy struggles and exertions of despair, this is thy miserable end! —Alas, alas! thou who didst bear thy crest so proudly in many a well fought field; this is thy miserable end! (*Turning away, and hiding her face in the bosom of AGNES.*)

Ambass. (*examining the body more closely.*) I think in very truth he is dead.

1st gentleman of his train. Yes; the face never looks thus, till every spark of life is extinguished.

Ambass. (*turning fiercely to the prior.*) How is this, prior? What sorcery has been here, that your block alone should destroy its victim, when the stroke of the axe has been wanting? What account shall I carry to my master of the death of his gallant general?

Prior. No sorcery hath been practised on the deceased: his own mind has dealt with him alone, and produced the effects you behold. And, when you return to Lewis of Bavaria your master, tell him that his noble general, free from personal injury of any kind, died, within the walls of this monastery, of fear.

Ambass. Nay, nay, my good prior; put the fool's cap on thine own head, and tell him this tale thyself. —Fear! Osterloo and fear coupled together! when the lion and the fawn are found couching in the same lair we will believe this.

Prior. All the brothers of the order will attest it.

Ambass. Away with the testimony of your cowed witnesses! (*Beckoning MORAND to come near.*)

Morand, thou art a brave fellow; I have known thee of old, thou art the prior's officer indeed; but thou art now under my protection, and shalt be received into the emperor's service with increased rank: speak the truth then, boldly; how died Count Osterloo?

Mor. In very truth then, my lord, according to my simple thoughts, he died even as the prior has told you.

Ambass. Out upon thy hireling's tongue! art thou not ashamed, thyself wearing a soldier's garb, to blast a soldier's fame? There is no earthly thing the brave Osterloo was ever known to fear.

Mor. You say true, my lord; and on my sword's point I'll maintain it against any man as stoutly as yourself. But here is a pious monk (*pointing to JEROME*) who will explain to you what I should speak of but lamely.

Jer. With the prior's permission, my lord, if you will retire with me a little while, I'll inform you of this mysterious event, even simply as it happened. And perhaps you will then confess, that, called upon suddenly, under circumstances impressing powerfully the imagination, to put off this mortal frame, and stand forth in that tremendous presence, before which this globe, with all its mighty empires, hangs but as a crisped rain-drop, shivering on the threaded gossamer; the bravest mind may, if a guilty one, feel that within which is too powerful for human nature to sustain.

Ambass. Explain it as thou wilt; I shall listen to thee: but think not to cheat our imperial master of his revenge for the loss of his gallant general. I shall not fail, my lord prior, to report to him the meek spirit of your Christian authority, which has made the general weal of the community subservient to your private revenge; and another month, I trust, shall not pass over our heads, till a worthier man (*pointing to BENEDICT*) shall possess this power which you have so greatly abused. —Let the body be removed, and laid in solemn state, till it be delivered into the hands of those brave troops, who shall inter it with the honours of a soldier!

THE SIEGE:

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

COUNT VALDEMERE.
 BARON BAURCHEL.
 WALTER BAURCHEL, *his brother*.
 ANTONIO, *Baron de Bertrand*.
 DARTZ, *his friend*.
 Page to COUNT VALDEMERE.
 LORIMORE, *his valet*.
 HOVELBERG, *a jewel or diamond merchant*.
 Soldiers, servants, &c.

WOMEN.

COUNTESS VALDEMERE, *mother to the Count*.
 LIVIA.
 JEANETTA, *woman to the Countess*.
 NINA.

Ladies, &c.

Scene, *a castle on the French confines of Germany*.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A grove near the castle, with part of the embattled walls seen through the trees. Enter BARON BAURCHEL and WALTER BAURCHEL, speaking as they enter.

Bar. Have done, brother! I can bear it no longer. Hadst thou been bred in a cave of Kamshatka, instead of a mansion of civilized Europe, this savage plainness had been endurable; but—

Walt. I call a turnip a turnip, indeed, when other people say it is a peach or a nectarine; I call a pig a pig too, though they swear it is a fawn or an antelope; and they look at me, I confess, somewhat suspiciously, as if they expected to see a tail peeping from under my jerkin, or fur upon my hands like a bear.—You would have me civilized, would you? It is too late in the day now, good sooth!

Bar. Yes, the time is indeed gone by. This bachelor's life has brutified thee past all redemption. Why did you not marry, brother?

Walt. Nay, you who have met with so many goddesses and creatures of perfection in the world, why did not you marry, brother? I who could light upon nothing better than women—mere women; every one of them too with some fault or failing be-

longing to her, as obvious as those white hairs that now look from under your peruke, was it any marvel that I did not marry?

Bar. Had your wife possessed as many faults as you do wrinkles on your forehead, you would have been the better for her; she would have saved thee, as I said before, from brutification.

Walt. And yours would have saved you from dupification, dotification, and as many 'fications besides, as an old sentimental, hypocritical, greedy Dulcinea, can fasten on a rhyme-writing beau, who is stepping most unwillingly, with his lace-clocked hose, over that ungracious line of division, that marks out his grand climacteric.

Bar. Hypocritical! greedy! you don't know the delicacy of her mind; nothing can be more tender, more refined, more disinterested than her attachment to me. You don't understand her.

Walt. Perhaps I don't understand the attachments of the fair sex now-a-days. An old rich neighbour of mine informed me the other night that he is going to marry his poor friend Spendall's youngest daughter, who has actually fallen in love with him; and nothing, as he tells me, almost in your own words, can be more tender, more disinterested than her attachment. Not understanding these matters, brother, I'll freely confess to you I did not give much credit to his story; but I may be wrong nevertheless. I dare say you believe it entirely.

Bar. Ridiculous! What proofs can the fool possibly receive of her attachment?

Walt. The very same which the countess so condescendingly vouchsafes to yourself; she accepts of his presents.

Bar. The very same! No, no, Walter Baurchel; very different. Does not every smile of her countenance, every look of her eyes, involuntarily express her partiality for me?

Walt. Say, rather, every word of her tongue.

Bar. With what generous enthusiasm did she not praise my sonnet to Sensibility.

Walt. Ay, she is generous in what costs her little: for what are two or three lies, more or less, in a week's confession between her and Father Benedict? She'll scarcely eat a mouthful of partridge the less for it.

Bar. O heartless infidel! thou wouldst mistrust the fond smiles of a mother caressing her rosy-faced infant.

Walt. By my faith, so I would, baron, if that same infant brought a diamond necklace or a gold

snuff-box in his hand for every kiss she bestowed upon him. Every sonnet you write costs you, one with another, a hundred louis d'ors. If all the money vanity filches from rich poets could be transferred to the pockets of poor ones, verse-making would be as good a business as shoe-making, or any other handicraft in the country.

Bar. Hold thy unhallowed tongue! These subjects are not for thy rude handling. What is all this grumbling intended for? Tell me what you want, and have done with it; you who pique yourself so much on your plain speaking.

Walt. Well, then, I want you to let the next six sonnets you write go unpraised, and give the money that should have been paid for the praising of them, six hundred louis d'ors, as I reckon, to Antonio. Is it not a shame that your own ward and heir, in love with the lady of this castle, as you very well know, cannot urge his suit with advantage, for want of the equipage and appendages becoming his rank; while this conceited count, by means of his disinterested mother, drains your purse so freely; and is thereby enabled to ruin the pretensions of him whom you ought to support.

Bar. His pretensions are absurd, and cannot be supported.

Walt. Why absurd? Is he not as brave, as well born, as handsome too, as his rival?

Bar. What signify all his good qualities? In the presence of his mistress he is an idiot.

Walt. It is true, he loses all possession of himself in that situation, and therefore she despises him, while the gay confidence of the other delights her; but he should be supported and encouraged.

Bar. How encouraged? Silly fellow!

Walt. He feels too sensibly his disadvantages, and they depress him. He feels that he is not entitled to pretend to Livia, but as the probable heir of your estates; while your fantastical fondness for this woman and her son makes it a doubtful matter whether you may not be tempted—But hush! here she comes with her newly reddened face, bearing her morning's potation of flattery with her, for a stomach of most wonderful digestion.

Enter COUNTESS VALDEMERE, who, after slightly noticing WALTER, runs up caressingly to the Baron.

Countess. How do you do, my dear baron? I hope you have passed the night in sweet repose—Yet why do I hope it? You scarcely deserve that I should.

Bar. And why so, Belinda?

Walt. (*aside, making a lip at them.*) Belinda too! Sweet innocents!

Bar. Why should you not hope that I have passed the night in repose?

Countess. Because I am vindictive, and would be revenged upon you for making me pass a very sleepless one.

Walt. (*aside.*) Will she make love to him before one's very face!

Bar. Then I am a culprit indeed, but an innocent one. What kept you awake?

Countess. O, those verses of yours! those dear provoking verses! they haunted me the whole night. (*Baron bows.*) But don't think I am going to talk to you of their beauties—those tender easy graces which they possess, in common with every thing that comes from your pen: I am going to tell you of their defects. You know well my friendship for you, my dear baron, makes me sometimes severe.

Bar. (*aside to WALT.*) There now, you churl, do you call this flattery? (*Aloud.*) My dear countess, your severity is kindness.

Countess. Receive it then as such; for indeed I must be very severe on the two last lines of the second stanza, which have disturbed me exceedingly. In the verses of an ordinary poet I should not find fault with them; but in a work where every thing besides is easy, harmonious, and correct, the slightest defect is conspicuous; and I must positively insist on your altering them, though you should hate me for being so fastidious.

Bar. (*aside to WALT.*) There now, ungracious canker-tongue, do you call this hypocrisy? (*Aloud.*) Madam, I kiss the rod in so fair and so friendly a hand. Nay, it is a sceptre, to which I bow with devotion.

Countess (*to WALT.*). You see, good sir, I take great liberties with the baron, as, I doubt not, with the privilege of a brother, you yourself sometimes do.

Walt. Yes, madam, but my way of finding fault with him is somewhat different from yours.

Countess. Yet you still find his generous spirit, I am sure, submissive to the rod.

Walt. I can't say I do, madam.

Countess. You are unfortunate enough, perhaps, to use it unskillfully.

Walt. I am fortunate at present, however, in receiving so good a lesson from you, madam.

Countess. O no! there is no skill with me. There are persons to whom one cannot say one-half of what one really thinks, without being deemed a flatterer.

Walt. In this, however, I have been more fortunate than you, madam; for I have said to him what I have really thought for these forty years past, and have entirely escaped that imputation.

Bar. Ay, flattery is a sin thou wilt never do penance for. Thou canst rub the side of a galled jade with any tender-hearted innocent in Christendom, and be mightily surprised withal that the poor wretch should be so unreasonable as to wince at it.

Countess. Nay, nay, baron! say not this of so good a brother, the shrewdness and penetration of

whose mind are tempered, I am sure, with many amiable qualities.

Walt. Nay, pray, madam, spare me, and deal with but one of us at a time. Such words will intoxicating a poor younger brother like myself, who is scarcely able to get a fowl for his pot, or new facings for his doublet, and cannot therefore be supposed to be accustomed to them.

Countess. Sir, I understand not your insinuation.
Bar. Regard him not, madam: how should a mind, noble and delicate as your own, comprehend the unworthy thoughts of contemptible meanness?—Let me conduct you to company more deserving of you. Our fair hostess, I suppose, is already in her grotto.

Countess. No, she and my son are to follow me. But you must not go to the grotto with me now: nobody is to see it till the evening.

Bar. (offering to lead her out.) A step or two only.

Countess. O, not a step for the world.

[Exit, Baron hissing her hand as she goes off.]

Bar. (turning fiercely upon WALT.) Thy unmannerly meanness is intolerable. Still hinting at the presents she receives. Greedy as thou call'st her, she never asked a gift from me in her life, excepting my picture in miniature, which could only be valuable to her as she prized the original.

Walt. Say rather, as her jeweller shall prize the goodly brilliants that surround it.

Bar. What do you mean?

Walt. What I should have told you before, if she had not interrupted us; that her trinket-broker is this very morning coming secretly, by appointment, to the castle, to treat with her for certain things of great value which she wishes to dispose of; and if your picture be not amongst them, I'll forfeit my head upon it.

Bar. It is false.

Walt. Here comes one who will confirm what I say.

Enter DARTZ.

Walt. I'm glad to see you, chevalier, for you can bear evidence to a story of mine that will not be believed else.

Dartz. This is a better reason for being so than most of my friends have to give.

Walt. Is not Hovelberg, the jeweller, coming secretly to the castle to-day to confer with the countess?

Dartz. Yes, he told me so himself; and added, with a significant smile, that she had some of her old ware to dispose of.

Walt. Do you hear that, brother? It was as much as to say, she had often had such truckings with him before. Ay, you are not the only man who has thought his own dear resemblance lapped warmly behind the stomach of his mistress, while, stripped

of its jewels, it has been tossed into the drawer of some picture-monger, to be changed into a general of the last century, or one of the grand-dukes of Austria. As for you, brother, they'll put a black velvet cap on your head, and make you a good sombre doctor of theology.

Bar. You shall not, however, make me the credulous man you think of, Walter Baurchel, with all your contrivances.

Walt. And you don't believe us then?

Bar. Are you fool enough to imagine I do?

Walt. That were foolish enough, I grant you; for though an old lover has generally a strong vein of credulity about him, the current of his belief always sets one way, carrying withered nosebags, tattered billets doux, broken posies, and all kinds of trumpery along with it at fifteen knots by the hour.

Bar. Walter Baurchel! Walter Baurchel! flesh and blood cannot endure the offensive virulence of thy tongue.

Dartz. He is indeed too severe with you, baron; but what he tells you of Hovelberg is, nevertheless, very true.

Bar. I'll believe neither of you: you are both hatching a story to deceive me. [Exit in anger.]

Walt. (shrugging his shoulders and casting up his eyes.) What strong delusion we poor mortals may be blinded withal! That poor brother of mine believes, that the woman who refused to marry him when he was young and poor, yet smiles upon him, praises him, accepts presents from him when he is old and rich, must certainly entertain for him a most delicate, disinterested attachment; and you might as well overturn the walls of that castle with one stroke of your foot, as beat this absurdity out of him.

Dartz. But you are too violent: it will not be beaten out; it must be got out as it got in, with craft and discretion.

Walt. Then devil take me for attempting it! for craft I have none, and discretion is a thing—

Dartz. You will never have any thing to do with, I believe.

Walt. What then is to be done? If it were not that I cannot brook to see the conceited overbearing son of this Jezebel, carrying off the mistress of Antonio, I would even let the old fool sit under the tickling of her thievish fingers, and make as great a noodle of himself as he pleases.—But it must not be.—Fie upon it, Dartz! thou hast a good head for invention, while I, heaven help me! have only a good tongue for railing: do thou contrive some plot or other to prevent the disgrace of thy friend.

Dartz. Plots are not easily contrived.

Walt. I know this, else I should have tried it myself.

Dartz. Are you well acquainted with the count?

Walt. I am but just come to the castle, where I have thrust myself in, though an unwelcome guest,

to look after the interest of De Bertrand; and should be glad to know something more of the man who has so much intoxicated the gay Livia. What kind of a being is he?

Dartz. It would puzzle me as much as the contriving of your plot to answer that question. There is nothing real in him. He is a mere package of pretences, poorly held together with sense and capacity enough, were it not for one defect in his nature, to make him all that he affects to be. He is a thing made up of seemings.

Walt. Made up of seemings!

Dartz. Even so; for what in other men is reckoned the sincerest part of their character, his very self-conceit is assumed.

Walt. And what is the defect you hinted at?

Dartz. It has been whispered to me by an old schoolfellow of his, that he is deplorably deficient in personal courage; which accounts for his mother's having placed him in the regiment of a superannuated general, and also, for the many complaints he makes of the inactivity of his commander. It is a whisper I am inclined to credit; and, if we must have a plot, it shall hinge upon this.

Walt. My dear fellow! nothing can be better. Give it a turn or two in thy brains, and I'll warrant thou drawest it out again, shaped into an admirable plot. Direct all thyself, and I'll work under thee as a journeyman conspirator; for, as I said before, I have a ready tongue, but a head of no invention.

Dartz. We must speak of this another time. See who approaches.

Walt. Ha! the man we are speaking of, and the deluded Livia. By my faith he has a specious appearance! and the young fool looks at him too, as she would not look at a worthier man, whose merit might be tarnished with a few grains of modesty.

Enter VALDEMERE and LIVIA, followed by JEANNETTE carrying a basket filled with flowers, &c.

Dartz (to LIVIA). Permit me, madam, to pay you my profound homage.

Livia. You are welcome here, echevalier: what accident procures me this pleasure? (*Aside to the count.*) He'll make one more at our midnight revel in the grotto.

Vald. (aside with some chagrin). Are there not enough of us?

Dartz. Being in this part of the country on military duty, I could not resist the pleasure of paying my respects at the castle: and I honestly confess I had a secondary motive for my visit, expecting to find among your guests my old friend and schoolfellow Antonio.

Livia. Baron de Bertrand, you mean. He was here yesterday, but I really forget whether he went away or remained in the evening. (*Affecting to yawn.*) Is he with us, or not, count?

Walt. (aside to DARTZ). Meet me by-and-bye in

my chamber. My tongue is unruly, and I had better go while I can keep it within my teeth.

[*Exit.*]

Livia. Does not his amiable relation there, who steals from us so quietly, know where he is?

Vald. If you are in quest of your friend, echevalier, had you not better inquire at some of the peasants' houses in the neighbourhood? There may be some beauty in the village, perhaps, whose august presence a timid man may venture to approach, particularly if her charms should be somewhat concealed behind the friendly flax of her distaff.

Dartz. Pardon me, count; I thought my friend had aspired to a beauty, whose charms would have pleased him, indeed, behind the flax of a distaff, but will not, I trust, entirely intimidate him from the more brilliant situation in which fortune has placed them. Ay; that glances in your eye, and that colour in your cheek, charming Livia, tell me I am right.

Livia. They speak at random then; for it would puzzle a much wiser head than I wear on my shoulders to say what are his pretensions. He visits me, it is true, but suddenly takes his leave again, and the very next day, perhaps, as suddenly returns.

Vald. Like poor puss with roasted chestnuts before her, who draws back her burnt paw every time she attempts them, but will not give up the attack. He may, however, after some more of those hasty visits, find courage for it at last.

Dartz. There is one attack, however, for which he never lacks courage, when the enemies of his country are before him.

Vald. True, he is brave in the field, but he is fortunate also. He serves under an active commander, while I waste my ardour in listless inactivity.

Dartz. Cheer up then, noble count, I have good news to tell you upon this score.

Vald. On this score! Is any change to take place? (*In a feeble voice.*)

Dartz (after a pause). You are too well bred to be impatient for an answer.

Vald. O no; you mistake me; I am very impatient; I am on fire to hear it.

Dartz. Expand then your doughty breast at thoughts of the glorious fields that are before you: your old general is set aside, and the most enterprising man in the service, Count—himself, is now your commander. (*After a momentary pause, and eyeing him keenly.*) Silent joy, they say, is most sincere; you are, I perceive, considerably and profoundly glad.

Vald. (assuming sudden great animation). O, immeasurably so. Great news indeed!—Strange—I mean very admirable news, if one could be sure it were true.

Dartz. True! Who doubts what delights him?

Vald. I thought the regiment was promised to another person; I was not prepared to hear it.

Dartz. So it appeared.

Vald. But I am delighted—I can't express it:—I am glad to a folly. 'Tol de rol—tol de rol—*(Singing and skipping about affectedly.)*

Livia. Cruel creature! to sing at what, perhaps, will make others weep.

Vald. Weep!—No, I don't weep. I am happy to a folly, but I don't weep. *(Skipping about again.)* Tol lol de rol!—Plague take these stones! this ground is abominably rough.

Dartz. Fie upon it! any ground is smooth enough for a happy man to skip upon.

Livia. You smile, Dartz; your news is of your own invention.

Dartz. Not absolutely, madam; there was such a rumour.

Vald. (eagerly). A rumour! only a rumour! Why did you say it was true?

Dartz. To give you a moment's pleasure, Valdemere. If you have enjoyed it, you are a gainer; and the disappointment, I hope, will not break your heart.

Vald. It is cruel indeed. But who can feel disappointment in this fair presence? *(Bowing to LIVIA.)* Let us go to the grotto, charming Livia; we waste our time here with folly—Give me thy basket, child *(to JEAN.);* I'll dispose of every chaplet it contains to admiration. I'll hang them all up with my own hand.

Livia. Don't be so very active: you positively shan't follow me to the grotto: I told you so before.

Vald. Positive is a word of no positive meaning when it enforces what we dislike. However, since you forbid it, I will not follow you; I'll go by your side, which is far better, and support your fair hand on my arm. *(Putting LIVIA'S arm in his with conceited confidence.)*

Livia. What a sophistical explanation of my words! an heretical theologian is a joke to you.

Vald. (casting a triumphant look behind him to DARTZ, as he leads her off) Good morning, chevalier; you go in quest of your friend, I suppose. Pray tell him to take courage, and be less diffident of his own good parts, and he may at last be promoted, perhaps, to the good graces of his quartermaster's daughter.

Dartz. Nobody, at least, who sees Count Valdemere in his present situation, will think of recommending modesty to him.

[Exeunt VALD. and LIVIA. followed by JEAN.]

Impudent puppy! his triumph shall be short. Blind woman! are flattery and impudence so necessary in gaining your favour, that all other qualities, without them, are annihilated? He shall this very night pay dearly for his presumption. *[Exit.]*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A room in the castle. Enter WALTER BAURCHEL and DARTZ, by opposite sides

Walt. Ha! my good friend, punctual to a wish. You have got your head stored, I hope, with a good plot.

Dartz. I am at least more in the humour for it than I was. I have found his conceit and arrogance more intolerable than I imagined. I have touched him in the weak part too, and find him vulnerable.

Walt. Well, but the plot.

Dartz. I have discovered also a trait of villany in him, that would prick me on to the charge, were I sluggish as a tortoise.

Walt. So much the better. Now for the plot.

Dartz. As I passed just now through the little green copse near the postern, a beautiful girl crossed my way, and in tears.

Walt. Tut! she has crossed thy wits too.

Dartz. Have patience! she'll be useful.—I questioned her gently.

Walt. Ay, gently enough I doubt not.

Dartz. And find she is sister to that shrewd little fellow, the count's page; that her affections have been gained and betrayed by Valdemere; and she is now hovering about the castle, for an opportunity of upbraiding him, or in the vain hope, perhaps, of moving his pity.

Walt. She has moved thy pity at least; what has all this to do with our plot?

Dartz. A great deal: I am telling you beforehand what we shall have to work upon: a plot cannot, any more than a coat, be made without materials.

Walt. Well, but show me thy pattern first, and talk of the buttons and buckram afterwards.

Dartz. Be it so then, since you are so impatient. There is a friend of mine stationed about a league hence with his regiment; where he is to wait till he is joined by another detachment of the army, as the enemy, it is feared, may penetrate to these parts, and overrun the country. I mean to go to him immediately; make him privy to our design, and engage him to send a party of his soldiers to make a sham attack upon the castle at midnight, when we shall all be assembled at this fanciful banquet in the grotto.

Walt. (nodding his head). Good.

Dartz. Valdemere then, as the gallant soldier he affects to be, and the favoured admirer too of the lady, must of course take upon himself the defence of her castle.

Walt. (nodding again). Very good.

Dartz. This will quell his presumption, I trust; and expose him to Livia for the very paltry being that he is.

Walt. Ay, so far good; you'll make some furtherance to the plot out of this.

Dartz. Some furtherance to the plot! Why this is the plot itself.

Walt. The plot itself! Any simple man in the country might have devised as much as this comes to.

Dartz. It does not please you then because it is not intricate. But don't despise it entirely; though the outline is simple, tricks and contrivances to work up the mind of our victim to the state that is suited to our purpose, will enrich it as we proceed; and the page I have mentioned, provoked by the wrongs of his sister, will be our subtle and diligent agent. Nay, should we draw Valdemere into great disgrace, we may bribe him, by concealing his dishonour, to marry the poor girl he has wronged.

Walt. Ha! this indeed is something like a plot. — And Antonio's marriage with Livia, how is that to be fastened to the end of it?

Dartz. Nay, I have no certain hook, I confess, to hang that upon. It must depend on the baron; for unless he declare Antonio his heir, he will never venture to propose himself as a match for the well-dowered Livia. But we shall manage matters ill, if we cannot draw the baron into our scheme.

Walt. Then a fig for your plot! It is as bare of invention as the palm of my hand.

Dartz. This is always the case with those who lack invention themselves: they are never pleased with that of any other person, if it be not with contrivances bristled over like a hedgehog. And I must be allowed to say, Mr. Walter Baurchel, that he who racks his brains for your service, works for a thankless master.

Walt. He works for an honest one, then.

Dartz. Away with the honesty that cannot afford a few civil words to a friend, who is doing his best to oblige you! As much duplicity as this amounts to, would not much contaminate your virtue.

Walt. Well, well, I am wrong, perhaps, but thou art as testy as myself.

Dartz. Because I won't bear your untoward humour. Some people find every body testy who approaches them, and marvel at their own bad luck. — But no more of this: let us think of our friend. Does the baron believe what you told him of Hovelberg's appointment with the countess?

Walt. He makes a show of not believing it, but I think he has his own suspicions at bottom; for his valet tells me, he has sent to desire Hovelberg to speak with him as soon as he arrives.

Dartz. Here comes De Bertrand; I hear his steps.

Walt. Is he returned to the castle?

Dartz. Yes; I forgot to tell you so, you were in such a hurry for your plot.

Walt. Silly fellow! he cannot stay away from his capricious mistress, though the first glance of her eye sinks him to a poltroon at once.

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. (to WALT.) Good morning, gentle kinsman; — but methinks you are not very glad to see me; these are not looks of welcome.

Walt. Thou art one of those that trouble me.

Ant. I am of a pretty numerous class of beings then, from the kitten that gnaws at your shoe-string, to the baron, who spoils your best pen in writing love-verses to his mistress.

Walt. Well; and they would torment any man. Love-verses! with such an old painted hypocrite for the object of them!

Ant. His first love, you know; his Delia.

Walt. His Delia! His delusion. Is there such a thing as witchcraft in the world? I believe in good earnest there is. Her dominion over him is a mystery: a more than Egyptian blindness.

Ant. Nay, you have yourself in a good degree to blame for it, my good sir. Had you encouraged his humour, harmless as it is; bestowing some praise on his verses, and less abuse on the too youthful cut of his peruke, she could never have taken possession of him as she has done.

Walt. Praise his verses, and not abuse his peruke! it had been beyond the self-denial of a saint.

Dartz. And had you —

Walt. (to DARTZ.) One assailant at a time, if you please.

Dartz. Excuse me, sir; I must needs say, had you even paid a little attention to the countess herself, when she first renewed her intimacy with the baron, she would have been less anxious, perhaps, to estrange him from his old friends.

Walt. Attention to her! I could not have done it to gain myself, like Mahomet, the entrance to the seventh heaven. I must tell people plainly what I think of them, though I should hang for it.

Dartz. Had you said starve for it, you had named the fate that more commonly attends plain speaking.

Ant. And in telling people disagreeable truths to gratify your own humour too, are you surprised, my good sir, that they should not be edified thereby?

Walt. (to ANT.) What, young soldier, you are become a plain speaker too.

Ant. Just to show you, sir, how agreeable it is.

Walt. Ha, ha, ha! Well; thou hast the better of me now. Would thou couldst prate as briskly to thy mistress! that would do more for thee in one hour than all thy bashful tenderness in a year.

Ant. I might — I should indeed — I defend not my weakness. — You promised on this point to spare me.

Walt. Ay, the very sound of her name quells thy spirit, and makes thee hesitate and stammer like a culprit. It is provoking.

Dartz. You profess a violent detestation of conceit, my shrewd sir; where, then, is your indulgence for modesty?

Walt. You mistake the matter, *Dartz.* Your friend there, has as good a conceit of himself as any man: he is not modest, but bashful; a weakness, too, that only besets him in the presence of his mistress. By this good fist of mine! it provokes me almost to the guggling of such an unaccountable ninny. But I would cudgel thee, and serve thee too, *De Bertrand.* Take courage; we have a plot in our heads to make a man of thee at last.

Dartz (*aside, pulling WALT. by the sleeve*). Say not a word of the plot;—his sense of honour is so delicate, he would recoil at it.

Ant. A plot, did you say?

Walt. Ay, a kind of a plot;—that is to say—What kind of a plot is it, *Dartz?*

Dartz. Have you forgotten your own scheme for cheating the virtuoso, when your cabinet of antiquities comes to the hammer?

Walt. By my fay! this memory of mine is not worth a pinch of tobacco. (*Seeing ANT. look at his watch.*) Art thou going any where?

Ant. No;—I did think—I believe I shall take a turn on the terrace.

Dartz (*to ANT.*). I understand you: take a turn in the cabinet of paintings rather; that will suit your purpose better.

Ant. May I presume to go there?

Walt. Presume, simpleton! That impudent puppy of a count lords it in her dressing-room. Go thy ways! (*Pushing him off the stage with slight anger.*) *Exit ANTONIO.* That fellow provokes me; yet there is something in him that goes so near my heart: he is more akin to me than his blood entitles him to be: he is like a part of myself.

Dartz. Not the least like it. Now that you have taught us to speak plainly, I must needs say, were he at all like yourself, you would disinherit him in the course of a month.

Walt. You are right, perhaps. But, alas! he would not be much the poorer for being disinherited by me. O that old fool of a brother! I could flog him for his poetry.

Dartz. Have patience, and we may find a better way of dealing with him. If we could persuade him to disguise himself like a diamond merchant, and accompany *Hovelberg* when he visits the countess, he would be convinced of the true nature of her regard for him.

Walt. An excellent thought! This is just what was wanting to make our plot really like a plot.

Dartz. I'm glad it pleases you at last. Before I leave the castle to negotiate with my friend for his myrmidons, I'll find out the baron, and endeavour to persuade him.

Walt. Heaven prosper thee! but return, ere thou goest, and let me know the result.

Dartz. Depend upon it. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

A room hung with paintings, and enriched with carving and ornaments, &c. Enter VALDEMERE and ANTONIO.

Vald. Here are some good paintings, *De Bertrand*; if you have any taste for the art, they will please you. This *Guido* on the left is a divine thing. The *Magdalen* in *Count Orrinberg's* collection was considered as superior to it; but I always maintained this to be the best painting of the two, and the world have at last adopted my opinion. I have always decidedly thought—but you are not looking at it. Is there any thing in that door to arrest your attention? The carving on it is but indifferent.

Ant. I thought I heard footsteps. She's coming.

Vald. Pooh! she won't be here this half hour; so you need not yet take alarm, as if an enemy were advancing upon you.

Ant. You connect the idea of alarm with an enemy; would I had firmness to face what I love! You are a happy man, *Valdemere*, and a bold one too, most assuredly: what would not I give for a little of your happy self-possession.

Vald. Ay, it is an article of some value: he who can't possess himself, must not expect to possess his mistress.

Ant. A very specious maxim this from a young fellow's mouth, with the manliness of well-curved whiskers to support it: yet I have seen the embarrassment of a diffident character plead its own cause more effectually than the eloquence of a brazen-browed barrister. At least I have always felt it have more power over me.

Val. That is natural enough: it is a common selfish sympathy: one thief pities another when the rope is round his neck. Feeling for others is the consequence of our own imperfections; this is a known truth.

Ant. Establish it if you can, *Valdemere*, for it will go well nigh to prove you immaculate.

Vald. How far soever I may be from that degree of perfection, jealousy at least is not one of my faults, since I have introduced a rival into the apartments of my mistress, where he had not the courage to venture alone, and am also pointing out to him what he has not discovered for himself, that her picture is now before his eyes. (*Pointing to a picture.*)

Ant. (*looking up to it eagerly*). It is somewhat like.

Vald. She sat for it at my request: no one else could prevail on her. The painter knew my taste in these matters, and has taken wonderful pains with it.

Ant. (*sighing*). You have indeed been honoured.

Vald. He has made the eyes to look upon you with such expression.

Ant. Think you so? To me he appears to have

failed in this respect; or perhaps it is because any semblance of eyes which I can thus steadfastly look upon, are not to me the eyes of Livia.

Vald. I did not suspect you of being so fastidious.

Ant. Not so neither: but had they been turned on some other object instead of the spectator, one should then have seen them as one is accustomed to see them.

Vald. Yes, speaking for your single self, this may be true. I beg leave to dissent.

Ant. Yet surely you will agree, that the direct thrilling glance, from eyes of such vivid expression, cannot possibly be imitated, and ought not by a skilful painter to be attempted.

Enter LIVIA behind them.

Vald. Perhaps you are right: you talk like a connoisseur on the subject.

Livia. I come in good time then; for connoisseur or not, to hear De Bertrand talk at all is a very lucky adventure. You have wronged us much, baron, to keep us so long ignorant of your taste for the fine arts.

Ant. (embarrassed). Madam, I am much honoured. I am very little—(*mumbling words in a confused way that are not heard*). I am very much obliged to you.

Livia. You are grateful for slight obligations. But you are looking at my picture I see, which was painted two years ago at the request of a good old uncle of mine; pray give me your opinion of it.

Ant. It appears—it is very charming. It is—that is, I suppose, it is very finely painted.

Livia. It is reckoned so: and it certainly does more than justice to the original. (*ANT. hesitates as if he would speak, but remains silent.*) You are of my opinion, I perceive, or at least too well bred to contradict me. Confess it freely; you are of my opinion.

Ant. O entirely, madam.

Livia. You flatter me exceedingly.

Ant. I meant it in simple sincerity.

Livia. O, sincere enough I doubt not.

Vald. And surely you will not question its simplicity.

Livia (to VALD., turning from ANT. with pity and contempt). Don't let us be too hard upon him. Pray look at that picture of my great aunt, who was a celebrated beauty.

Vald. (gazing with affected admiration at LIVIA'S picture). I have no eyes for any other beauty than what I now gaze upon.

Livia. And do you indeed admire this picture so much?

Vald. The faintest resemblance of its fair original is fascinating. Yet, methinks, the painter should have represented it as looking on some other object than the spectator.

Livia. Why so?

Vald. The direct thrilling glance, from eyes of

such vivid expression, cannot possibly be imitated, and ought not to have been attempted.

Ant. (aside). My own words in the coxcomb's mouth!

Livia. This is an objection proceeding from genuine sensibility: yet you never mentioned it before.

Vald. Perhaps I am too fastidious; but any eyes that I can thus steadfastly look upon, are not to me the eyes of Livia.

Livia. Ah! these are in truth the words of a too partial friend.

Vald. Words from the heart, divine Livia, will tell from whence they came.

[*They both walk to the bottom of the stage, speaking in dumb-show, while ANT. remains in the front.*]

Ant. (aside). With my own words he woos her, and before my face too: matchless impudence!—And such a man as this pleases Livia!—He whispers in her ear, and she smiles.—My heart sickens at it: I'll look no more, lest I become envious and revengeful, and hateful to myself—O Nature! hast thou made me of such poor stuff as this?

Vald. (turning round from the bottom of the stage). Ha! De Bertrand, are you declaiming? Some speech of a tragedy, I suppose, from the vehemence of your gesture. Pray let Livia hear you: she is partial, you know, to every thing you do, and finds every exhibition you make before her particularly amusing.

Ant. (sternly). Come nearer to me, sir; the first part of my speech is for your private ear.—Come nearer.

Livia. Pray go to him: by the tone of his voice he personates some tyrant, and must be obeyed.

Ant. Yes, sir, I must be obeyed. (*VALD. shuffles up to him unwillingly, and ANT. speaks in his ear.*) Take no more impertinent liberties with me in this lady's presence, or be prepared to justify them elsewhere.

[*Exit, looking at VALD. sternly, who remains silent.*]

Livia (advancing to the front). What is the matter, count?

Vald. Nothing—nothing at all.

Livia. Nay, something unpleasant has passed between you.

Vald. I believe I did wrong: I should have treated him more gently. But the strangeness of his behaviour obliged me to use threatening words, upon which he withdrew, and chose not to understand them.

Livia. How ill one judges then by dumb-show of what passes at a distance.

Vald. I am always calm on these occasions, while he assumes the fierceness of a boaster.

Livia. But you will not call him out for such a trifle?

Vald. Not for the world, divine creature, if it give you uneasiness.

Livia. How gentle you are! The brave are always so.

Vald. How can I be otherwise with such an angel to prompt me? No, the braggart may live in safety for me; I will not harm one hair of his head.

Livia. I thank you, dear Valdemere! and now, to recompense your goodness, I'll show the beautiful gem I promised you: follow me.

Vald. Yes, bewitching maid! to the world's end, to the bottom of the ocean, to the cannon's brazen mouth, I would follow thee. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

The Countess's dressing-room. She enters from an inner chamber, with a small shagreen case in her hand, followed by JEANETTA, carrying a casket, which she sets upon a table.

Countess. Jeanetta, let me take a last look of those dear things before I part with them for ever.

Jean. I'm sure, my lady, they are so handsome, and you look so handsome when you wear them, it would go to my heart to part with them.

Countess. But my dear boy must have money, Jeanetta, and I have been expensive myself. (*Opens the casket, and looks at the jewels.*) My diamonds, my pearls, my rubies, my darlings! for the sake of a still greater darling I must part with you all.

Jean. But if I might presume to speak, my lady, don't you indulge the young count too much in extravagance?

Countess. O no, Jeanetta; I doat upon him: it is this amiable weakness of character which all the world remarks and admires in me. And he loves me entirely too; he would sacrifice his life for my sake.

Jean. He'll sacrifice nothing else, however; for he never gives up the smallest convenience of his own to oblige you.

Countess. Small things are of no consequence: he would give up for me, I am confident, the thing most dear to his heart: and for him—to see him lord of this castle and its domains, and occupying in society the brilliant place that becomes him, I would—what would I not sacrifice!

Jean. Were he to live on the fortune he has, and marry where he is attached, he might perhaps be happier.

Countess. Happier! Were he mean enough to be happy so—contemptible thought!—I would see him in his grave rather. But no more of this: have you seen Hovelberg? You say he is waiting below.

Jean. Yes, madam, and a friend with him; an Armenian Jew-merchant, who will, he says, go halves in his purchases, and enable him to give you a better price for the jewels, as he is himself rather low in cash at present.

Countess. Well, I'll object to neither Jew nor infidel that puts money into my pocket. (*Holding up a ruby necklace.*) This should fetch something considerable.

Jean. O la, madam! you won't part with that surely; your neck is like alabaster under it. Did you but know how they admired you at Prince Dormach's the last time you wore it.—I would sell the very gown from my back ere I parted with it.

Countess. So they admired me at Prince Dormach's then?

Jean. O dear, my lady! the prince's valet told me, though two young beauties from Brussels were there, nobody spoke of any one but you.

Countess. Well, to please thee then, I'll keep it.

Jean. La! here is a little emerald ring, my lady; those brokers will despise such a trifle, and give you a mere nothing for it.—La! who would think it? it fits my finger to a hair. It must be a mort too large for your delicate hand.

Countess. Keep it for thyself, then, since it fits thee. He was a great fool who gave it me, and had it made of that awkward size.

Jean. I thank you, my lady: I wish you would give me every thing in this precious casket that has not been the gift of a sage.

Countess. Thou art right, child. It would put many a hundred louis-d'ors into thy pocket, and leave scarcely a maravedi for myself. A rich knight of Malta gave me these (*holding up a string of pearls*), whose bandy legs were tricked out most delicately in fine-clocked hose of the nicest and richest embroidery. Rest his soul! I made as much of those legs as the hosier did.

Jean. I doubt it not, madam, and deserved what you earned full as well.

Countess (*looking again at her pearls*). There is not a flaw in any one of them.

Jean. Ay, commend me to such legs! had they been straighter, the pearls had been worse.

Countess. This amber box with brilliants I had from an old croaking marquis, who pestered every music room in the principality to the day of his death, with notes that would have frightened a peacock. As long as he sang, poor man! I considered myself as having a salary on the musical establishment at the rate of two hundred ducats per month.

Jean. Ay; heaven send that all the old marquises in these parts would croak for us at this rate.

Countess. I have no reason to complain: my present friend bleeds as freely as any of his predecessors.

Jean. So he should, my lady. Such nonsense as he writes ought not to be praised for a trifle. I would not do it, I'm sure.

Countess. Dost thou ever praise then for profit.

Jean. To be honest with you, madam, I have done it, as who has not? But never since I entered your ladyship's service; for why should you reward me for praising you, when all the world does it for

nothing?—No, no, my lady; you are too wise for that.

Countess. There is somebody at the door.

Jean. It is Hovelberg.

Countess. Open then, but let nobody else in.

[*JEAN opens the door, and HOVELBERG enters, followed by BARON BAURCHEL, disguised as an Armenian Jew.*

Countess. I am happy to see you, dear Hovelberg; and this gentleman also (*curtseying to the baron*). I know it is only a friend, whom we may trust, that you would introduce to me on the present occasion.

Hov. To be sure, madam: a friend we may depend on. (*Drawing countess aside, and speaking in her ear.*) A man of few words: better to do in this quarter than this. (*Pointing first to his pocket, and then to his head.*) And that is a good man, you know, to be well with.

Countess. O the best stuff in the world for making a friend of. (*Returning to the baron.*) Sir, I have the highest regard and esteem for you.

Bar. (*in a feigned voice.*) On vatch account, madam?

Countess. O, good sir! on every account.

Bar. You lov'sh not my religion?

Countess. I respect and reverence it profoundly.

Bar. You lov'sh not my pershon?

Countess. It is interesting and engaging, most assuredly.

Bar. No body telsh me sho before!

Countess. Because the world is full of envious people, who will not tell you truths that are agreeable.

Bar. (*nodding assent.*) Now I understant.

Countess. Yes, dear sir; you must do so; your understanding is unquestionable. (*Looking archly to Hov.*) And now, gentlemen, do me the honour to be seated, and examine these jewels attentively.

Hov. We would rather stand if you'll permit us.

Countess (*aside to Hov., while the baron examines the jewels*). My dear Hovelberg, be liberal: for the sum I want is a large one, and those jewels would procure it for me any where; only, regarding you as my friend, I give you the first offer.—But your friend, methinks, examines every thing with great curiosity.

Hov. Yes, poor man! he likes to appear as knowing as he can: this is but natural, you know, when one is deficient in the upper department.—But he'll pay like a prince, if you flatter and amuse him.

Bar. Vasht fine stones! Vasht pretty ornaments! (*To countess.*) You dishposhe of all deshe?

Countess. Yes, every thing.

Bar. Dere be gifsh here, no doubt, from de dear friensch.

Hov. Or some favoured lover, perhaps.

Countess (*sighing affectedly*). Perhaps so; but I must part with them all.

Bar. (*aside to Hov.*) Nay, she has some tenderness for me: put her not to too severe a trial.

Hov. (*aside*). We shall see.

Bar. (*returning to countess*). You be woman; and all womansh have de afflictions for some one lover or frient.

Countess. O how good and amiable and considerate you are! I have indeed a heart formed for tenderness.

Bar. (*drawing Hov. aside again*). She does love me, Hovelberg; tempt her not with an extravagant price for the picture.

Hov. (*aside*). I'll take a better way of managing it. (*Returning to the countess.*) My friend desires me to say, madam, that, if there is any thing here you particularly value, he'll advance you money upon it, which you may repay at your leisure, and you shall preserve it.

Countess (*to baron*). How generous you are, my dear sir! Yes; there is one thing I would keep.

Bar. (*eagerly*). One ting—dere be one ting: tish picture, perhaps.

Countess. This ruby necklace.

Bar. You sell tish picture, den?

Countess. To be sure, if you'll purchase it.

Hov. The diamonds are valuable, indeed; but you will not sell the painting?

Countess. That will depend on the price you offer for it.

Hov. Being a portrait, it is of no value at all, but to those who have a regard for the original.

Jean. And what part of the world do they live in, Mr. Hovelberg? Can you find them out any where?

Countess. Nay, peace Jeanetta.—As a portrait, indeed, it is of no value to any body, but, as a characteristic old head, it should fetch a good price. (*Showing it to baron.*) Observe, my dear sir, that air of conceit and absurdity over the whole figure: to those who have a taste for the whimsical and ridiculous, it would be invaluable. Don't you perceive it?

Bar. Not very sure.

Countess. Not sure! look at it again. See how the eyes are turned languishingly aside, as if he were repeating, "Dear gentle idol of a heart too fond." (*Mimicking the baron's natural voice.*)

Hov. Ha, ha, ha! Your mimickry is excellent, countess. Is it not, friend Johnadab?

Bar. O, vasht comical.

Hov. (*aside to him*). She has a good talent.

Bar. (*aside*). Shrewd with! The words of my last sonnet, indeed; but I did not repeat them so.

Hov. (*aloud*). Though you are an admirable mimic, madam, my friend Johnadab does not think your imitation of the baron entirely correct.

Countess (*alarmed*). He knows the baron then; I have been very imprudent.—But pray don't

suppose I meant any disrespect to the worthy baron, whom I esteem very much.

Bar. O vasht much!

Hov. Be not uneasy, madam; my friend will be secret, and loves a joke mightily.

Countess. I'll trust then to his honour; and since he does not like my imitation of the baron, he shall have it from one who does it better than I. Jeanetta, amuse this worthy gentleman by repeating the baron's last sonnet.

Jean. Nay, my lady, you make me do it so often I'm tired of taking him off.

Countess. Do as you are bid, child.

Jean. "Dear gentle idol of a heart too fond,
Why doth that eye of sweetest sympathy —"

Hov. Ha, ha, ha! Excellent!

Bar. (*off his guard*). By my faith, this is too bad! Your servants taught to turn me into ridicule!

Countess (*starting*). How's this? Mercy on me!

Hov. Be not alarmed, countess: I thought he would surprise you. My friend is the best mimic in Europe.

Countess. I can scarcely recover my surprise. (*To baron*). My dear sir, I cannot praise you enough. You have a wonderful talent. The baron's own mouth could not utter his voice more perfectly than yours.

Bar. (*pulling off his cap and beard*). No, madam, not easily. (*JEAN shrieks out, and the countess stands in stupid amazement*). This disguise, madam, has procured for me a specimen of the amiable dispositions of a heart formed for tenderness, with a sample of your talents for mimicry into the bargain; and so I wish you good day, with thanks for my morning's amusement.

Countess (*recovering herself*). Ha, ha, ha! You understand mumming very well, baron, but I still better. I acted my part well.

Bar. Better than well, madam: it was the counterpart of my enacting the baron.

Jean. Indeed, dear baron, the countess knew it was you, and so did I too. Indeed, indeed, we did. I'm sure it is a very good joke: I wonder we don't laugh more at it than we do.

Bar. Be quiet, subordinate imp of this arch tempter! My thraldom is at an end; and all the jewels in that shameful heap were not too great a price for such emancipation. (*Bowing very low to countess*). Adieu! most amiable, most sentimental, most disinterested of women! [*Exit*].

Countess. Hovelberg, you have betrayed me.

Hov. How so, madam? You told me yourself you were the most sincere woman in the world; the baron doubted your regard for him: how could I then dissuade him from putting it to the proof, unless I had doubted your word, madam? an insult you could never have pardoned.

Countess. What, you laugh at me too you vil-

lain! (*Exit Hov.*) Oh! I am ruined, derided, and betrayed!

[*Throws herself into a chair covering her face with her hand, while JEANETTA endeavours to comfort her.*]

Jean. Be not so cast down, my lady, there are more than one rich fool in the world, and you have a good knack at finding them out.

Countess. O, that I should have been so unguarded! That I should never have suspected!

Jean. Ay, with his vasht this, and his vasht that: it was, as he said, vasht comical that we did not.

Countess. Bring not his detested words again to my ears: I can't endure the sound of them.

Enter VALDEMERE.

Vald. Well, madam, you can answer my demands now, I hope: Hovelberg has been with you. Money, money, my dear mother! (*Holding out his hand*.) There is a fair broad palm to receive it; and here (*kissing her hand coaxingly*) is a sweet little hand to bestow it.

Countess (*pushing him away sternly*). Thy inconsiderate prodigality has been most disastrous. Hadst thou been less thoughtless, less profuse—a small portion of prudence and economy would have made us independent of every dotard's humour.

Vald. Notable virtues indeed, madam; but where was I to learn them, pray? Did you ever before recommend them to me, by either precept or example? Prudence! Economy! What has befallen you? I'm sure there is something wrong when such words come from your lips.—Ha! in tears, too! Hovelberg has brought no money then?

Countess. No, no, barbarian! He has ruined me. *Vald.* How so?

Countess. I cannot tell thee: it would suffocate me.

Jean. La, count! My lady may well call him barbarian. He brought the old baron with him to purchase the jewels, disguised like an Armenian Jew; and when bargaining with her for his own picture, my lady said something of the original not much to his liking, and so the old fool tore off his disguise, and bounced out of the room in a great passion.

Vald. By my faith, this is unlucky! I depended on touching five hundred louis d'ors immediately.

Countess. Thinking only of yourself still, when you may well guess how I am distressed.—I shall never again find such a liberal old dotard as he.

Vald. Yes, you will, mother: more readily than I shall find the five hundred louis.—I owe half that sum to Count Pugstoffs, for losses at the billiard table; all the velvet and embroidery, the defunct suits of two passing years, haunt me wherever I go, in the form of unmannerly tailors: and, besides all this, there is a sweet pretty Arabian in the

stables of Huckston, my jockey, that I am dying to be master of.—By my faith, it is very hard! Had you no suspicion? How came you to be so much off your guard?

Countess. I believe it was fated to be so, and therefore I was blinded for a moment. I dreamt last night that I had but one tooth in my head, and it dropped on the ground at my feet. This, it is said, betokens the loss of a friend by death, and I trembled for thee, my child; but now too surely, my dream is explained and accomplished.

Vald. And, methinks, you would have preferred the first interpretation.

Countess. Ah! ungrateful boy! You know too well how I have doated on you.

Vald. I do know too well: it has done me little good, I fear.

Countess. It has done me little good, I'm sure, since this is all the gratitude thou hast. I should never, but for thee, have become the flatterer of those I despise, to amass these odious jewels.

Vald. Ha! the jewels are still here then! I shall have my louis still. Thank you, dear mother, that you did not part with them, at least. (*Kissing her hand hastily, and running to the table.*) I'll soon dispose of them all.

Countess (running after him). No, no! not so fast, Valdemere: thou wilt not take them all. Haste thee, Jeanetta, and save some of them.

[*They all scramble round the table for the jewels, and the scene closes.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Scene before the gate of the castle. Enter NINA, who crosses the stage timidly, stopping once or twice, and then with hesitation giving a gentle knock at the gate. Enter porter from the gate, which he opens.

Port. (after waiting to hear her speak). What do you want, young woman? Did you only knock for amusement?

Nina. No, sir. Is Count Valdemere in the castle? I would speak with him, if he is at leisure.

Port. He is in the castle; but as to speaking with him, no man of less consequence than his valet can answer that question.

Enter LORIMORE, by the opposite side.

Here he is. You come opportunely, Mr. Lorimore; this young person would speak with your master.

Lor. (aside). O, Nina, I see. (*Aloud.*) How do you do, my pretty Nina? You can't speak with my master, indeed; but you may speak with the next most agreeable personage in these parts, my master's

man, as long as you please; and that, be assured, is a far better thing for your purpose, my princess.

Nina. Dare you insult me? You durst not once have done it.—I do not ask then to see him; but give him this letter.

Lor. (taking the letter). Do you wish this precious piece to be read, child, or to be burnt?

Nina. Why ask that? to be read, certainly.

Lor. I must not give it to the count, then, but keep it to myself: and if you'll just allow me to make the slight alteration of putting Lorimore the valet for Valdemere the master, as I read, it will be a very pretty, reasonable letter, and one that may advance your honour withal.

Nina. Audacious coxcomb! Give it me again. (*Snatches the letter from him, and turns away.*)

Lor. She is as proud as that little devil of a page, her brother.

Enter Page behind from the gate.

Page. The more devil he be, the fitter company for you. Whom spoke you to? (*Seeing NINA.*) Oh, oh! Is Nina here?—Nina, Nina! (*running after her.*)

Nina. (returning). My dear Theodore, is it thou? I did not ask for thee, lest thou shouldst chide me for coming to the castle.

Page. I won't chide, but I'm sorry to see thee here. Fie, woman! thou art the daughter of as brave an officer, though a poor one, as any in the service; art thou not ashamed to come, thus meanly, after a lover who despises thee?

Nina. He promised to marry me.

Page. He promised a fiddle-stick! Poor deluded simpleton!

Nina. Ah! dost thou chide me, boy as thou art?

Page. Who is there to chide thee now, when both our parents are dead? But as they would have done, so do I, sister; I chide thee, and love thee too.—Go now; return to the good woman from whose house thou hast stolen away, and I'll buy thee a new gown as soon as my quarter's salary is paid me.

Nina. Silly child, what care I for a new gown? But if thou hast any pity for me, give this letter to thy master.

Page. I will, I will: but go thy ways now; there is a gentleman coming. And do, dear Nina, return no more to the castle till I send thee word. Good be with thee, poor simpleton!

[*Exit NINA, and enter DARTZ by the opposite side.*]

Dartz. Is it thy sister thou hast parted from? I met her in the wood this morning: she need not avoid me now.

Page. Let her go, sir; the farther she is from the castle the better.

Dartz. Thou hast a letter in thy hand.

Page. Yes, sir.

Dartz. Which thou art to give to the count.

Page. No, sir; I'll see him choked first. (*Tearing the letter.*)

Dartz. Nay, see what it contains ere thou destroy it.

Page (*putting it together again and reading it*). Only upbraiding his unkindness, and stuff of that sort, with some nonsense about a dream she has had, which makes her afraid she shall never see him again.

Dartz. Let me look. (*After reading it*). This letter may be useful. Come with me, my little friend; and we'll devise a way of revenging thy sister on her cruel seducer.

Page. Will you? I'll worship you like a saint of the calendar, if you do this.

Dartz (*considering*). Is not your master somewhat superstitious?

Page. Marry is he! but mightily afraid to be thought so. He laughed at me,—when the bad fever prevailed,—for wearing a charm on my breast against infection! but the very next night when he went to bed, what should drop out, think you, as he opened his vest, but the very same charm, which he had procured immediately, and worn with such secrecy, that even valet Lorimore knew nothing of the matter.

Dartz. This is good; come with me, and I'll instruct thee what to do with thy letter. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

VALDEMERE's dressing-room. *Enter Page treading softly on tiptoe, and looking about the room.*

Page. Ay; the coast is clear, and the door of his chamber is ajar; now is my time. (*Pulling the torn letter from his pocket, and stamping on the floor as he raises his voice.*) There, cursed letter, I'll make an end of thee! Give thee to my master, indeed! I'll give thee to the devil first. (*Pretending to tear the letter and strew the pieces about, while VALDEMERE, looking from the door of his chamber, steals behind him, and seizes his hands with the remainder of the letter in them.*) Mercy on me! is it you, my lord?

Vald. What art thou doing? What scares thee so? What letter is this? Let me see it.

Page. O no, my lord! I beseech you, for your own sake, don't read it.

Vald. Why should not I read it, boy?

Page. I don't know! you may not mind it, perhaps; but were any body to send such a letter to me, I should be mainly terrified. To be sure, death comes, as they say, at his own time, and we can't keep him away, though we should hang ourselves; but one don't like to be told beforehand the very year or day we are to die, neither.

Vald. The year and day! give me the letter: give it me immediately. (*Snatching the fragments of the letter from him, and picking up a piece or two*

from the floor, which he puts together hastily on a table near the front of the stage.) I can't make it piece any way.

Page. So much the better, my lord: don't try to do it.

Vald. It is Nina's hand, I see, but I can make no sense of it.—Ay, now it will do (*reading*). "I have been terrified with a dream, and fear I shall see you no more." But where is the dream? it is torn off; give it me.

Page. I have it not.

Vald. Thou liest! give it me, I say.

Page. Lud have mercy! as I tore it off just now, your black spaniel ran away with it.

Vald. No, varlet! that is a sham; go find it; thou knowest where it is well enough.

Page. Indeed, my lord, if it be not in the black spaniel's custody, it is nowhere else that I know of.

Vald. (*reading again*). "I fear I shall see you no more!" But it may be her own death as well as mine that her dream has foretold; and therefore she may see me no more.

Page. Very true, you had better think so; though it does not often happen that a woman is killed at a siege.

Vald. At a siege!

Page. Pest take this hasty tongue of mine; I could bite it off for the tricks it plays me.

Vald. At a siege!

Page. O, never mind it, sir. It may be some lie after all: some wicked invention to make you afraid.

Vald. (*sternly*). What sayst thou?

Page. O no, I don't mean afraid; only uneasy as it were:—no, no! not uneasy neither; only somewhat as you feel at present, my lord; you know best what to call it.

Vald. At a siege!

Page. Dear my lord, those words are glued to your tongue.

Vald. (*not heeding him*). My grandfather perished at a siege, and his grandfather also: is this fate decreed in our family for alternate generations? (*Sinks into a chair by the table, and page, seeing him so much absorbed, comes close to him, staring curiously in his face.*)

Vald. Take thy varlet's face out of my sight; why art thou so near me? Leave the room, I say.

[*Exit page.*]

[*Rising, and pacing to and fro as he speaks to himself.*]

A hundred dreams prove false for one that prefigures any real event.—It should not have been, however: my mother should have found for me some other occupation than a military life.—Quit it? No, I can't do that: the world would cry out upon me; Livia would despise me.—'Tis a strange thing that women, who can't fight themselves, should so eagerly push us to the work.—Pooh! am

I a fool that it seizes me thus?—I would this boy, however, had really destroyed the letter.

Enter DARTZ, looking at VALD. some time before he speaks.

Dartz (aside). This will do; it is working with him. (*Aloud, advancing.*) My dear count—but don't start, I bring no bad tidings; I come to beg a favour of you.

Vald. (recovering himself). Say you are come to oblige me.

Dartz. I thank you, Valdemere; but faith I'm ashamed to mention it; you will laugh at me for being so superstitious.

Vald. Ha! somebody has been dreaming about you too.

Dartz. Should you deem me very credulous if a thing of this nature had power to disturb me?

Vald. 'Tis even so; they have been dreaming all over the house. Ha, ha, ha! And thou art really uneasy about such flummery as this: ha, ha, ha! ha, ha, ha! this is admirable! delightful!—ha, ha, ha, ha!

Dartz. Be more moderate with your merriment: your tears and your laughter come so strangely together, one would take you for an hysterical girl.

Vald. I can't choose but laugh at your dreamers; ha, ha, ha!

Dartz. Don't laugh at me then; for I am neither a dreamer, nor believer in dreams.

Vald. (becoming serious at once). No! what is it then?

Dartz. I'm almost ashamed to tell you, yet I'll throw myself on your mercy and do it. I am in love then, and fearful of the fortunes of war; for you know we must expect sharp fighting this ensuing campaign.

Vald. (ruefully). You think so?

Dartz. I am certain of it. Now, though I have no faith in dreams, I must own I have some in fortune-tellers; and there is a famous one just come to the castle, whom I would gladly consult. Will you permit me to bring him to your inner apartment there, that he may tell me of my future destiny whatever his art may reveal to him? Laugh as you please, but refuse me not this favour, for there is no other room in the castle where I can meet him secure from interruption.

Vald. (smiling affectedly). And thou art really in earnest with this folly?

Dartz. When you have heard the wonderful things this wizard has foretold, you will not call it folly.

Vald. Canst thou tell me any of them?

Dartz. Take a turn with me on the terrace, and thou shalt hear things that will astonish thee.

Vald. Ha, ha! it is whimsical to see thee so serious. Such stories are pleasant amusement: I'll attend thee most willingly. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A small room in VALDEMERE'S apartments. BARON BAURCHEL is discovered in the disguise of a fortune-teller, with DARTZ standing by him, adjusting part of his dress.

Dartz. 'Twill do well enough. Stand majestically by this great chair, with your worsted robe thrown over the arm of it; it will spread out your figure and make it more imposing.—Bravo! you assume the astrological dignity to admiration; the rolling of your eyes under that black hood almost appals me. Be as good an astrologer as you have been an Armenian Jew, baron, and we shall be triumphant.

Bar. As good, Dartz! if I am not a dolt, I shall be better; for there is no danger of losing my temper now; and being fairly engaged in it, methinks I could assume as many shapes as Proteus, to be revenged on this false hyena and her detestable cub.

Dartz. Ay, that is your true spirit. But I must leave you now, and wait in the ante-room for the count, who will be here presently. [*Exit.*

Bar. (after musing some time). Superlative baseness and ingratitude! That sonnet, of all the sonnets I ever wrote, is the most exquisitely feeling and tender. When I read it to her, she wept. Were her tears feigned? I can't believe it. Assassins will weep at a high-wrought scene of tragedy and cut the author's throat when it is over.—Even so: it suited her purposes better to laugh at my verses, than acknowledge their genuine effect; and so, forgetting every kindness she owed me—O, the detestable worldling! I'll—hush, hush, hush! they are coming.

Re-enter DARTZ, followed by VALDEMERE, who walks shrinkingly behind, peeping past his shoulder to the Baron, who slightly inclines his body, putting his hand with great solemnity three times to his forehead.

Dartz (aside to VALD. after a pause). Faith, Valdemere, I dare scarcely speak to him; 'tis well you are with me; will you speak to him?

Vald. No, 'tis your own affair; stand to it yourself.

Dartz (aloud). Learned and gifted mortal, we come to thee—

Vald. (aside, joggng his arm). Don't say *we*; 'tis your own affair entirely.

Dartz. Well, I should say, gifted sage, not *we*, but I come to thee, to know what fortune is abiding me in this up-and-down world. I am a lover and a soldier, and liable, as both, to great vicissitudes.

Bar. Thou sayst truly, my son; and who is this

young man, so much wiser than thyself, who does not desire to look into futurity?

Dartz. It is my friend.

Bar. (after examining the faces of both for some time). Say more than friend.

Dartz. How so?

Bar. (still continuing to gaze alternately at them). 'Tis very wonderful! in all the years of my occult experience, I never met the like before, but once.

Vald. (aside to DARTZ). What does he mean? Ask him, man.

Dartz. You never met the like but once! What mean you, father?

Bar. (answers not, but continues to look at them, while VALD., unable to bear it longer, shrinks again behind DARTZ). Shrink not back, young man; my eyes make not the fate they see, and cannot do you harm.—'Tis wonderful! there is not in your two faces one trait of resemblance, yet your fortunes in the self-same mould are cast: ye are in fate twin-brothers.

Dartz. Indeed! then my friend need only listen to my fortune, and he'll have his own into the bargain.

Bar. Nay, nay, my sons, be advised, and inquire not into futurity. They are the happiest men who have fewest dealings with such miserable beings as myself—beings who are compelled to know the impending evils of hapless humanity, without the power of averting them. Be advised, and suppress unprofitable curiosity.

Dartz. By my fay, sage, I cannot suppress it.

Bar. Then let your friend go. He is wise enough not to wish to know his future fate, and I have already said you are in this twin-brothers.

Dartz. Retire then, Valdemere.

Vald. (agitated and irresolute). I had better, perhaps.—Yet there is within me a strange and perverse craving—I will retire (going to the door and stopping short).—Live in fearful ignorance, fancying evils that may never be! 'twere better to know all at once. (Returning.) Is it our general fortunes, only, or is there some particular circumstance of our fate, now present to your mind, of which you advise us to be ignorant?

Bar. There is——

Vald. (pulling DARTZ by the arm). Come away, come away; don't hear it.

Dartz. I am bound by some spell; I must stay to hear it.

Vald. I am certainly bound also; I know not how it is; I must hear it too.

Bar. Be it as you will. (After writing characters on a table, with other mummeries.) Propose your questions.

Dartz. The name, age, and quality of her who is my love! (*Baron writes again.*) The initials of her name, I protest; and her age to a day, nineteen years and a half! And her quality, good father?

Bar. Only daughter and heiress of an eminent Dutch butter dealer.

Dartz. Nay, you are scarcely right there, sage; you might at least have called him Burgomaster; but let it pass. She loves me, I hope? (*Baron nods.*) I knew it. And now let me know if she shall ever be my wife, and how many children we shall have?

Vald. (aside to DARTZ). Dence take wife and children too! what is all this drivelling for?

Dartz. (aside to him). I thought you were in love as well as myself.

Vald. So I am; but be satisfied that she loves you, and pass on to things of deeper import.

Dartz. (aside). Can any thing be of deeper import? (*Aloud.*) I should like very well, gifted father, to have two or three black-haired burly knaves, and a little fair damsel, to play with.

Vald. (aside to DARTZ). Would they were all drowned in a horse-pond! Look how ruefully the sage shakes his head at thee: wife or children thou wilt never have.

Dartz. Shall I never be married, father? what shall prevent it?

Bar. Death.

Dartz. Shall I lose her? (*Turning to VALD.*) Do you not tremble for Livia?

Vald. Is it her death? Did he say so? Ask him.

Bar. Death will prevent it. Let me leave you.

Vald. (seizing the baron's robe). Whose death? Whose death? Is it only the lady's?

Bar. Nay, do not detain me. There is a deep depression on my mind. Good night to you! I'll tell you the remainder when you are better prepared to hear it.

Dartz. No, no! the present time is the best.

Vald. (in a feeble voice). You had better let him go.

Dartz. (catching hold of the baron). You must not leave us in this tremendous uncertainty. Whose death shall prevent my marriage?

Bar. Let me examine then. Stretch out your hand. (*DARTZ holds out his hand, and VALD. involuntarily does the same, but draws it back again as baron begins to inspect it.*) Nay, don't draw back your hand: I must examine both palms to see if the line of death be there.

Dartz. The line of death must be on every man's hand.

Bar. But if it be early or impending death, the waving of the shroud will lie across it. (*VALD. shudders and turns away his head, and the baron, after looking at both their hands, starts back from them, and shakes his head piteously.*)

Dartz. What is the matter, father? What is the matter?

Bar. Ask not; I will not tell what I know; nothing shall compel me. [*Exit hastily.*]

Vald. (turning round). Is he gone? Went he by the door?

Dartz. What way he went I know not. He has vanished I believe: did you hear his steps on the floor?

Vald. I heard nothing.

Dartz (after a short pause). How do you feel, count?

Vald. Ha! do you feel it too?

Dartz. Feel what?

Vald. As if a cold shroud were drawn over you.

Dartz. Ay, so I think I do.—But never mind it: we may still have some good months or weeks before us; let us go to the banquet and put a merry face upon it: a cup of wine will warm us again. What though my grandam dreamt at my birth that I should be slain in a breach, and the weird witch of Croningberg confirmed it; I'll live and be merry while I may.

Vald. Ha! and thy grandam had such a dream!

Dartz. Never mind it: a cup of wine will soon cheer us again.

Vald. Would to heaven I had one now!

Dartz. You have no time to take wine at present: I hear a bustle below: they are going to the grotto already.—Who's at the door? (*Opens the door.*) Your valet with your new suit for the banquet. I'll leave you then. (*Exit DARTZ, and enter LORIMORE with a suit of clothes over his arm, followed by page.*)

Lor. I have waited this half hour, my lord, to hear your bell, and the ladies are waiting for you to go to the grotto. Look at this coat, my lord: the fashion of it is exquisite, and it has such an air with it; there is not, besides yourself, a man in the empire that would know how to wear it.

Page. His consummate valet excepted.

Lor. Hold your peace, sirrah.—Look here, my lord; if I had not myself given the tailor a few hints, he could never have had genius enough to finish it in this style. I'd give a ducat that the Marquis de Florimel's valet could see it. He pretends—But you don't look at it, my lord: what is the matter with you?

Vald. (eagerly). Is any thing the matter?

Lor. Nothing, my lord; but the ladies are waiting for you to go with them to the grotto: won't you be pleased to put on your new coat.

Vald. Put it on then. (*Stretching out his arms to put on the coat.*)

Lor. But we must first take off the old coat.

Vald. I forgot that. (*Trying to pull off his coat.*) It sticks strangely to me: doff it if thou canst.

Lor. (after pulling off his coat). Now, my lord, thrust your arm into this beautiful sleeve; the whole beau monde of Paris can't show you its fellow.—That is the wrong arm, my lord.

Vald. It will do; it will do.

Lor. Pardon me, my lord, your left arm won't do for the right sleeve of the coat.

Vald. (holding out his other arm and fumbling some time.) There is no hole at all to put my arm into.

Lor. Nay, you push your hand past it; here, here.

Vald. Where, sayst thou? 'Tis mightily perplexed.

Page (aside to himself). Either the coat or the coat's master is perplexed enough. (*Aloud, offering him his hat.*) You won't go, my lord, without your new hat and plume?

Vald. Plume?

Page. Yes, my lord, and it will wave so handsomely too, for the company walk by torchlight in procession.

Vald. Let them move on, and I'll follow.

Page. No, they can't go without you, my lord.

Vald. How is it? Am I one of the pall-bearers?

Page. It is not a funeral, my lord.

Vald. I forgot; the chillness of the night has bewildered me.

Lor. You are not well, my lord; what is the matter with you?

Vald. Nothing; leave me alone for a little.

Lor. Will you not join the company? The procession is prepared to set out.

Vald. Ay, very true; tell me when they move the body, and I'll follow it.

Page. He, he, he! a funeral again.

Lor. Unmannerly imp; what art thou snickering at? (*To VALD. in a loud distinct voice.*) It is not a funeral, my lord. The lady Livia, and the countess your mother, are going to the grotto, and are waiting impatiently below till you join them.

Vald. (rubbing his forehead). It is so: how went it out of my head? That wine after dinner must have fuddled me. I'll join them immediately.

Lor. Lean on me, my lord; you are not well, I fear.

Vald. No, no; the fumes of that diabolical champagne have left my head now.

Lor. It must have been mixed with some black drug, I think, to produce such a sombre intoxication.

Page. It may rest in the cellar long enough for me; I'll none on't.

Lor. Peace, young sir; and go before with one of these lights. [*Exeunt, page lighting them.*]

SCENE II.

An arched grotto, the roof and sides of which are crusted over with shells and corals, &c.; a banquet set out, ornamented with lamps and festoons of flowers. Enter countess, led in by DARTZ, and LIVIA by VALDEMERE, two other ladies by the Baron and WALTER BAURCHEL, page and attendants following.

Liv. Welcome all to my sea-nymph's hall; and do me the honour to place yourselves at table, as

best pleases your fancy, without ceremony. If you hear any sound without, 'tis but the rolling of forty fathom water over-head; and nothing can intrude on our merriment, but a whale, or a mermaid, or a dolphin.

Walt. This same sea-nymph must have an ingenious art of cultivating roses in the bottom of the ocean.

Livia. It must be a perfect contrivance indeed that escapes the correct taste of Mr. Walter Baurchel. Fruit and ices perhaps may likewise be an incongruity: shall I order them away, and feast you on salt water and limpets?

Bar. Ay, pickle him up with brine in a corner by himself, for he has a secret sympathy with every thing uncherishing and pungent.

Livia. Do me the honour to take your places. I can pretty well divine which of the ladies will be your charge, gentle baron.—But how is this? The countess and you exchange strange looks, methinks, as if you did not know one another.

Bar. Some people exchange strange looks, fair Livia, from the opposite cause.

Livia. I don't comprehend you: should you have preferred being in masks? That indeed would have been a less common amusement.

Bar. By no means, madam; the countess and I meeting one another unmasked is a very uncommon one.

Countess. You know best, baron, as far as you are yourself concerned: you always appeared to me a good and amiable man, and a most tender and elegant poet.

Bar. Of which, madam, you always took great care to inform me, as a sincere and disinterested friend.

Livia. Ha! what is all this? Pooh, pooh, take your places together as usual: a love-quarrel never mars merry-making.

Walt. Yes, tender doves! let them smooth down their ruffled feathers by one another as sweetly as they can. Why should you, madam, give yourself any uneasiness about it?—But the count, methinks, is less sprightly than usual: there are no more love-quarrels, I hope, in the party.

Livia (looking at *VALD.*). Indeed you are very silent: I have been too much occupied to observe it before. You don't like my grotto, I fear.

Vald. Pardon me; I like it very well; I like it very much.

Livia. But this is not your usual manner of expressing approbation.

Vald. Is it not? you do me honour to remember it. (Speaking confusedly as the company sit down to table.) My spirits are very—that is to say, not altogether, but considerably—

Dartz. Low, Valdemere?

Vald. (snatching up a glass, and filling a bumper of wine, which he swallows hastily). No, Dartz;

light as a feather. My tongue was so confoundedly parched: this wine is excellent. (*Drinking another bumper.*) There is more beauty in these decorations than I was aware of: the effect, the taste is incomparable. (*Drinks again.*) It is truly exquisite.

Walt. The champagne you mean, count? I should have guessed as much.

Vald. No, no; the decorations.—Is it champagne? Let me judge of its flavour more considerately. (*Drinks again.*) Upon honour it is fit for the table of a god. But our hostess is a divinity, and 'tis nectar we quaff at her board.—Wine! common earthly wine! I'll thrust any man through with my rapier that says it is but wine.

Bar. Keep your courage for a better cause, count. Report says the enemy are near us, and you may soon have the honour to exert it in defence of your divinity.

Walt. Which will be a sacred war, you know, and will entitle you perhaps to the glory of martyrdom.

Vald. The enemy?

Walt. Ay, report says they are near us.

Vald. Be it so: I shall be prepared for them.

[*Drinks again.*]

Dartz (aside to *WALT.*). By my faith, he will be prepared for them, for he'll fill himself mortal drunk, and frustrate our project entirely. (*Aside to page.*) Go, boy, and bid them make haste: thou understandest me?

Page (aside). Trust me for that: the Philistines shall be upon him immediately.

Countess. Valdemere is immeasurably fond of war and of military glory, which the tenderness of a too fearful mother has hitherto with difficulty restrained; and in your cause, charming Livia, he will be enthusiastically devoted.

Livia. I claim him then as my knight, when'er I stand in need of his valorous arms; though it may, perhaps, prove but a troublesome honour.

Vald. It is an honour I would purchase—ay purchase with a thousand lives—I say it, divine Livia, with a thousand lives.—Life!—life!—What is it but the breath of a moment: I scorn it. (*Getting up from table, and reeling about.*) The enemy, did they say? Let a host of them come: this sword shall devour every mother's son of them.—I'm prepared for them all.

Bar. (aside to *DARTZ.*) He is too well prepared; we were foolish to let him drink so much.

Countess (aside to *VALD.*). Be seated again, you disturb the company.

Vald. (still reeling about). Ay, divine Livia; but the breath of a moment; I scorn it.

[*An alarm without: re-enter page, as if much frightened.*]

Page. O, my Lady Livia! O my master! O gentles all! a party of the enemy is coming to attack the castle, and they'll murder every soul of us.

Vald. Speak plainer, wretch; what saidst thou?

Page (*speaking loud in his ear*). The enemy are coming to attack the castle.

Vald. Thou liest.

Page. I wish I did; but he will confirm my words.

[*Pointing to a servant, who now enters in alarm.*

Scr. v. (*to VALD.*) He speaks truth, my lord! they are approaching in great strength.

Vald. Approaching! are they near us then?

Page. Ay, marry too near! They beat no drum, as you may guess; but the heavy sound of their march strikes from the hollow ground most fearfully.

[*VALDEMERE becoming perfectly sober, stands confounded.*

Livia (*and the ladies, much alarmed*). What shall we do? What will become of us?

Dartz. Have courage, madam; have courage, ladies; the valiant Valdemere is your defender; you have nothing to fear.

Livia (*and ladies, crowding close to VALD.*). Ay, dear count; our safety depends on you. Save us! Save us! We have no refuge but you. (*All clamouring at once.*)

Vald. Hush, hush, hush! They'll hear you. (*In a low choked voice.*)

Dartz. Nay, don't whisper, Valdemere; they are not so near us yet.

Bar. Rouse you, count, and give your orders for the defence of the castle immediately.

Dartz. We are ready to execute them, be they ever so daring.

Walt. There is no time to be lost; your orders, count: do you comprehend us?

Vald. My orders!

Dartz. Your orders quickly.

Vald. I am thinking—I was thinking—

Page (*aside*). How to save yourself, I believe.

Bar. Well, noble count, what are your thoughts?

Vald. I—I—I am considering—

Walt. Thought and consideration become a good commander, with some spice of activity into the bargain.

Dartz. There is no time to deliberate; issue your orders immediately. Under such an able commander we may stand a siege of some days.

Vald. A siege!—Ay, the very thing—and so suddenly!

Page. You tremble, my lord; shall I bring you drops?

Countess. Thou liest, boy; get thee gone! (*Aside to VALD.*) Are you beside yourself? Tell them what to do; they wait for your orders.

Vald. I order them all to the walls. Haste, haste (*pushing off the ladies who stand next him*), and man them as well as you can.

Bar. Woman them, you mean, Valdemere; these are ladies you push.

Countess. Nay; you crowd upon him too much

—you confuse him: he is as brave as his sword, if you would leave off confounding him so.

Livia. Dear Valdemere! What is the matter? Rouse yourself, rouse yourself! (*A great alarm without.*) Hear that sound: they are at hand; what shall we do? There is a vault by the side of this grotto, where we poor miserable women may be concealed, but—

Vald. (*eagerly*). Where is it? My duty is to take care of you, dear Livia: come, come with me, and I'll place you in security. (*Catches hold of the page in his hurry, and runs off with him.*)

Countess. Stop, stop! that is the page you have taken. Will you leave me behind you?

[*As VALD. is about to drag the page into a recess at the side of the stage, the boy laughs outright, and he discovers his mistake.*

Vald. Off, wretch! Where is Livia? Come, come, my life! where are you? (*Stretching out one hand to her, while his body bends eagerly the other way.*)

Livia. No, count; I will not go. Alarm overcame me for the moment; but now I will enter the castle; and if the enemy should take it, they shall find me there in a situation becoming its mistress.

Omnes. Bravely said, lady! Let us all to the castle.

Dartz. With or without a commander, we'll defend it to the last extremity.

Countess (*going to VALD. and speaking in his ear, while she pulls him along with her*). Come with the rest, or be disgraced for ever. Did I put a sword by your side, a cockade in your hat, for this?

[*A still louder alarm without, and Exeunt in great hurry and confusion.*

SCENE III.

A grove by the castle; the scene darkened, and moving lights seen through the trees from the castle, sometimes gleaming from the battlements and sometimes from the windows. Enter NINA, with a peasant's surtout over her dress.

Nina. O, if in this disguise I could but enter the castle! Alas! the company are gone in, and the gate is now shut. I'll wait here till day-break.—Woe is me! He passed by me quickly, and heard me not when I spoke to him.—O mercy! Soldiers coming here! (*Hides herself amongst some bushes.*)

Enter BOUNCE, followed by Soldiers.

Bounce. Come, let us hector it here awhile: I'll warrant ye we make a noise that might do for the siege of Troy.

1st sold. Ay, you're a book-learned man, corporal: you're always talking of that there siege. Could they throw a bomb in those days, or fire off an eighteen-pounder any better than ourselves?

[*Firing heard without.*

Bounce. Hark! our comrades are at it on the other side: let us to it here at the same time. I'll warrant ye we'll make the fair lady within, and my lady's fair gentlewomen, and the village curé himself, should he be of the party, cast up their eyes like boiled fish, and say ten pater-nosters in a breath. (*Voices without.*) Hallo! hallo! comrades! Who goes there?

Enter 2d Soldier and others.

2d sold. What makes you so quiet, an' be hanged to you! An old woman with her spinning-wheel might be stationed here to as much purpose. I could not tell where to find you.

Bounce. By my faith, 'tis the first time Corporal Bounce was ever accused of not making noise enough. Come; we'll give you a round shall make the whole principality tremble.

[*They prepare to fire, when the 3d soldier enters in haste.*

3d sold. Hold, there! Spare your powder for better purpose: an advanced corps of the enemy is coming in good earnest, and marching in haste to the castle.

Bounce. So, we're to have real fighting then! Faith, comrade, valiant as I am, a little sham thunder, and a good supper after it, would have pleased my humour full as well at this present time. Pest take it! They must open the gates and let us in. What gentlemen are in the castle? We have no officer to command us.

3d sold. The Chevalier Dartz is there, and Count Valdemere.

Bounce. Ah! he's but a craven-bird, that same count: a kind of Free-mason-soldier, for parades and processions, and the like. If the young baron de Bertrand were there, we should be nobly commanded.

3d sold. Don't stand prating here; let us give the alarm to the rest of our comrades, and get into the castle ere the enemy come up with us.

Bounce. Come, then! But what moves among the bushes? (*Pulling out NINA.*) A girl, i' faith, disguised in a countryman's surtout.

Nin. O dear—O mercy! Don't be angry with me: I'm a poor harmless creature.

Bounce. Blessings on thee, pretty one! thou'rt harmless enough: don't think we're afraid of thee. Come away with us: we'll lodge thee safely in the castle. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A hall in the castle. Enter LIVIA and the Baron, talking as they enter.

Liv. Yes, baron; you and your friends have, by this plot of yours, taught me a severe lesson; and I thank you for it, though my own understanding ought to have made it unnecessary.

Bar. Dear Livia; why should a young woman like you be so much affronted at finding her understanding—for you are mighty fond of that word *understanding*—not quite infallible? At the age of sixty-three, an age I shall henceforth honestly own I have attained, one is not surprised at some small deficiencies even in one's own understanding. One can then, as I shall henceforth do, give up the vanity of being a wise man.

Livia. And a poet, too, baron? That were too much to give up in one day.

Bar. Posterity will settle that point, madam, and I shall give myself very little concern about the matter.

Livia. Which one can easily perceive is perfectly indifferent to you. (*Noise without.*) What increased noise is that? Since your poor victim is already sacrificed (for they tell me he is gone, on pretence of violent illness, to the vaults under the castle), why continue this mock-war any longer?

Enter Servant.

Bar. By this man's looks one might suppose that our mockery had turned to earnest.

Livia (to serv.). What is the matter?

Serv. A party of the real enemy, madam, has come to attack the castle, and is now fighting with the chevalier's men at the gate.

Livia. Why did you not open the gate to receive the chevalier's men?

Serv. They called to us to get in; but we could not distinguish them from the enemy, who were close on their heels; so we let down the portcullis, an' please you, and they must fight it out under the walls as they can.

Bar. Is the chevalier in the castle?

Serv. O no, sir! he sallied out by the postern with Mr. Walter Burchel and some of the domestics, and is fighting with them like a devil. But his numbers are so small, we fear he must be beaten; and—

Livia. And how can we hold out with neither men, ammunition, nor provisions. Merciful heaven, deliver us!

Enter Maid-Servants, wringing their hands.

Maid. O dear, dear! What will become of us? What will become of us? What shall we do?

Bar. Any thing you please but stun us with such frantic clamour. Get off to your laundries and your store-rooms, and your dressing-closets, and don't increase the confusion here.

[*Exeunt maids, clamouring and wringing their hands.*]

Livia. You are rough with those poor creatures; they are very much frightened.

Bar. Not half so frightened as those who make less noise. They think it necessary to raise an outcry, because they are women, and it is expected from them. I have been long enough duped in this way: I have no patience with it now.—But I must go to the walls and try to be of use (*going*).

(*Voice without.*) Succour! succour!

Livia. Ha! there is a welcome cry.

Enter JEANETTA.

Succour, did you say?

Jean. Yes, my lady: a band of men come to relieve us; and their leader is charging the enemy so furiously sword in hand! The chevalier, they said, fought like a devil; but he fights like forty devils. We have been looking down upon them by torch-light from the walls; and their swords flash, and their plumes nod, and their eyes glare in the light so gallantly, I could almost sally out myself and take a bout with them.

Bar. (to *JEAN.*) Ay, minx; thou'rt forward enough to do any thing.

Livia. Nay, chide her not when she brings us good news.—Heaven be praised for this timely aid! What brave man has brought it to us? Dost thou know him, Jeanetta?

Jean. No, madam: for, thank heaven! his back is to us, and his face to the foe; but there is a smack in his air of the Baron de Bertrand.

Bar. Ha! my brave Antonio! I'll be sworn it is he. Come; let us to the ramparts, and look down on the combatants.

Livia. Heaven grant there be not much bloodshed! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A dark vault. Enter VALDEMERE, followed by Page, carrying a torch in one hand, and his plumed cap in the other.

Vald. (after hurrying some paces onward, stops short, and looks wildly round him). Is there no passage this way?

Page. No, my lord; but you run marvellously fast for one so ill as you are: I could scarcely keep up with you: pray stop here awhile and take breath.

Vald. Stop here, and that sound still behind me!

Page. What sound?

Vald. Didst thou not hear the tread of heavy steps behind us? The trampling of a whole band?

Page. It was but the sound of my feet following you.

Vald. Only that! The castle is taken, thou sayst, and the ruffians are in quest of me.

Page. Ay, marry are they! Their savage leader says, as the old tale book has it, that he'll have the heart's blood of Count Valdemere on his sword before he eat or sleep.

Vald. His sword!

Page. Ay, my lord, a good heavy rapier, I assure you; and he swears, since you have not fought like a man on the walls, he'll kill you like a rat in your hole.

Vald. I am horribly beset!

Page. Ay, half work, my lord; the big drops fall from your forehead, like a thunder shower.

Vald. Thou liest; I am cold as the damp of a sepulchre.

Page. And pale too, as the thing that lies within it.

Vald. (listening). Hark, hark! they are coming.

Page. I hear nothing.

Vald. Thou dost! thou dost! lying varlet with that treacherous leer upon thy face: thou hast deceived me here for destruction. (*Catching him by the throat.*)

Page. For mercy, my lord, let go your hold! I hear nothing, as I hope to be saved, but our own voices sounding again from the vaulted roof over our heads.

Vald. Ay, it is vaulted; thou'rt right perhaps.—This strange ringing in my ears will not suffer me to know the sounds that really are, from those that are not.—Why dost thou grin so? I have a frenzy, I believe! I know I am strangely disordered. It was not so with me yesterday. I could then—Dost thou grin still? Stand some paces off: why art thou always so near me?

Page. (retiring to the opposite side of the stage). I had best, perhaps: his hand has the gripe of a madman.

Vald. (leans his back against the side-scene, pressing his temples tightly with both hands, and speaking low to himself) This horrible tumult of nature! it knows within itself the moments that precede its destruction.

Page. I must let him rest for a time. (*Pause.*)—It is cold here doing nothing. (*Puts on his cap.*)—He moves not: his eyes have a fixed ghastly stare; truly he is ill. (*Going up to him*). You are very ill, my lord.

Vald. (starting). Have mercy upon me!

Page. Don't start, my lord; it was I who spoke to you.

Vald. Who art thou?

Page. Your page, my lord.

Vald. Ha! only thou! thy stature seemed gigantic.

Page. This half-yard of plume in my cap, and your good fancy, have made it so.

Vald. Ay; thou wast unbonneted before. Keep by me then, but don't speak to me. (*Putting his hand again to his temples.*)

Page. Nay, I must ask what is the matter. You are very ill: what is the matter with you?

Vald. There is a beating within me like the pendulum of a great clock.

Page. Is it in your heart or your head, my lord?

Vald. Don't speak to me: it is every where.

Page. Rest here awhile; it will not discover you. You are indeed very ill.—Are you worse?

Vald. Speak not; my mouth is parched like a cinder; I can't answer thee.

Page. I'll fetch you some water. (*Going.*)

Vald. (*springing across the stage after him.*) Not for the universe.

Page (*aside*). He's strong enough still I see. (*Turning his ear to the entry of the vault.*)

Vald. Thou'rt listening; thou hear'st something.

Page. By my faith, they are coming now.

Vald. Merciful heaven! where shall I run?

Page. Where you please, my lord.

Vald. (*hurrying two or three steps on, in a kind of groping way.*) The light fails me: I don't see where I am going.

Page. Nay, it burns very clearly; I fear it will discover where we are.

Vald. Put it out! put it out, for heaven's sake!—Where is it? (*Seizes on the torch, puts it out, stamping on it with his feet, then laying himself on the floor.*) I am gone—I am dead; tell them so, for heaven's sake!

Page. I shall tell but half a lie when I do.

Enter Baron and WALTER BAURCHEL, with soldiers' cloaks thrown over them, and LIVIA in the same disguise with a military cap drawn over her eyes, a Servant preceding them with torches.

Livia (*shrinking back as she enters*). Is he dead?

[*Page nods, and winks to her significantly.*]

Bar. (*in a rough voice*). Has the caiffit escaped my sword? Have I thirsted for his blood in vain?

Walt. (*in a rough voice also*). Is he really dead? I'll lay my hand on his breast, and feel if his heart beats.

Page. O don't do that, gracious, merciful sir! You'll but defile your worshipful fingers in touching of a dead corse, which brings bad luck with it.

Walt. Well then, boy, I will not; but there are a couple of brawny knaves without, who are burying the dead for us; they shall come forthwith, and cast him into the pit with the rest.

Page. O no, sir! don't do that, please your worshipful goodness! What if he should come alive again?

Walt. Never fear that: I'll draw this rapier cross his laced cravat, and make it secure.

Vald. (*starting up upon his knees*). Mercy, mercy!

slay not a dying man; let me breathe my last breath without violence.

Livia (*covering her eyes and turning away her head*). Torment him no more, I beseech you!

Enter ANTONIO, and DARTZ with his arm bound up.

Ant. Nay, gentlemen, this is unfeeling, ungenerous, unmanly. Stand upon your feet, Count Valdemere (*raising him up*); there are none but friends near you, if friends they may be called, who have played you such an abominable trick.

Vald. How is this? Art thou Antonio? Where are those who would have butchered me?

Omnes (*LIVIA and ANT. excepted*). Ha, ha, ha! (*Laughing some time.*)

Bar. Nowhere, Valdemere, but in your own imagination. We have put this deceit upon you to cure you of arrogance and boasting.

Walt. Running the usual risk, gentle count, of not having our services very thankfully acknowledged.

Vald. You have laid a diabolical snare for me, and I have fallen into it most wretchedly.—I have been strangely overcome. I have been moved as with magic.—I have been—I—I know not—What shall I call it?

Walt. Give yourself no trouble about that, count, we can find a name for it.

Ant. Nay, good sir; you shall not call it by any name a man would be ashamed—(*correcting himself*) unwilling to hear. The count, as Dartz has informed me, while I bound up his wound above stairs, has been tampered with, by dreams and fortune-telling and other devices, in a way that might have overcome many a man, who, differently circumstanced, would not have shrunk from his duty in the field. And shall we sport wantonly with a weakness of our nature in some degree common to all? We admire a brave man for overcoming it, and should pity the less brave when it overcomes him.

Livia (*catching his hand eagerly*). Noble Antonio!

Ant. Young man, I thank you: this squeeze of the hand tells me I have you upon my side.

Vald. And let me also say, "Noble Antonio!"—And what more can I say? I have not deserved this generous treatment from you.

Ant. Say nothing more: the transactions of this night shall be as if they had never been: they will never be mentioned by any of us.

Walt. Speak for yourself, Antonio de Bertrand; my tongue is a free agent, and will not be bridled by another person's feelings. But there is one condition on which I consent to be silent as the grave; and the baron and chevalier concur with me.

Bar. and Dartz. We do so. [*Exit Bar.*]

Dartz. We but require of Valdemere to do what as a man of honour he is bound to do; and satisfied on this point, our silence is secured for ever.

Re-enter baron leading in NINA.

Bar. (to VALD.) Look on this fair gentlewoman : her father was a respectable officer, though misfortunes prevented his promotion. You have taken advantage of her situation, being under the protection of the countess your mother, as a god-daughter and distant relation, to use her most unworthily. Make her your wife, and receive, as her dowry, your reputation in the world untarnished.

Walt. Now, good, heroic, sentimental Antonio ; is this too much to require of the noble personage you plead for ?

Ant. On this I am compelled to be silent.

Bar. Will Count Valdemere vouchsafe us an answer ? Will you marry her or not, count ?

Vald. I have indeed — I ought in strict justice — She will not accept of one who has used her so unworthily.

Page (eagerly). I hope not ; I would rather than a thousand crowns she would refuse him.

Dartz. Will you have him or not, pretty Nina ? Don't be afraid to refuse him : we shan't think the worse of you if you do. (*NINA stands silent and weeping.*)

Page (aside to NINA). Don't have him, woman : he's a coward and a coxcomb, and a — don't have him.

Nina (aside). Ah, you have never loved him as I have done, brother.

Page (aloud). Murrain take thee and thy love too ! thou hast no more spirit in thee than a worm.

Bar. Bravo, boy ! thou hast enough of it, I see ; and I'll put a stand of colours into thy hand as soon as thou art strong enough to carry them. Thou art my boy now ; I will protect thee.

Page. I thank you, baron. — And my sister ; will you protect her too ?

Bar. Yes, child ; both of you.

Page. Refuse him then, Nina : hast thou no more pride about thee ?

Nina. Alas ! I should have more pride : I know I should ; but I have been sadly humbled.

Page. Thou'lt be still more so if thou art his wife, trust me ! for he'll despise thee, and cow thee, and make thee a poor slave to his will. Thou'lt tremble at every glance of his eye, and every turn of his humoursome fancy. — He'll treat thee like a very —

Vald. Stop, spiteful wretch ! I'll cherish and protect her, and turn every word thou hast uttered to a manifest and abominable falsehood — Give me thy hand, Nina ; thou really lovest me : no one will do it but thee ; and I sha'l have need of somebody to love me.

Omnes. Well said, count ! this is done like a man !

Ant. (to page). Faith, boy ! those sharp words of thine were worth a store of gentle persuasion. Thou hast woo'd for thy sister in a spell-like fashion as

witches say their prayers backwards. I wish somebody would court my mistress for me in the same manner : 'tis the only chance I have of winning her.

Livia (in a feigned voice). I'll do that for thee, gallant De Bertrand ; for I know faults enough of yours to acquaint her with, besides the greatest of all faults, concealing good talents *under a bushel* ; every tittle of which I will tell her forthwith, and she'll marry you, no doubt, out of spite.

Ant. Thanks, pleasant strippling ! May thy success be equal to thy zeal ! (*Taking her hand.*) Thy name, youth ? thou hast a pretty gait in that warlike cloak of thine, but thy cap overshadows thee perversely. — Ha ! this is not a boy's hand ! — That ring — O heavens !

[*Retires some paces back in confusion, while LIVIA, taking off her cap and cloak, makes him a profound courtesy ; and pauses, expecting him to speak. Finding him silent, she begins to rub her hand, and look at it affectedly.*]

Livia. It is not a boy's hand, Baron de Bertand ; 'tis the hand of a weak foolish woman, which shall be given to a lover of her's who is not much wiser than herself, whenever he has courage to ask it.

Walt. (aside, joggng ANT.) That is thyself : dost thou not apprehend her, man ?

Livia (still looking at her hand). Even so ; whenever he has courage to ask it. That, I suppose, may happen in about five or six years from this present time.

Ant. (running up to her, catching her hand, and putting his knee to the ground). Now, now, dear Livia ! O that I could utter what I feel ! — I am a fool still ; — I cannot.

Livia. Nothing you can possibly say will make me more sensible of your generous worth, or more ashamed of my former injustice to it.

[*All crowd round ANT. and LIVIA, to congratulate them, when the countess is heard speaking angrily without.*]

Dartz. We must pay our compliments another time ; I fear there is a storm ready to burst upon us.

Enter Countess.

Countess. Yes, gentlemen ; I have heard of your plot, as you call it ; a diabolical conspiracy for debasing the merit you envy. I despise you all : you are beneath my anger.

Walt. Let us escape it then.

Countess (to WALT). Ay, snarling cynic ! who hast always a prick of thy adder's tongue to bestow upon every one whom the world admires or caresses ; thou art the wicked mover of all these contrivances. (*To the baron.*) As for you, poor antiquated rhyme-maker ! had I but continued to praise your verses, you would have suffered me to ruin your whole kindred very quietly ; nor had one single grain of

compunction disturbed the sweet calm of your gratified vanity.

Bar. Nay, madam; I cannot charge my memory with any interruption of your goodness, in this respect, to my face: had you been as perseveringly obliging behind my back, we might indeed have remained longer friends than would have been entirely for the interest of my heir.

Countess. Well, well; may every urchin of the principality learn by rote some scrap of your poetry, and mouth it at you as often as you stir abroad. (*To LIVIA.*) And you, madam; you are here, too, amongst this worshipful divan! This is your hospitality—your delicacy—your—O! may you wed a tyrant for your pains, and these walls prove your odious prison!—But I spend my words vainly: where is the unhappy victim of your envious malevolence? They told me he was here. (*Discovering VALD. and NINA retired to the bottom of the stage.*) Ha! you *are* here, patiently enduring their triumph, degenerate boy! Is this the fruit of all my cares? Did I procure for you a military appointment, did I tease every creature connected with me for your promotion, did I ruin myself for your extravagant martial equipments—and has it all come to this?

Vald. You put me into the army, madam, to please your own vanity; and they who thrust their sons into it for that purpose, are not always gratified.

Countess. And you answer me thus! I have spoilt you, indeed; and an indulged child, I find, does not always prove a dutiful one. Who is that you hold by the hand?

Vald. My wife, madam.

Countess. Your wife! You do not say so: you dare not say so. Have they imposed a wife upon you also? Let go her unworthy hand.

Vald. No, madam; never. It is my hand that is unworthy to hold so much innocent affection.

Countess. You are distracted: let go her hand, or I renounce you for ever.—What, will you not?

Vald. I will not.

Countess. Thou canst be sturdy, I find, only for thine own ruin. They have confounded and bewildered thee: thou hast joined the conspiracy against thyself, and thy poor mother.—O, I could hate thee more than them all!—Heaven grant me patience!

Vald. I like to hear people pray for what they really want.

Countess. Insolent! Heaven grant you what you

need not pray for, the detestation of every one annoyed with your pestiferous society. [*Exit in rage.*]

Dartz. Let us be thankful this tornado is over, and the hurry of an eventful day and night so happily concluded.—I hope, charming Livia, you forgive our deceit, and regret not its consequences.

Livia. The only thing to be regretted, chevalier, is the wound you have received.

Dartz. Thank heaven! this, though but slight, is the only harm that has been done to-night, a broken pate or two excepted; and our feigned attack upon the castle has been providentially the means of defending it from a real one. Had not Antonio, however, who was not in our plot, come so opportunely to our aid, we had been beaten.—But now that I have time to inquire, how didst thou come so opportunely?

Ant. I have been in the habit of wandering after dark round the walls. Livia knows not how many nights I have watched the light gleaming from the window of her chamber. Wandering then, as usual, I discovered a corps of the enemy on their march to the castle, and went immediately for succour, which I fortunately found. We have both fought stoutly, my friend, with our little force; but the blows have fallen to your share, and the blessing to mine.

Dartz. Not so; friends keep not their shares so distinctly.

Livia. True, chevalier; and you claim, besides, whatever satisfaction you may have from the gratitude of this good company, for contriving a plot that has ended so fortunately.

Dartz. Nay, there is, I fear, one person in this good company, from whom my claims, of this kind, are but small.—Count Valdemere, can you forgive me?

Vald. Ask me not at present, Dartz. I know that my conduct to Antonio did deserve correction; but you have taken a revenge for him with merciless severity, which he would himself have been too generous, too noble, to have taken.

Dartz. Well, count, I confess I stand somewhat reproved and conscience-stricken before you.

Vald. (*to DARTZ.*) Why, truly, if he forgive thee, or any of us, by this day twelvemonth, it will be as much as we can reasonably expect.

Dartz. Be it so! And now we have all pardon to ask, where, I hope, it will be granted immediately.

[*Bowing to the audience.*]

THE BEACON:

A SERIOUS MUSICAL DRAMA, IN TWO ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

ULRICK, *lord of the island.*
 ERMINGARD.
 BASTIAN, *friend of ULRICK.*
 GARCIO, *friend of ERMINGARD.*
Page.
Pope's Legate.
Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.
 Fishermen, singers, attendants of the Legate, &c.

WOMEN.

AURORA.
 TERENTIA, *a noble lady, and governante to AURORA.*
 VIOLA, } *ladies attending on AURORA.*
 EDDA, }
Scene, a small island of the Mediterranean.
Time, towards the middle of the 14th century.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A grove adjoining to a castellated building, part of which only is seen. Several people are discovered near the window of one of its towers who begin to sing as the curtain draws up.

Song of several voices.

Up! quit thy bower, late wears the hour;
 Long have the rooks caw'd round thy tower;
 On flower and tree, loud hums the bee;
 The wilding kid sports merrily:
 A day so bright, so fresh, so clear,
 Shineth when good fortune's near.

Up! lady fair, and braid thy hair,
 And rouse thee in the breezy air;
 The lulling stream, that sooth'd thy dream,
 Is dancing in the sunny beam:
 And hours so sweet, so bright, so gay,
 Will waft good fortune on its way.

Up! time will tell; the friar's bell
 Its service sound hath chimed well;
 The aged crone keeps house alone,
 And reapers to the fields are gone;
 The active day, so boon and bright,
 May bring good fortune ere the night.

Enter Page.

Page. Leave off your morning songs, they come too late;

My lady hath been up these two good hours,
 And hath no heart to listen to your lays!
 You should have cheer'd her sooner.

1st sing. Her nightly vigils make the evening morn.

And thus we reckon'd time.

Page. Well, go ye now;
 Another day she'll hear your carols out.

[*Exeunt page and singers severally, by the bottom of the stage, while ULRICK and TERENTIA enter by the front, speaking as they enter.*

UL. Thou pleadst in vain: this night shall be the last.

Ter. Have patience, noble Ulrick; be assur'd,
 Hope, lacking nourishment, if left alone,
 Comes to a natural end. Then let Aurora,
 Night after night, upon the lofty cliff,
 Her beacon watch: despondency, ere long,
 Will steal upon the sad unvaried task.

Ul. Sad and unvaried! Ay; to sober minds
 So doth it seem indeed. I've seen a child,
 Day after day, to his dead hedgeling bring
 The wonted mess, prepared against its waking,
 'Till from its putrid breast each feather dropt:
 Or on the edge of a clear stream hold out
 His rod and baitless line from morn till noon,
 Eyeing the spotted trout, that past his snare
 A thousand times hath glided, till by force
 His angry dame hath dragg'd him from his station.
 Hope is of such a tough continuous nature,
 That, waiting thus its natural end, my life
 Shall to a close wear sadly. Patience, sayst thou!
 I have too long been patient.

Ter. Then be it known to thee, despondency
 Already steals upon her; for she sits not
 So oft as she was wont upon the beach,
 But in her chamber keeps in sombre silence;
 And when the night is come, less eagerly
 She now inquires if yet the beacon's light
 Peer down the woody pass, that to the cliff
 Nightly conducts her toilsome steps. I guess,
 Soon of her own accord she'll watch no more.

Ul. No, thou unwisely guessest. By that flame
 I do believe some spirit of the night
 Comes to her mystic call, and soothes her ear
 With whisper'd prophecies of good to come.

Ter. In truth, my lord, you do yourself talk strangely.

These are wild thoughts.

Ul. Nay, be thou well assur'd, Spell-bound she is : night hath become her day ; On all wild songs, and sounds, and ominous things (Shunning the sober intercourse of friends Such as affliction courts), her ear and fancy Do solely dwell. This visionary state Is foster'd by these nightly watchings ; therefore, I say again, I will no more endure it ; This night shall be the last. [tine

Ter. That Ermingard upon the plains of Pales-Fell on that fatal day, what sober mind Can truly doubt ; although his corpse, defaced, Or hid by other slain, was ne'er discover'd. For well I am assured, had he survived it, Knowing thou wert his rival, and Aurora Left in this isle, where thou bearest sov'reign sway, He, with a lover's speed, had hasten'd back. All, whom the havoc of the battle spared, Have to their homes return'd.—Thou shak'st thy head,

Thou dost not doubt ?

Ul. We'll speak of this no more. I'm sick and weary of these calculations. We must and will consider him as dead ; And let Aurora know —

Enter BASTIANI.

(*To BAST. angrily.*) Why, Bastiani, Intrud'st thou thus, regardless of my state : These petty cares are grown most irksome to me ; I cannot hear thee now.

Bast. Indeed, my lord, it is no petty care Compels me to intrude. Within your port A vessel from the Holy Land has moor'd.

Ul. (starting). Warriors from Palestine ?

Bast. No, good my lord ! The holy legate on his way to Rome ;

Who by late tempests driven on our coasts, Means here his shatter'd pinnace to reft, And give refreshment to his weary train.

Ul. In evil hour he comes to lord it here.

Bast. He doth appear a meek and peaceful man.

Ul. 'Tis seeming all. I would with mailed foes Far rather in th' embattled plain contend, Than strive with such my peaceful town within. Already landed, sayst thou ?

Bast. Yes, from the beach their grave procession comes.

Between our gazing sight and the bright deep That glows behind them in the western sun, Crosses and spears and croziers show aloft Their darken'd spikes, in most distinct confusion ; While grey-cowl'd monks, and purple-stoled priests, And crested chiefs, a closing group below, Motley and garish, yet right solemn too, Move slowly on. —

Ul. Then must I haste to meet them.

Bast. Or be most strangely wanting in respect. For every street and alley of your city Its eager swarm pours forth to gaze upon them : The very sick and dying, whose wan forms No more did think to meet the breath of heaven, Creep to their doors, and stretch their wither'd arms

To catch a benediction. Blushing maids, Made bold by inward sense of sanctity, Come forth with threaded rosaries in their hands To have them by the holy prelate bless'd ; And mothers hold their wond'ring infants up, That touch of passing cowl or sacred robe May bring them good. And in fair truth, my lord, Among the crowd the rev'rend legate seems Like a right noble and right gentle parent, Cheering a helpless race.

Ul. Ay, 'tis right plain thou art besotted too. Were he less gentle I should fear him less. [*Exit.*

Bast. He's in a blessed mood : what so disturbs him ?

Ter. What has disturb'd him long, as well thou knowest :

Aurora's persevering fond belief That her beloved Ermingard still lives, And will return again. To guide his bark Upon our dang'rous coast, she nightly kindles Her watch-fire, sitting by the lonely flame ; For so she promis'd, when he parted from her, To watch for his return.

Bast. Ulrick in wisdom should have married them

Before he went, for then the chance had been She had not watch'd so long. Your widow is a thing of more docility Than your lorn maiden. — Pardon, fair Terentia.

Ter. Thy tongue wags freely. Yet I must confess,

Had Ulrick done what thou callst wisely, he The very thing had done which as his kinsman He was in duty bound to. But, alas ! A wayward passion warp'd him from the right, And made him use his power ungenerously Their union to prevent.

Bast. But though the death of Ermingard were prov'd,

Thinkst thou Aurora would bestow her hand On one who has so long her wishes cross'd, A lover cloth'd in stern authority ?

Ter. I know not ; Ulrick fondly so believes ; And I, although allied to him by blood, The playmate also of his early days, Dare not an opposite opinion utter.

Bast. Hark there ! I hear without th' approaching crowd.

My duty on this public ceremony I must attend, for honour of the state.

In petty courts like this, on such occasions,
One spangled doublet more or less bears count.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

An arbour, supported by rustic wooden pillars, twined round with flowers and green plants, and a flower-garden seen in the background between the pillars.

Enter Page, followed by EDDA, speaking as she enters.

Edda. Yes, do so, boy; Aurora is at hand.—
But take with thee, beside, this little basket,
And gather roses in the farther thicket,
Close to the garden-gate.—

Page (*taking the basket*). Give it me then. She chid me yesterday

For gath'ring full-spread roses, whose loose leaves
Fell on her lap: to-day I'll fill my basket
With buds, and blossoms, and half open'd flowers,
Such as nice dames do in their kerchiefs place.

Edda. Prate less and move thee quicker. Get thee hence.

See there, thy mistress comes: haste to thy task.

[*Exit page.*]

Enter AURORA and TERENTIA.

Ter. Here you will find a more refreshing air;
The western sun beats fiercely.

Aur. Western sun!
Is time so far advanced? I left my couch
Scarcely an hour ago.

Ter. You are deceiv'd.
Three hours have past, but past by you unheeded;
Who have the while in silent stillness been,
Like one forlorn, that has no need of time.

Aur. In truth I now but little have to do
With time or any thing besides. It passes;
Hour follows hour; day follows day; and year,
If I so long shall last, will follow year:
Like drops that through the cavern'd hermit's roof
Some cold spring filters; glancing on his eye
At measur'd intervals, but moving not
His fix'd unvaried notice.

Edda. Nay, dearest lady, be not so depress'd.
You have not ask'd me for my song to-day—
The song you prais'd so much. Shall I not sing it?
I do but wait your bidding.

Aur. I thank thy kindness; sing it if thou wilt.

[*Sits down on a low seat, her head supported between both her hands, with her elbows resting on her knees.*]

SONG.

Where distant billows meet the sky,
A pale, dull light the seamen spy,
As spent they stand and tempest-tost,
Their vessel struck, their rudder lost;

While distant homes where kinsmen weep,
And graves full many a fathom deep,
By turns their fitful, gloomy thoughts pourtray:
" 'Tis some delusion of the sight,
Some northern streamer's paly light."
" Fools!" saith rous'd Hope with gen'rous scorn,
" It is the blessed peep of morn,
And aid and safety come when comes the day."
And so it is; the gradual shine
Spreads o'er heaven's verge its lengthen'd line:
Cloud after cloud begins to glow
And tint the changeful deep below;
Now sombre red, now amber bright,
Till upward breaks the blazing light;
Like floating fire the gleamy billows burn:
Far distant on the ruddy tide,
A black'ning sail is seen to glide;
Loud bursts their eager joyful cry,
Their hoisted signal waves on high,
And life, and strength, and happy thoughts return.

Ter. Is not her voice improv'd in power and
sweetness?

Edda. It is a cheering song.

Aur. It cheers those who are cheer'd.

[*After a pause.*]

Twelve years are past;
Their daughters matrons grown, their infants youths,
And they themselves with aged furrows mark'd;
But none of all their kin are yet return'd;
No, nor shall ever.

Ter. Still run thy thoughts upon those hapless
women

Of that small hamlet, whose advent'rous peasants
To Palestine with noble Baldwin went,
And ne'er were heard of more?

Aur. They perish'd there; and of their dismal
fate

No trace remain'd—none of them all return'd.
Didst thou not say so?—Husbands, lovers, friends,
Not one return'd again.

Ter. So I believe.

Aur. Thou but believest then?

Ter. As I was told—

Edda. Thou hast the story wrong.
Four years gone by, one did return again;
But marr'd, and maim'd, and chang'd—a woeful
man.

Aur. And what though every limb were hack'd
and maim'd,
And roughen'd o'er with scars?—he did return.

[*Rising lightly from her seat.*]

I would a pilgrimage to Iceland go,
To the antipodes or burning zone,
To see that man who did return again,
And her who did receive him.—Did receive him!
O what a moving thought lurks here!—How was't?
Tell it me all: and oh, another time,
Give me your tale ungarbled.—

Enter VIOLA.

Ha, Viola! 'tis my first sight of thee
Since our long vigil. Thou hast had, I hope,
A sound and kindly sleep.

Viola. Kindly enough, but somewhat cross'd with
dreams.

Aur. How cross'd? what was thy dream? O
tell it me!

I have an ear that craves for every thing
That hath the smallest sign or omen in it.
It was not sad?

Viola. Nay, rather strange; methought
A christ'ning feast within your bower was held;
But when the infant to the font was brought,
It prov'd a full-grown man in armour clad.

Aur. A full-grown man! (*Considering for a
moment, and then holding up her hands.*) O
blessing on thy dream!

From death to life restor'd is joyful birth.
It is, it is! come to my heart, sweet maid,

[*Embracing VIOLA.*
A blessing on thyself and on thy sleep!
I feel a kindling life within me stir,
That doth assure me it has shadow'd forth
A joy that soon shall be.

Ter. So may it prove!
But trust not such vain fancies, nor appear
Too much elated; for unhappy Ulrick
Swears that your beacon, after this night's watch,
Shall burn no more.

Aur. He does! then will we have
A noble fire. This night our lofty blaze
Shall through the darkness shoot full many a league
Its streamy rays, like to a bearded star
Preceding changeful—ay, and better times.
It may in very truth. O if his bark
(For many a bark within their widen'd reach
The dark seas traverse) should our light desery!
Should this be so—it may; perhaps it will.
O that it might!—We'll have a rousing blaze!
Give me your hands.

[*Taking VIOLA and TERENCE gaily by the
hands.*

So lightly bounds my heart,
I could like midnight goblins round the flame
Unruly orgies hold.—Ha! think ye not,
When to the font our mail-clad infant comes,
Ulrick will a right gracious gossip prove?

Viola. Assuredly, so will his honour prompt.

Aur. Nay, rather say his pride. Methinks I see
him;

His darken'd figure striding 'cross the hall,
While his high plume, that noddeth to and fro,
Show'th his perturb'd and restless courtesy.
Good, noble, happy wight! Yet woe betide
The luckless hound that fawns on him that day!
His dismal yell disturbs the ceremony.
Ha, ha! I needs must laugh.

Ter. Indeed you let your fancy wildly run,
And disappointment will but prove the sharper.

Aur. Talk not of disappointment; be assur'd
Some late intelligence hath Ulrick prompted
To these stern orders. On our sea there sails,
Or soon will sail, some vessel, which right gladly
He would permit to founder on the coast,
Or miss its course. But no, it will not be:
In spite of all his hatred, to the shore,
Through seas as dark as subterranean night,
It will arrive in safety.

Ter. Nay, sweet Aurora, feed not thus thy wishes
With wild unlikely thoughts; for Ulrick surely
No such intelligence hath had, and thou
But makest thy after-sorrow more acute,
When these vain fancies fail.

Aur. And let them fail: though duller thoughts
succeed,
The bliss e'en of a moment still is bliss.

Viola (to TER.) Thou wouldst not of her dew-
drops spoil the thorn,
Because her glory will not last till noon;
Nor still the lightsome gambols of the colt,
Whose neck to-morrow's yoke will gall. Fye on't!
If this be wise, 'tis cruel.

Aur. Thanks, gentle Viola; thou art ever kind.
We'll think to-morrow still hath good in store,
And make of this a blessing for to-day,
Though good Terentia there may chide us for it.

Ter. And thus a profitable life you'll lead,
Which hath no present time, but is made up
Entirely of to-morrows.

Aur. Well, taunt me as thou wilt, I'll worship
still

The blessed morrow, storehouse of all good
For wretched folks. They who lament to-day,
May then rejoice: they who in misery bend
E'en to the earth, be then in honour robed.
O! who shall reckon what its brighten'd hours
May of returning joy contain? To-morrow!
The blest to-morrow! cheering, kind to-morrow!
I were a heathen not to worship thee.
(*To TER*) Frown not again; we must not wrangle
now.

Ter. Thou dost such vain and foolish fancies
cherish,

Thou forest me to seem unkind and stern.

Aur. Ah! be not stern. Edda will sing the song
That makes feet beat and heads nod to its tune;
And even grave Terentia will be moved
To think of pleasant things.

SONG.

Wish'd-for gales, the light vane veering,
Better dreams the dull night cheering,
Lighter heart the morning greeting,
Things of better omen meeting!
Eyes each passing stranger watching,
Ears each feeble rumour catching

Say he existeth still on earthly ground,
The absent will return, the long, long lost be
found.

In the tower the ward-bell ringing,
In the court the carols singing,
Busy hands the gay board dressing,
Eager steps the threshold pressing,
Open'd arms in haste advancing,
Joyful looks through blind tears glancing,
The gladsome bounding of his aged hound,
Say he in truth is here, our long, long lost is
found.

Hymned thanks and beadsmen praying,
With sheath'd sword the urchin playing,
Blazon'd hall with torches burning,
Cheerful morn in peace returning,
Converse sweet that strangely borrows
Present bliss from former sorrows;
O who can tell each blessed sight and sound
That says, he with us bides, our long, long lost is
found.

Aur. (who at first nods her head lightly to the
measure, now bursts into tears, taking EDDA's
hands between hers, and pressing them grate-
fully). I thank thee: this shall be our daily
song:

It cheers my heart, although these foolish tears
Seem to disgrace its sweetness.

Enter Page.

Viola (to *Aur.*). Here comes your page with
lightly-bounding steps,
As if he brought good tidings.

Edda. Grant he may!

Aur. (eagerly). What brings thee hither, boy?

Page (to *Aur.*). A noble stranger of the legate's
train,

Come from the Holy Land, doth wait without,
Near to the garden gate, where I have left him;
He begs to be admitted to your presence;
Pleading for such indulgence as the friend
Of Ermingard, for so he bade me say.

Aur. The friend of Ermingard! the Holy Land!

[*Pausing for a moment, and then tossing up her
arms in ecstasy.*

O God! it is himself!

[*Runs eagerly some steps towards the garden,
then catching hold of TERENTIA, who follows
her.*

My head is dizzy grown; I cannot go.

Haste, lead him hither, boy.

[*Waving her hand impatiently.*

Fly; hearest thou not?

[*Exit page.*

Ter. Be not so greatly moved. It is not likely
This should be Ermingard. The boy has seen him,
And would have known him. 'Tis belike some friend.

Aur. No; every thrilling fibre of my frame
Cries out "it is himself."

[*Looking out.*

He comes not yet: how strange! how dull! how
tardy!

Ter. Your page hath scarce had time to reach the
gate,

Though he hath run right quickly.

Aur. (*pausing and looking out*). He comes not yet.
Ah! if it be not he;

My sinking heart misgives me.

O now he comes! the size and air are his.

Ter. Not to my fancy; there is no resemblance.

Aur. Nay, but there is: and see, he wears his
cloak

As he was wont to do; and o'er his cap
The shading plume so hangs. — It is! it is!

*Enter GARCIO; and she, breaking from TERENTIA,
runs towards him.*

My lost, my found, my blest! conceal thee not.

[*Going to catch him in her arms, when GARCIO
takes off his plumed cap, and bows profoundly.
She utters a faint cry, and shrinks back.*

Gar. Lady, I see this doffed cap hath discover'd
A face less welcome than the one you looked for.
Pardon a stranger's presence; I've presumed
Thus to intrude, as friend of Ermingard,
Who bade me —

Aur. Bade thee! is he then at hand?

Gar. Ah, would he were!

'Twas in a hostile and a distant land
He did commit to me these precious tokens,
Desiring me to give them to Aurora,
And with them too his sad and last farewell.

Aur. And he is dead!

Gar. Nay, wring not thus your hands:

He was alive and well when he entrusted me
With what I now return.

● [*Offering her a small casket.*
Aur. Alive and well, and sends me back my
tokens!

Gar. He sent them back to thee as Ulrick's
wife;

For such, forced by intelligence from hence
Of strong authority, he did believe thee:
And in that fatal fight, which shortly follow'd,
He fought for death as shrewdly as for fame.
Fame he indeed hath earn'd.

Aur. But not the other?

Ah, do not say he has! Among the slain

His body was not found.

Gar. As we have learnt, the Knights of blest
St. John

Did from the field of dying and of wounded
Many convey, who in their house of charity
All care and solace had; but with the names,
Recorded as within their walls receiv'd,
His is not found; therefore we must account him
With those who, shrouded in an unknown fate,
Are as the dead lamented, as the dead
For ever from our worldly care dismiss'd.

Aur. Lamented he shall be ; but from my care
Dismiss'd as are the dead — that is impossible.

Ter. Nay, listen to advice so wise and needful :
It is the friend of Ermingard who says,
Let him within thy mind be as the dead.

Aur. My heart repels the thought ; it cannot be.
No, till his corse, bereft of life, is found,
Till this is sworn, and prov'd, and witness'd to me,
Within my breast he shall be living still. [night,

Ter. Wilt thou yet vainly watch night after
To guide his bark who never will return ?

Aur. Who never will return ! And thinkest thou
To bear me down with such presumptuous words ?
Heaven makes me strong against thee :

There is a Power above that calms the storm,
Restrains the mighty, gives the dead to life :
I will in humble faith my watch still keep ;
Force only shall restrain me.

Gar. Force never shall, thou noble, ardent spirit !
Thy gen'rous confidence would almost tempt me
To think it will be justified. [thee

Aur. Ha ! sayst thou so ? A blessing rest upon
For these most cheering words ! Some guardian
power

Whispers within thee. — No, we'll not despair.

Enter ULRICK.

Ul. (to *GAR.*) Your dismal mission is, I trust,
fulfill'd ;

Then, gentle Garcio, deem it not unkind
That I entreat you to retire ; for they
Who sorrow for the dead, love to be left
To grieve without constraint. [sir ;

Aur. Thanks for your kind concern, most noble
And when we needs must sorrow for the dead,
We'll freely grieve without constraint. But know,
Until our corse is found, we ring no knell.
If then your ear for funeral dirges long,
Go to some other bower ; hope still is here.

Ul. Ha ! still perversely bent ? what can con-
vince thee ?
This is distraction.

Aur. Be it what it may,
It owns not thy authority. Brave youth (to *GAR.*),
I owe thy gentleness some kind acknowledgment :
I'll find another time to give thee thanks.

[*Exit, followed by VIOLA and EDDA.*

Ul. Such hope is madness ! yield we to her
humour ?

No, she must be to sober reason brought,
By steady, firm control. [trol ?

Gar. Mean you by this, my lord, a forc'd con-
Ul. Who shall inquire my meaning ?

Gar. The holy legate, patron of th' oppress'd,
Will venture to inquire.

Ul. Ay, as his nephew, thou presum'st, I see.
But know, bold youth, I am unused to threats.

Gar. Yet brook them as you may. I take my
leave. [Exit.

Manent ULRICK and TERENTIA.

Ul. Did I not say these cursed meddling priests —
These men of meekness, wheresoe'er they come,
Would rule and power usurp ? Woe worth the
hour

That brought them here ! — and for this headstrong
maniac,

As such, I will —

Ter. Hush, hush ! these precincts
quit.

It is not well, here to expose to view
Thy weak ungovern'd passions. Thou'rt observ'd ;
Retire with me, where screen'd from ev'ry eye,
With more possession of thy ruffled mind,
Thou mayst consider of thy wayward state.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*A flat spot of ground on the top of a cliff, with broken
craggy rocks on each side, and a large mass of rock
in the middle, on which a great fire of wood is
burning ; a dark sea in the background ; the scene
to receive no light but from the fire. Two fisher-
men are discovered watching the fire, and supplying
it with wood.*

SONG.

1st Fisherman.

" High is the tower, and the watch-dogs bay,
And the fitting owlets shriek ;
I see thee wave thy mantle grey,
But I cannot hear thee speak.

" O, are they from the east or west,
The tidings he bears to me ?
Or from the land that I love best,
From the knight of the north countree ?"

Swift down the winding stair she rush'd,
Like a gust of the summer wind ;
Her steps were light, her breath was hush'd,
And she dared not look behind.

She pass'd by stealth the narrow door,
The postern way also,
And thought each bush her robe that tore,
The grasp of a warding foe.

And she has climb'd the moat so steep,
With chilly dread and fear,
While th' evening fly humm'd dull and deep,
Like a wardman whisp'ring near.

" Now, who art thou, thou Palmer tall,
Who beckonest so to me ?
Art thou from that dear and distant hall ?
Art thou from the north countree ?"

He rais'd his hood with wary wile,
That cover'd his raven hair,
And a manlier face and a sweeter smile
Ne'er greeted lady fair.

"My coal-black steed feeds in the brake,
Of gen'rous blood and true;
He'll soon the nearest frontier make,
Let they who list pursue.

"Thy pale cheek shows an alter'd mind,
'Thine eye the blinding tear;
Come not with me if aught behind
Is to thy heart more dear.

"Thy sire and dame are in that hall,
Thy friend, thy mother's son;
Come not with me, if one o' them all,
E'er lov'd thee as I have done."

The lady mounted the coal-black steed,
Behind her knight I ween,
And they have pass'd through brake and mead,
And plain, and woodland green.

But hark, behind! the warders shout,
And the hasty larums ring;
And the mingled sound of a gath'ring rout
The passing air doth bring.

O noble steed! now 'quit thee well,
And prove thy gen'rous kind!
That fearful sound doth louder swell,
It is not far behind.

"The frontier's near—a span the plain,
Press on and do not fail!
Ah! on our steps fell horsemen gain,
I hear their ringing mail."

2d fish. Tush, man! give o'er; thy ballads have
no end,

When thou art in the mood. I hear below
A sound of many voices on the shore:
Some boat, belike, foreed by the drifting current
Upon the rocks, may be in jeopardy.

1st fish. 'Tis all a moek to eut my ditty short.
Thou hast no mind to hear how it befell
That those two lovers were by kinsmen stern
O'er'ta'en; and how the knight,—by armed foes
Beset, a bloody combat bravely held,
And was the while robb'd of his lady fair.

And how in Paynim land they met again.
How, as a page disguised, she sought her knight,
Left on the field as lifeless. How she cheer'd him;
And how they married were, and home in
state—

2d fish. Ha' done, ha' done! a hundred times I've
My grandam lull'd me with it on her lap
Full many a night; and as my father sat,
Mending his nets upon the beach, he sang it.

I would I knew my prayers as well.—But hark!
I hear a noise again.—

[*Goes to the bottom of the stage, as if he were
looking down to the sea.*]

Along the shore
I see lights moving swiftly.
1st fish. Some fishermen, who, later than the rest,
Their crazy boat bring in; while, to the beach,
With flaming brands, their wives and children run.
Rare sight, indeed, to take thy fancy so!

(*Sings again.*)

No fish stir in our heaving net,
And the sky is dark, and the night is wet;
And we must ply the lusty oar,
For the tide is ebbing from the shore;
And sad are they whose fagots burn,
So kindly stored for our return.

Our boat is small and the tempest raves,
And nought is heard but the lashing waves,
And the sullen roar of the angry sea,
And the wild winds piping drearily;
Yet sea and tempest rise in vain,
We'll bless our blazing hearths again.

Push bravely, mates! Our guiding star
Now from its towerlet streameth far.
And now along the nearing strand,
See, swiftly moves yon flaming brand:
Before the midnight watch be past,
We'll quaff our bowl and mock the blast.

Bast. (*without.*) Holla, good mate! Thou who so
bravely singst!
Come down, I pray thee.

1st fish. Who art thou who callst?

2d fish. I know the voice; 'tis Signor Bastiani.

1st fish. What! he, at such an hour, upon the
cliff!

(*Calling down.*) I cannot come. If, from my sta-
tion here,

This fire untended, I were found; good sooth!
I had as lief the luckless friar be,
Who spilt the abbot's wine.

2d fish. I'll go to him. [*Exit.*]

1st fish. (*muttering to himself.*) Ay; leave my
watch, indeed! a rare entreaty!

Enter BASTIANI.

Bast. Wilt thou not go? A boat near to the
shore,

In a most perilous state, calls for assistance:
Who is like thee, good Stephen, bold and skilful?
Haste to its aid, if there be pity in thee,
Or any Christian grace. I will, meantime,
Thy beacon watch; and should the lady come,
Excuse thy absence. Haste; make no reply.

1st fish. I will; God help us all! [*Exit.*]

Bast. Here is, indeed, a splendid noble fire

Left me in ward. It makes the darkness round,
To its fierce light oppos'd, seem thick and palpable,
And closed o'er head, like to the pitchy cope
Of some vast cavern. — Near at hand, methinks,
Soft female voices speak : I'll to my station.

[Retires from the front of the stage behind the fire.

Enter AURORA, TERENTIA, and VIOLA.

Viola. A rousing light ! Good Stephen hath full well

Obe'y'd your earnest bidding. — Fays and witches
Might round its blaze their midnight revelry
Right fitly keep.

Ter. Ay ; thou lov'st wilds and darkness,
And fire and storms, and things unsooth and
strange :

This suits thee well. Methinks, in gazing on it,
Thy face a witch-like cagerness assumes.

Viola. I'll be a goblin then, and round it dance.
Did not Aurora say we thus should hold
This nightly vigil. Yea, such were her words.

Aur. They were light bubbles of some mantling
thought,

That now is flat and spiritless ; and yet,
If thou art so inclin'd, ask not my leave,
Dance if thou wilt.

Viola. Nay, not alone, sweet sooth !
Witches, themselves, some fiend-like partners find.

Ter. And so mayst thou. Look yonder ; near
the flame

A crested figure stands. That is not Stephen.

Aur. (eagerly). A crested figure ! Where ? O call
to it ! [BAST. comes forward.

Ter. 'Tis Bastiani.

Aur. Ay ; 'tis Bastiani :
'Tis he, or any one ; 'tis ever thus ;
So is my fancy mock'd.

Bast. If I offend you, madam, 'tis unwillingly.
Stephen has for awhile gone to the beach,

To help some fishermen, who, as I guess,
Against the tide would force their boat to land.
He'll soon return ; meantime, I did entreat him
To let me watch his beacon. Pardon me ;
I had not else intruded ; though full oft
I've clamber'd o'er these cliffs, e'en at this hour,
To see the ocean from its sabled breast
The flickering gleam of these bright flames return.

Aur. Make no excuse, I pray thee. I am told
By good Terentia thou dost wish me well,
Though Ulrick long has been thy friend. I know
A wanderer on the seas in early youth
Thou wast, and still canst feel for all storm-toss'd
On that rude element.

Bast. 'Tis true, fair lady : I have been, ere now,
Where such a warning light, sent from the shore,
Had saved some precious lives ; which makes the
task,
I now fulfil, more grateful.

Aur. How many leagues from shore may such a
light

By the benighted mariner be seen ?

Bast. Some six or so, he will desery it faintly,
Like a small star, or hermit's taper, peering
From some cav'd rock that brows the dreary waste ;
Or like the lamp of some lone lazar-house,
Which through the silent night the traveller spies
Upon his doubtful way.

Viola. Fie on such images !
Thou shouldst have liken'd it to things more seemly.
Thou mightst have said the peasant's evening fire
That from his upland cot, through winter's gloom,
What time his wife their evening meal prepares,
Blinks on the traveller's eye, and cheers his heart ;
Or signal-torch, that from my lady's bower
Tells wand'ring knights the revels are begun ;
Or blazing brand, that from the vintage-house
O' long October nights, through the still air
Looks rousingly. — To have our gallant beacon
Ta'en for a lazar-house !

Bast. Well, maiden, as thou wilt : thy gentle
mistress

Of all these things may choose what likes her best,
To paint more clearly how her noble fire
The distant seamen cheer'd, who bless the while
The hand that kindled it.

Aur. Shall I be bless'd —
By wand'ring men returning to their homes ?
By those from shipwreck sav'd, again to cheer
Their wives, their friends, their kindred ? Bless'd
by those !

And shall it not a blessing call from heaven ?
It will ; my heart leaps at the very thought :
The seamen's blessing rests upon my head,
To charm my wand'rer home. —

Heap on more wood :
Let it more brightly blaze. — Good Bastiani,
Lie to thy task, and we'll assist thee gladly.

[As they begin to occupy themselves with the fire,
the sound of distant voices, singing in harmony,
is heard under the stage as if ascending the
cliff.

Aur. What may it be ?

Viola. The songs of Paradise,
But that our savage rocks and gloomy night
So ill agree with peaceful soothing bliss.

Ter. No blessed spirits in these evil days
Hymn, through the stilly darkness, strains of grace.
Aur. Nay, list ; it comes again.

[Voices heard nearer.
Ter. The mingled sound comes nearer, and be-
trays

Voices of mortal men.

Viola. In such sweet harmony !

I never heard the like.

Aur. They must be good and holy who can utter
Such heavenly sounds.

Bast. I've surely heard before

This solemn chorus chaunted by the knights,
The holy brothers of Jerusalem.
It is a carol sung by them full oft,
When saved from peril fire of flood or field.

Aur. The Knights of blest St. John from Palestine!

Alas! why feel I thus? knowing too well
They cannot bring the tidings I would hear.

[*Chorus rises again very near.*]

Viola. List, list! they've gain'd the summit of
the cliff:

They are at hand; their voices are distinct;
Yea, e'en the words they sing.

[*A solemn song or hymn, sung in harmony, heard without.*]

Men preserv'd from storm and tide,
And fire and battle, raging wide;
What shall subdue our steady faith,
Or of our heads a hair shall scath?
Men preserv'd, in gladness weeping,
Praise Him, who hath alway our souls in holy
keeping.

And wheresoe'er in earth or sea
Our spot of rest at last shall be;
Our swords in many a glorious field,
Surviving heroes still shall wield,
While we our faithful meed are reaping
With Him, who hath alway our souls in holy
keeping.

Enter six Knights of St. John of Jerusalem in procession, with their followers behind them, who do not advance upon the stage, but remain partly concealed behind the rocks.

Aur. Speak to them, Bastiani; thou'rt a soldier;
Thy mind is more composed.—I pray thee do.

[*Motioning BAST. to accost them.*]

Bast. This lady, noble warriors, greets you all,
And offers you such hospitality
As this late hour and scanty means afford.
Will't please ye round this blazing fire to rest?
After such perilous tossing on the waves,
You needs must be forspent.

1st knight. We thank you, s'r, and this most
noble dame,

Whose beacon hath from shipwreck sav'd us.
Drive'n

By adverse winds too near your rocky coast,
Warn'd by its friendly light, we stood to sea:
But soon discover'ng that our crazy bark
Had sprung a dangerous leak, we took our boat
And made for shore. The nearest point of land
Beneath this cliff, with peril imminent,
By help of some good fishermen we gain'd;
And here, in God's good mercy, safe we are
With grateful hearts.

Aur. We praise that mercy also
Which hath preserv'd you.

1st knight.

Lady, take our thanks.

And may the vessel of that friend beloved,
For whom you watch, as we have now been told,
Soon to your shore its welcome freight convey!

Aur. Thanks for the wish; and may its prayers
be heard!

Renowned men ye are; holy and brave;
In every field of honour and of arms
Some of your noble brotherhood are found:
Perhaps the valiant knights I now behold,
Did on that luckless day against the Souldan
With brave De Villeneuve for the cross contend.
If this be so, you can, perhaps, inform me
Of one who in the battle fought, whose fate
Is still unknown.

1st knight. None of us all, fair dame, so honour'd
were

As in that field to be, save this young knight.
Sir Bertram, wherefore, in thy mantle wrapt,
Standst thou so far behind? Speak to him, lady:
For in that battle he right nobly fought,
And may, belike, wot of the friend you mention'd.

Aur. (*going up eagerly to the young knight.*)
Didst thou there fight? then surely thou
didst know

The noble Ermingard, who from this isle
With valiant Conrad went:—

What fate had he upon that dismal day?

Young knight. What'er his fate in that fell fight
might be,

He now is as the dead.

Aur. Is as the dead! ha! then he is not dead:
He's living still. O tell me—tell me this!
Say he is still alive; and though he breathe
In the foul pest-house; though a wretched
wand'rer,

Wounded and maim'd; yea, though his noble form
With chains and stripes and slavery be disgraced,
Say he is living still, and I will bless thee.
Thou knowst—full well thou knowst, but wilt not
speak.

What means that heavy groan? For love of God,
speak to me!

[*Tears the mantle from his face, with which he
had concealed it.*]

My Ermingard! My blessed Ermingard!
Thy very living self restored again!

Why turn from me?

Er. Ah! callst thou this restor'd?

Aur. Do I not grasp thy real living hand?

Dear, dear!—so dear! most dear!—my lost, my
found!

Thou turnst and weepst; art thou not so to me?

Er. Ah! would I were! alas, alas, I'm lost:
Sever'd from thee for ever.

Aur. How so? What mean such words?

Er. (*shaking his head, and pointing to the cross
on his mantle.*) Look on this emblem of a
holy vow,

Which binds and weds me to a heavenly love :
We are, my sweet Aurora, far divided ;
Our bliss is wreck'd for ever.

Aur. No ; thou art still alive, and that is bliss.
Few moments since, what would I not have sacrific'd,

To know that in the lapse of many years
I should again behold thee ? — I had been ——
How strongly thou art moved ! — Thou heedst me not.

Ter. (to Aur.) Were it not better he should leave this spot ?

Let me conduct him to my quiet bower.
Rest and retirement may compose his mind.

Aur. Ay, thou art right, Terentia.
Ter. (to the other knights). Noble knights,
And these your followers ! gentle Bastiani
Will to a place of better comfort lead you,
Where ye shall find some hospitable cheer,
And couches for repose. — Have we your leave
That your companion be a little time
Ta'en from your company ?

1st knight. You have, good lady,
Most readily we grant it. — Heaven be with you,
And this your lovely charge !
(*To Bast.*) Sir, to your guidance
We yield ourselves right gladly.

[*Exeunt knights, &c., by a path between the rocks, and AURORA and ERMINGARD, &c., by another path.*]

SCENE II.

An ante-room in the house of AURORA. Enter GARCIO, beckoning the page, who presently enters by the opposite side.

Gar. Come hither, little friend, who didst before
Serve me so willingly. Wilt thou from me
Bear to Sir Ermingard a friendly message ;
And say his old companion ——

Page. Nay, I dare not.
The holy legate and the pope besides
Might not disturb him now ; for dame Terentia
Hath so decreed. He is in her apartment,
And yonder is the door. [*Pointing off the stage.*]

Gar. From which e'en now
I saw thee turn ?

Page. I listen'd not for harm.
Gar. Do I accuse thee, boy ? Is he alone ?
Or is thy lady with him ?

Page. That I know not.
Do folks groan heaviest when they are alone ?

Gar. Full oft they do ; for then without restraint
They utter what they feel.

Page. Then, by my beard, I think he is alone !
For as I slipp'd on tiptoe to the door,
I heard him groan so deeply !

Gar. Thou heardest him groan ?

Page. Ay ; deeply.
I thought when he return'd, we should be merry :

So starting up at the good tidings, quickly,
All darling as I was, I donn'd my clothes :
But, by my beard ! I'd go to bed again,
Did I not long most curiously to know
What will betide.

Gar. Speak softly, boy ; thou, and thy beard to boot,

Will badly fare if Ulrick should o'erhear thee.
I know his angry voice : he is at hand.

Page. Where shall I go ? — He will not tarry here :

He will but pass to the adjoining hall.
In this dark nook I'll hide me from his sight,
Lest he should chide me. [*Retires behind the pillar.*]

Gar. Is there room for me ?
He'll greet me too with little courtesy,
If I remain to front him.

[*Retires behind the pillar also.*]

Enter ULRICK and BASTIANI, speaking as they enter.

Ul. And still thou sayst, forbear !

Bast. Pass on, my lord.

Ul. No, by the holy rood ! I'll keep in sight
Of that accursed door which gave him entrance.
An hour's sand well hath run, which undisturb'd
They have in converse or endearments spent.
And yet I must forbear !

Bast. They have not told the truth who told
you so ;
It is not yet so long.

Ul. It is ! it is !

I have within these walls, who for my service
More faithfully have watch'd than Bastiani —
Ay, or Terentia either.

Bast. Wrong us not.
Since Ermingard returns by holy vows
So bound, that as a rival to your love,
You may, with honest thoughts of her you love,
No more consider him ; all jealousy
Within your noble breast should be extinct.
Then think not to disturb these few short moments
Of unavailing sorrow ; that were cruel.

Ul. Thou pitiest others well ; I am tormented,
And no onc pities me. — That cursed beacon !
I said in vain this night should be the last :
It was a night too much : the sea had now
Roll'd o'er his lifeless corse ; I, been at peace.

Bast. For merey, good my lord ! curb such fell
thoughts :

They bear no kindred to your better nature.

Ul. My better nature ! Mock me not with
words ;

Who loves like me, no nature hath but one,
And that so keen —— Would the engulfing waves
Had fifty fathom deep entomb'd him !

Bast. Speak not so loud : pass on ; we are within
The observation of a prying household.
Pass on, and presently I'll bring you notice
Of what you would. I pray you, stop not here !

[*Exeunt UL. and BAST., while GAR. and page
come from their concealment.*]

Page. He would have chid me shrewdly.

Gar. He is, indeed, an angry, ruthless man,
And Bastiani no slight task will have
To keep his wrath from mischief. To the legate
I'll hie me straight, and ask his better counsel :
So fare thee well, sweet child.

Page. Nay, take me with you ; I'm afraid to
stay.

I can my prayers and Ave-Maria say,
The legate will not chide me.

Gar. Nay, stay behind ; thou art secure, poor
elf !

I'll soon return again.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*The apartment of TERENTIA : ERMINGARD and
AURORA are discovered with TERENTIA, who is
withdrawn to a distance from them. ERMINGARD
is seated with his body thrown back, and his face
covered with both his hands, while AURORA stands
by him in the attitude of one who is entreating or
soothing him.*

Erm. O cease ! Thy words, thy voice, thy hand
on mine,

That touch so dearly felt, do but enhance
An agony too great. — Untoward fate !
Thus to have lost thee !

Aur. Say not, thou hast lost me.
Heaven will subdue our minds, and we shall still,
With what is spared us from our wreck of bliss,
Be happy.

Erm. Most unblest, untoward fate !
After that hapless battle, where in vain
I courted death, I kept my name conceal'd.
E'en brave De Villeneuve, master of our Order,
When he received my vows, did pledge his faith
Not to declare it. Thus I kept myself
From all communication with these shores,
Perversely forwarding my rival's will.
O blind and credulous fool !

Aur. Nay, do not thus upbraid thyself : Heaven
will'd it.

Be not so keenly moved : there still is left
What to the soul is dear. — We'll still be happy.

Erm. The chasten'd pilgrim o'er his lady's grave
Sweet tears may shed, and may without reproach
Thoughts of his past love blend with thoughts of
heaven.

He whom the treach'ry of some faithless maid
Hath robb'd of bliss, may, in the sturdy pride
Of a wrong'd man, the galling ill endure ;

But sever'd thus from thee, so true, so noble,
By vows that all the soul's devotion claim,
It makes me feel — may God forgive the crime !
A very hatred of all saintly things.

Fool — rash and credulous fool ! to lose thee thus !

Aur. Nay, say not so : thou still art mine. Short
while,

I would have given my whole of life besides
To've seen but once again thy passing form —
Thy face — thine eyes turn'd on me for a moment ;
Or only to have heard through the still air
Thy voice distinctly call me, or the sound
Of thy known steps upon my lonely floor :

And shall I then, holding thy living hand
In love and honour, say, thou art not mine ?

Erm. [*shaking his head.*] This state — this sacred
badge !

Aur. O no ! that holy cross upon thy breast
Throws such a charm of valorous sanctity
O'er thy lov'd form : my thoughts do forward
glance

To deeds of such high fame by thee achieved ;
That e'en methinks the bliss of wedded love
Less dear, less noble is, than such strong bonds
As may, without reproach, unite us still.

Erm. O creature of a gen'rous constancy !
Thou but the more distractest me ! Fool, fool !

[*Starting from his seat, and pacing to and fro
distractedly.*]

Mean, misbelieving fool ! — I thought her false,
Credulous alone of evil — I have lost,
And have deserv'd to lose her.

Aur. Oh ! be not thus ! Have I no power to
soothe thee ?

See, good Terentia weeps, and fain would try
To speak thee comfort.

Ter. [*coming forward.*] Ay ; bethink thee well,
Most noble Ermingard, heaven grants thee still
All that is truly precious of her love, —
Her true and dear regard.

Erm. Then heaven forgive my black ingratitude,
For I am most unthankful !

Ter. Nay, consider,
Her heart is thine : you are in mind united.

Erm. United ! In the farthest nook o' th' earth
I may in lonely solitude reflect,
That in some spot — some happier land she lives,
And thinks of me. Is this to be united ?

Aur. I cannot, in a page's surtout clad,
Thy steps attend as other maids have done
To other knights.

Erm. No, by the holy rood !
Thou canst not, and thou shouldst not. Rather
would I,

Dear as thou art, weep o'er thee in thy grave,
Than see thee so degraded.

Aur. Hear me out.
I cannot so attend thee — noon and eve
Thy near companion be ! but I have heard

That near the sacred houses of your order,
 Convents of maids devout in Holy Land
 Establish'd are — maids who in deeds of charity
 To pilgrims and to all in warfare main'd,
 In sacred warfare for the holy cross,
 Are deem'd the humble partners of your zeal.

Erm. Ay, such there are; but what availeth this?

Aur. There will I dwell, a vow'd and humble sister.

We shall not far be sever'd. The same winds
 That do o' nights through your still cloisters sigh,
 Our quiet cells visiting with mournful harmony,
 Shall lull my pillow too. Our window'd towers
 Shall sometimes show me on the neighbouring
 plains,

Amidst thy brave companions, thy mail'd form
 Crested with glory, on thy pawing steed
 Returning from the wars. And when at last
 Thou art in sickness laid—who will forbid
 The dear sad pleasure—like a holy bride
 I'll by thy death-bed stand, and look to heaven
 Where all bless'd union is. O! at the thought,
 Methinks this span of life to nothing shrinks,
 And we are bless'd already. Thou art silent:
 Dost thou despise my words?

Erm. O no! speak to me thus: say what thou wilt:

I am subdued. And yet these bursting tears!
 My heart is rent in twain: I fear—I fear
 I am rebellious still.

[*Kneeling, and taking both her hands between his, and kissing them with great devotion.*]

School me or chide me now: do what thou wilt:
 I am resign'd and humble.

Ter. (*advancing to them with alarm.*) Hear ye
 that noise without?—They force the door,
 And angry Ulrick comes.

Erm. (*starting from his knees furiously.*) Thank
 heaven this hated rival front to front
 Shall now oppose me! God avenge the right!

Enter ULRICK, *bursting into the room, followed by*
 BASTIANI.

Ul. (*to* *ERM.*) Vow'd, holy knight; from all vain
 earthly love

Pure and divided; in a lady's chamber
 Do we surprise thee? Quit it instantly:
 It is a place for thee unfit: and know,
 In sacred wardship will I keep that maid.

Erm. In sacred wardship! O unblushing face!
 What of thy baseness, treachery, and falsehood
 I could declare, my choking voice forbids,
 Which utterance hath not.—Here's a ready
 tongue— [*Drawing his sword.*]
 Defend thee, then, and heaven defend the right!

[*They both draw, and fight furiously, BASTIANI endeavouring in vain to interpose; when the legate and his train, with GARCIO and the Knights of St. John, enter, and separate them.*]

Leg. Put up your weapons: to the holy church
 This cause belongs, and to her high award
 I charge you both that you in all humility
 Submit. Lord Ulrick, to the pope perforce
 You must account of this your wardship give,
 Or by yourself in person, or your deputy,
 To Rome forthwith despatch'd. [*Ul. bows sullenly.*]
 As for the lady, to my guardian care,
 Till we before the holy father come,
 She must commit herself. And thou, Sir Ermingard,
 Shalt to the sovereign pontiff and the patron
 Of thy most valiant order, fully show
 Wherein thou'st been aggriev'd. If the bless'd cross
 Thou hast assum'd, supposing other vows
 That did before engage thee, were annull'd,
 By false reports deceived; the holy Urban,
 Our wise enlighten'd father, will, I trust,
 A dispensation grant, that shall empower thee
 To doff with honour this thy sacred mantle,
 And in its stead a bridegroom's robe assume.

[*ERMINGARD and AURORA both embrace the legate's knees, who raises them up gently.*]

It is enough; forbear, forbear, my children;
 I am too richly thank'd.

And now we must with sober minds confer:
 For when the wind is fair, we sail for Rome.
 Some days, perhaps, it may adversely blow—
 Perhaps some weeks; for I have known it oft
 Hold vessels bound.

Aur. (*tossing up her arms joyfully as she speaks.*)
 No; it will change to-morrow.

Erm. Dear ardent soul! canst thou command
 the winds? [*Aur. shrinks back ashamed.*]

Leg. Blush not, sweet maid; nor check thy
 ardent thoughts;

That gen'rous, buoyant spirit is a power
 Which in the virtuous mind doth all things conquer.
 It bears the hero on to arduous deeds:
 It lifts the saint to heaven. [*Curtain drops.*]

ROMIERO:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

DON ROMIERO, *a noble Spaniard.*
 DON GUZMAN, *his friend.*
 DON MAURICE, *a youth in love with BEATRICE.*
 DON SEBASTIAN, *father of ZORADA.*
 JEROME, } *domestics of ROMIERO.*
 PIETRO, }
 Mariners, passengers, domestics, &c.

WOMEN.

ZORADA, *the wife of ROMIERO.*
 BEATRICE, *her friend.*
 Nurse.

Scene in or near the castle of ROMIERO, by the sea-shore of the Mediterranean.

Time, during the reign of PETER the Cruel, King of Castile, towards the middle of the 14th century.

* This was the first of a series of plays published in 1836 under the title "Dramas," in three volumes¹, to which was prefixed the following

PREFACE.

THE greater number of the Dramas contained in the following volumes have been written many years ago; none of them very recently. It was my intention not to have them published in my lifetime; but that, after my death, they should have been offered to some of the smaller theatres of our metropolis, and thereby have a chance, at least, of being produced to the public with the advantages of action and scenic decorations, which naturally belong to dramatic compositions. But the present circumstances connected with our English Theatres are not encouraging for such an attempt; any promise of their soon becoming so is very doubtful; and I am induced to relinquish what was at one time my earnest wish. This being the case, to keep them longer unpublished would serve no good purpose, and might afterwards give trouble to friends whom I would willingly spare. They are, therefore, now offered to the Public, with a diffident hope that they may be found deserving of some portion of its favour and indulgence.

The first volume comprises a continuation of the series of Plays on the stronger Passions of the Mind,

¹ The first volume contained *Romero, a Tragedy on Jealousy; The Alienated Manor, a Comedy on the same passion; and Henriquez, a Tragedy on Remorse.* The *Martyr* was bound up with these. The second volume contained *The Separation, The Stripling, The Phantom, and Enthusiasm.* The third volume contained *Witchcraft, The Ho-*

and completes all that I intended to write on the subject: for envy and revenge are so frequently exposed in our Dramas,—the latter, particularly, has been so powerfully delineated,—that I have thought myself at liberty to exclude them from my plan as originally contemplated. The two following volumes of Miscellaneous Plays will complete the whole of my Dramatic Works.

In thus relinquishing my original intention, there is one thing particularly soothing to my feelings,—that those friendly readers who encouraged my early dramatic writings (alas, how reduced in numbers!) will see the completion of the whole. This will, at least, gratify their curiosity; and it would be ungrateful in me not to believe that they will, also, take some interest in the latter part of a work, the beginning of which their partial favour so kindly fostered.

With the exception of two Dramas, "*The Martyr*," and "*The Bride*," the matter of the following volumes is entirely new to the public; but, as only one edition of the former, and two small editions of the latter, have been circulated, there are few persons who can be possessed of either. Besides, as they are on subjects particularly fitted to interest and improve a young mind, they may be given away to youthful readers disjoined from the general stock; and, in that case, will scarcely be considered as useless duplicates.

micide, The Bride, and The Match. The first three dramas in these volumes were a continuation of the Plays on the Passions, and are placed therefore in this portion of the work. The remainder were on miscellaneous subjects, and are to be found under the head "*Miscellaneous Plays.*"

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The sea-shore after a storm, with the masts of a wrecked vessel seen above the water at a distance, and casks and various chests, boards, &c. floating on the waves. Enter shipwrecked mariners and passengers, followed by SEBASTIAN, who keeps apart from the others.

1st pass. Well, sirs! to tread on firm dry earth again

Makes the heart glad and thankful.

1st mar. With good cause;

For a dry grave at home is, after all,
The secret wish and prayer of every seaman,
Ay, even the boldest of us.

None hath so long or roughly lived at sea
As to be careless where his bones are laid,—
In sacred ground, or in the gulfy deep.

And thou, too, thinkst so, if I read thee right.

[*To 2d passenger.*

2d pass. Ay, so in truth thou dost; I said my prayers

Devoutly as the tempest louder wax'd,
Nor am ashamed to own it.

2d mar. Nor need to be so; seaman as I am,

Let me, as oft as fortune beckons me,
On summer seas or rough December's waves,

Career it boldly with my jolly mates;
But let me die at last in mine own cot,

With all my kinsfolk round me. My poor wife!

She listens to the winds when others sleep,

And thinks,— Well, well! we are all safe on shore.

3d mar. But, saving this, what have we else to cheer us?

Men on dry land are hungry and lack food;

We cannot live on safety only. Sec,

Here comes a countryman. Ho! friend, I say!

[*Calling off the stage.*

(*Voice answering without.*) What dost thou say? I cannot hear thy words.

3d mar. Come hither, if thou hast a Christian heart,

Or any charity; come near, I pray thee.

Enter PIETRO.

Pie. What is your will with me?

3d mar. I pray thee, friend,

What shore is this? Be there or food, or shelter,
Or Christian pity in these parts? Thou seest

What miserably shipwreck'd men we are.

Pie. Yes, ye are cast upon a shore, where shelter
And Christian pity never are withheld

From those who want them. Seest thou through
the trees

That castle? There a noble lady dwells,

Who will have pity on you.

3d mar. Thank Providence for this! Your noble ladies,

When once they take to goodness, are most bountiful:

The best of all; the men to them are nothing.

1st pass. She hath no lord then?

Pie. He is absent now,

Kept at the king's high court, as it is said,

But my opinion is—

3d mar. Whate'er it be,

That is not our concern. What is his name?

Pie. They call him Don Romiero.

Seb. (*advancing hastily.*) What saidst thou? Is he absent?

Pie. He is, but his good lady will relieve you,
Ye need not fear for that.

Seb. We will not fear. Ye love that lady, then,
Who is, ye say, so good?

Pie. How should we else? A very brute would love her.

Seb. Yes, thou sayst well; she was e'en from her birth—

I mean, all ladies sprung from noble blood
Are, from their birth, to generous actions train'd;
At least, it should be so.

Pie. And is so, friend; for I have oft observ'd
Good birth and breeding, as in my own lady,
With gracious kindness join'd.

Seb. What is her name?

Pie. Donna Zorada. Thou hast heard, belike,
How her poor father—

Seb. (*turning away.*) No; I hear no stories;
I am a man withdrawn from worldly coil,
Who hears or cares for nothing.

Pie. (*to 3d mar.*) This is no mariner? and he speaks strangely.

3d mar. The strangest thing is that he spoke at all.

We took him up at sea from a small boat,
Which, by the moonlight, we descried afar;

Like a black cockle on the glimmering waves;
But whether earth or hell had sent him to us,

We doubted much.

1st mar. Nay; when the hurricane wax'd to its pitch

We scarcely doubted, and were once resolved
To cast him overboard. Yet, ne'ertheless,
He hath escaped; and God be praised, we did not.

Pie. Hush! he returns again. Go on, poor souls,

In lucky hour ye come; for in that wood
Not many paces hence, amongst the trees,

Donna Zorada takes her morning walk; [*her*]

You'll find her there. Come, I will lead you to
And, as we go, there are some words of counsel

Which I shall give to you. They may be useful;
For age, and some small share of shrewd observ-

ance,
Have made me, though I say it, fit to counsel.

1st mar. Do so, good man, and heaven reward thy kindness! [*Exeunt all but SEBASTIAN.*

Seb. (alone). So near her! Led, as by the hand of heaven,

Even to her very door! And I shall shortly see her again, and hold her to my heart! My child! my child! Oh! when those gentle eyes look on my woe-worn face and alter'd form, And these coarse weeds, how will thy piteous heart swell e'en to bursting! In that wood hard by,— So near me! Blessed heaven hath brought me here. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A wood, with various walks and alleys cut through it. Enter ZORADA and BEATRICE, speaking as they enter.

Bea. In truth, I slept it out. At times, indeed, A sound came to my ears, as it had been The distant roar of wheels, and then I dreamt Of coursing chariots and approaching crowds, And courtly tournaments, and tried in vain To cast my richest mantle o'er my form, To meet the coming show!

Zor. Thy mantle for the show!

Bea. Yes, but perversely, Still, as one tassell'd end across my shoulders I had composed, the others to the ground Fell dangling all awry. Then I look'd down, And, O sight of confusion! Canst thou guess What saw I then?

Zor. Some fearful thing, no doubt.

Bea. My own bare feet unslipper'd and unhosed, That on the chequer'd floor began to move In dancing measure. Yea, the very blood Rush'd to my cheeks; I felt it in my dream.

Zor. How could a dream so vain find harbourage In thy fantastic brain, my little friend, On such a dreadful night? [*dream.*

Bea. It was the tempest's sound that brought the *Zor.* So grand a cause producing thoughts so vain! [*awake,*

Bea. Who takes account of that? Thou wert Else thou, belike, hadst ta'en the mighty blast For the quick waving of some gallant's hat To cool thy glowing cheek, or the soft winnowing Of outstretch'd pinions—Cupid's wings, perhaps; Or those of downy swans, as I have seen them, Scared from the sedgy margin of the lake, Bending their hurried flight across thy path.

Zor. I was, indeed, awake, and heard with awe The war of elements, whose mingled roar Brought to mine ear the howl of raging fiends, The lash of mountain billows, the wild shrieks Of sinking wretches; and at intervals Cross'd strangely with the near distinctive sounds Of clatt'ring casements, creaking beams and doors Burst from their fastenings, swinging in the blast.

It was a fearful night; and many a soul, On sea and land, have found a dismal end.

Bea. Ay, we shall hear sad tales of this ere long, When seated round our evening fire. Alas! It will be piteous; but, the ill then past, It will be soft and pleasing piteousness.

Zor. Sad tales, I fear! O how my sympathy Follows the seaman's hardy, perilous life; And the poor passengers, torn from their homes To toss upon the rude and fathomless deep, Who shall no more on the dry land set foot, Nor find a peaceful rest e'en for their bones. It is a dismal thought.

Bea. And yet how fair and bright the morning shines, As if it laugh'd at all the late turmoil!

There's not a cloud in the whole azure sky.

Zor. None, save those little wanderers, pure as snow,

Those wild bewilder'd things, so hastening on Like sea-birds to their rock.—What men are these?

Enter Mariners, &c.

1st mar. We are, an' please ye, good and noble lady,

Poor shipwreck'd seamen, cast upon your shore; Our all is lost; and we are spent and faint For want of food.

Zor. Ye shall not want it long.

Go to the castle, where all needful succour Will be provided for you.—From what port? But stop not now to answer idle questions.

Are ye all mariners?

1st mar. (pointing to pass.) Those men are merchants;

And he who lingers yonder 'midst the bushes, Is one we found at sea, some leagues from shore.

We know not what he is. [*friend.*

Zor. Why keeps he thus aloof? Call to him, *1st mar. (calling off the stage.)* Ho! there; come this way, sir; the lady calls ye.

Zor. He has a noble air, though coarsely clad.

How is it that he moves so tardily?

3d mar. He's wayward, lady; neither moves nor speaks

Like other men.

Zor. Nay, do not speak so harshly

Of one so circumstanced; your fellow-sufferer.

Enter SEBASTIAN, bending his head, and keeping his eyes fixed on the ground.

Good stranger, be assured you're welcome here, And be not so desponding.

[*He bows in silence, and she seems agitated.* (*To the mariners, &c.*) Pass on, my friends; this lady will conduct you.

Wilt thou, my Beatrice, do this kind office?

And I will follow shortly. Tell my people To serve these shipwreck'd strangers bountifully.

Mariners, &c. (speaking all together). God bless
your liberal heart, my noble lady!

[*Exeunt all but ZOR. and SEB.*]

Zor. (eagerly). Who art thou?

Seb. Hush, till they be farther off.

Zor. Oh! is it thou?

Seb. Stand from me; no embrace;

They may look back and see us.

Zor. How slow they move! Will they ne'er
gain the thicket?

My yearning heart will burst; how slow they
move! (*Stands looking after them impatiently
and trembling all over for a few minutes.*)

Now they are out of sight. (*Rushing into his arms.*)

My father! my dear father!

Seb. My dear child!

Zor. Oh! art thou here in dread? come here to
see me

In peril of discovery? too, too kind!

Dear father! kind, and good, and dear to me,

How and where'er thou art. I fear, I fear

Thou art not as I would: tears in thine eyes,

And anguish on thy face! How hast thou fared?

Seb. Thou shalt hear all when I have words to
tell thee.

Zor. Not now; take breath awhile, and be com-
posed.

Lean on the grass, and I will fetch thee nourish-
ment.

Seb. (preventing her from going). Not now, dear
child.

I am composed again, and from my side

Thou shalt not move, till I have told thee all.

(*After a pause.*) Thou knowst the bitter wrongs
and foul affront,

Which my ungrateful monarch put upon me,

As meet reward for many years of service.

Ay, though I say it, valiant, faithful service

In field and council.

Zor. I know it all too well; a burning shame

That he should so requite thee! Some base wretch

Hath tempted him with —

Seb. Say his noble nature, —

I think it once was noble, — was abused

By the base machinations of my foes.

Say what thou wilt; I was a man, a soldier,

And sought revenge, that balcful remedy

For bitterness of heart.

Zor. Nay, pause, I pray you! do not tell it now:

Thou art too much distress'd. [told,

Seb. No, hear it now; 'tis short, and when once

One misery is past. Leagued with three chiefs,

Resentful as myself, we did in secret

Devise the means, and soon had reach'd our mark.

Zor. Your mark! O what was that?

Seb. I see the fearful meaning of thine eye;

But be not so disturb'd. — Our mark indeed

Was vengeance, but not murder. — On his throne

We meant to place a nobler prince, whose hand

Had even justice to his subjects dealt.

We meant to place on Pedro's worthless brow

That which became it better than a crown.

Zor. I understand; — a monk's unseemly cowl.

I'm glad you did not mean to shed his blood.

Seb. My gentle child, we meant but as I say.

And while revenging my especial wrongs,

We should have freed Castile from a hard master,

Who now sheds noble blood upon the scaffold,

As lavishly as hinds the common water

Of village pool cast o'er their arid fields.

And yet to kindle in our native land

The flames of civil discord, even this

Has often rack'd my mind with many doubts,

Recoiling thoughts, and feelings of remorse.

Zor. Ha! that indeed had been a fearful conse-
quence,

Had your concerted enterprise succeeded.

But speak not now of this. How did you fail?

Seb. Amongst our number, one accursed traitor

Like Judas lurk'd, and to the royal ear

Divulged the whole. — But we were warn'd of this,

And fled, each as he might. I gain'd the coast,

And lay disguised till I could find a boat,

In which I reach'd last night that founder'd bark,

Whose slender mast just peeps above the surge,

Like some black wizard's wand, token of ill.

Zor. Nc, not of ill, dear father, but of good.

'Tis heaven hath sent thee here.

My lord did write to me some distant hints

Of your sad story. When he shall return,

He will protect you. Cherish'd here with us,

You shall in secret live, till fair occasion

Shall offer to convey you where you would, —

Some land of safety.

Seb. Thy lord's return! no, no! beware of that!

He may not be my friend. — Nay, it is said

That he and others, from their kindred ties

Suspected as abettors of our treason,

To clear themselves, have sworn unto the king,

Dead or alive, wherever they may find us,

Our bodies to deliver to his power.

Zor. 'Tis false! thou wrong'st Romiero.

Do not believe it. Some false Judas also

Hath, in this point, deceived you. No, he did not —

He swore no oath so cruel and so base.

Do not believe it. — Hark! the castle bell!

[*Bell sounds.*]

Seb. Some traveller of note must be arrived.

Zor. And I must quit my dear and honour'd
parent,

With heartless ceremony to receive

A most unwelcome guest. —

Enter that tangled path; it leads to shelter,

An aged woman's cot, where thou mayst rest

And have refreshment. She will minister

To thy necessity. O woe is me!

That any hand but mine should have that office!

Seb. When shall we meet again?

Zor. At fall of eve beneath the castle wall,
Near to the northern postern. Heaven watch o'er
thee!

There's some one coming! part as we were
strangers,

Without one sign of love. That is the path.

[Exit SEBASTIAN; and, after a pause, DON
MAURICE enters by the opposite side.

Maur. Good tidings! Don Romiero is arrived.

Zor. My lord return'd? and art thou sure 'tis
he?

Maur. Yes, I am sure; why should I doubt it,
madam?

His train is in the court, and joyful vassals,
Hearing the notice bell, crowd in to greet him.
I have not seen him yet, but am in haste
Come to apprise you of it.

[Observing ZORADA motion with her hand, and
point as to something at a distance.

What man is that to whom you motion so?

Zor. A shipwreck'd stranger, who inquired his
way,

But was about to take the erring path.

Maur. He has a stately air, though mean his
garb;

I'll go myself and guide him through the wood.

Zor. No, no! I pray thee, let us to the castle.

Maur. I'll follow thee: but, 'faith, I fain would
go

And hold some parley with that stranger. Surely
He is no common man.

Zor. I do beseech thee!

Maur. I'll soon return. [Going.

Zor. O stay, Don Maurice, stay.

Maur. Why? How is this?

Zor. I cannot stir without thee.

Maur. What is the matter, lady? You are
pale.

Zor. I've wrench'd my foot: I'm lame; I'm faint
with pain.

I pray thee let me lean upon thine arm.

Maur. Ay, to the world's end. Nay, lean all
thy weight,

And let me bear thee up: thou dost but grasp me
As if to hold me fast. The pain is violent.

Zor. No, it is better now; 'tis almost gone,
But I walk lamely still. Let us proceed. [Exeunt.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An open entrance hall in the castle. JEROME,
vassals, and domestics, are discovered in waiting.
Enter PIETRO.

Pie. (to JER.) So, our good master is return'd in
safety:

May I not see him?

Jer. No, not now, good Pietro.

Pie. Not now! how so? It is my privilege,
Which he has granted to this hoary head,
To see him, unreprieved, when'er I list.
I needs must greet him.

Jer. Thou hadst better not!

Donna Zorada is not in the castle
To welcome his return: till he hath seen her,
I think thy courtesies would have small chance
Of courteous reception.

Pie. Well, be it so: what changes wedlock
makes,

That Don Romiero should be so possess'd!
He should have wedded earlier, as I think,
Or not so young a bride. For, as they say,
Let all things be in right and due proportion.
Let not the hart play gambols with the fawn.
Plant not a sprig olive by the side
Of the broad oak. Link not the bony stag-
hound—

Jer. Truce with thy wisdom, now! see, he is
coming.

Enter ROMIERO, in a hurried, impatient manner, fol-
lowed by GUZMAN.

Rom. Not yet return'd! Go, Jerome, to the
wood,

That is her favourite walk.

Jer. Please you, my lord, I have sent Blas
already

To search the wood, and now he is return'd.

Enter BLAS.

Rom. Hast found her, Blas?

Blas. Yes, she will soon be here;
She's coming from the wood.

Rom. With steps, I warrant,
Light as the bounding roe.

Blas. Nay, good my lord,

Donna Zorada, somewhat lame, I guess,
Comes with slow steps, supported on the arm
Of young Don Maurice.

Rom. I'll bear her in my arms: she is in pain.

The very pressure of the velvet turf

Will do her injury. [Exit hastily.

Guz. (to PIE.) Thou wearst a surly smile upon
thy face,

Good Pietro, mine old friend; what may it mean?
Thy lord, methinks, is a right tender husband.

Pie. Ay, marry is he! I remember well
His lady mother urged him oft to wed.

"Become a woman's toy!" quoth he: "am I
Of such soft matter form'd, that you, forsooth
Would make a husband of me?" Then he'd

speak
Of women, even the fairest and the best,
With such sharp taunts, that she, good lady, sigh'd,
And in despair forbore all further plea.

Guz. But dost thou think he spake unfeignedly?

Pie. Why should he feign with her who gave him birth?

She was a woman of good parts, well taught, Sober, and wise.

Guz. And yet it might be so.

Pie. I cannot tell; for now, as I remember, His love for Donna Laura none suspected, Till he was found at midnight in the vault Lamenting o'er her grave.

'Twas said that many a night a sheeted spectre Haunted the spot: that spectre was Romiero.

Guz. It might be so: and yet he is not close, Concealing what he feels, but with his friends Free and confiding.

Pie. Yes, St. Lawrence bless him. His thoughts must have their vent; but yet I say, And know it well, none did suspect his love Till he was found lamenting o'er her grave. Ah! many a cheerful face hides careful heart! This is a saying well approved by all.

For sound experience teaches many things, Which, as my mother, heaven rest her soul, Was wont to say——

Guz. Excuse me now, good Pietro; I'll stay and hear it all another time;

I am in haste. [*Exit.*
Pie. (looking after him with displeasure). He too in haste! That light and heedless youth,

Full of their youthful sports, should be impatient When sober serious men begin to speak, Is nothing marvellous; it was always so. But now the evil still goes on increasing, And men of middle age and understanding Are e'en as light and foolish as the young. An evil sign, I trow, of evil times.

Should it go on increasing, by my certes! Ere I have spoken half a sentence, off Each foolish varlet I address will run, And leave me most discourteously to find, As it may chance, another auditor For the remaining half.—O foolish times! Foolish and evil too! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

ZORADA's apartment. Enter ROMIERO and ZORADA.

Rom. Feelst thou no pain, my love? Thou art fatigued.

Ah! why didst thou refuse thine own support? These arms that to the earth's far verge would bear, Blessing their toil, so sweet, so dear a burthen.

Zor. Indeed, my lord, I needed no support; The pain had passed away: I walked with ease.

Rom. The foolish envious pain which east thee, sweet,

Upon another's care. Thus, thus, and thus [*Kissing her cheeks, and then both her hands, one after the other.*

I pay thee my devotion. Nay, look on me, Smile on me thy sweet smiles, and raise thine eyes, Sweet mate, sweet play-fellow, pretty Zorada!

Zor. Nay, good my lord, these words are full of fondness,

And yet they please me not. What shall I say? Speak to me as a wife, companion, friend, Not as a petted darling. Art thou well? How has it fared with thee since last we parted? My father too—what dost thou know of him?

Rom. Thou needst not fear for him; he has escaped;

He is in safety in a foreign land, Where he, I hope, will end his days in peace.

Zor. And shall I ne'er behold his face again? [*He shakes his head.*

O but I will! I'll go to comfort him, And so wilt thou. Why dost thou turn from me? May it not be?

Rom. Oh ask me not! I've sworn——

Zor. What hast thou sworn?

Rom. I cannot tell thee now.

Zor. Then it is true!

[*Turning from him with violent gestures of distress and displeasure to the end of the chamber; then returning and looking in his face upbraidingly.*

How couldst thou; Oh! how couldst thou Swear to deliver to the tyrant's vengeance, Dead or alive, wherever thou shalt find him, My father, thine old friend, the brave Sebastian? Is it not so? If thou hast sworn an oath Less terrible than this, tell it me quickly.

Rom. Dear love, he is in safety far from hence, This oath, as to his life, is nugatory; And, but for it, thou ne'er hadst seen thy husband. Thou knowst the cruel nature of Don Pedro. Ah! why that face of sorrow and displeasure? Alas! I see I am not welcome here.

Zor. No; say not so.

Rom. How can I then explain Thy sad averted looks? Where art thou going?

Zor. I'm faint; I am not well; I'm sick at heart; I long to be alone.

Rom. Life of my life! Indeed, thou art not well; Then wherefore leave this chamber?

[*Pointing to a couch.*
Here lay thee down, and I will watch by thee.

Zor. I'll rest me in my closet for a while!

I'm wayward grown, and love to be alone.

Rom. No; say not so; I know thou art not wayward;

It is not in thy nature; but distress, From filial duty, strain'd, perhaps, too far, Hath made thee so. Remain, my love, with me; Thou wilt forgive me when thou hast consider'd.

Zor. I cannot now consider, with a heart Gored to the quick. I pray you, then, my lord, Permit me to retire.

Rom. I'll lead thee to thy closet : lean on me.

[*She waves him off with her hand.*]

Wilt thou not deign to do it ?

[*Exit ZORADA, still motioning him not to follow her ; (stopping, with clasped hands, in a thoughtful posture, after having paced several times rapidly across the room.)*]

An absent father and a present husband
I th' scales are put, and, to all outward seeming,
The last doth kick the beam. Is it for this—
For this that I have given my freedom up,
Drawn every strong affection of my heart
To one dear point ?—and this the poor return !

[*After a second pause.*]

My life in such a perilous circumstance,
And now restored to her and to my home !
This is of small account. O woman, woman !
One corner of a gallant's passing fancy
Pleaseth thee well ; the whole devoted heart
Of man matur'd is to thee as a yoke, [escape ;
A cumb'rous weight from which thou wouldst
And friendship, filial duty, every tie
Defrauds thy husband of his dear-earned rights.

[*After pacing again through the room as before.*]

I am a fool ! I knew the heart of woman—
Knew what she had to give, and, Oh ! too well,
What might, at price of many an inward pang,
To her be given ; yet, ne'ertheless, forsooth !
I murmur at my lot.

[*These last words spoken while DON GUZMAN is entering behind him.*]

Guz. What art thou mutt'ring ? Murmurs at thy lot !

Were these the words I heard thee utter now
In such a smother'd voice ? With fair Zorada
Within that lot comprised, wouldst thou exchange it
For any other man's ?

Rom. No ; not for his who fills th' imperial throne.

Guz. What ails thee, then, possessing such a treasure ?

Rom. Ay, if I did possess it.

Guz. Dost thou not ?

Rom. The heart I do not. Call ye it possessing,
When any tie of friendship or of nature
Crosses the vows which she has given to love ?

Guz. I do not understand fantastic notions
And fine-span niceties of sentiment.
I'll comprehend thee better presently.

Rom. 'Tis plain and simple matter. My return,
Though from a perilous state, gives to Zorada
Slight pleasure : her affections and concern
Are all engross'd by what is duty call'd
To her unhappy father. I am nothing.

Guz. And is this all, indeed, that troubles thee ?

Rom. Should there be more ? Why dost thou smile so strangely ?

Guz. At thy most simple folly, noble friend.
Surely the man in these degenerate days,

When every high-plumed youth and idle stripling
Hath leave to play his gambols in the sight
Of maids and married dames without reproof,
And pour bewitching nonsense in their ears
At feast or tourney, is most fortunate,
Who can but charge a young and lovely wife
With too much duteous love for her old father.

[*Laughing heartily.*]

I needs must laugh : thou art fantastical.

Rom. No ; thou art light of heart and canst not judge :

Having no care thyself, thou art incredulous
Of any cause which others have for care.
To speak to thee of what I feel, is folly,
Though, from long habitude, I needs must do it.
Thou hast no sympathy, and yet my heart
Clings to thee as a friend.

Guz. Nay ; fie upon thee !
Thou knowst full well that unto the world's end
I'd run to serve thee, though my pliant lip
Cannot approve of all thy fleeting notions.

But we'll debate no more on things so irksome.
I came to say that Maurice hath invited me
To see some curious cave which yesterday
He first discover'd, as along the shore
In quest of sea-birds' eggs he idly wander'd.

Rom. Has he been here so long ?

Guz. Doubtless he has. It is a curious sight
This fairy cave, as he described it to me :

I shall be absent for an hour or so ;
Perhaps, a little longer.

[*Exit.*]

Rom. (*alone*). He is fortunate,
Who can but charge a young and lively wife
With too much duteous love for her old father !
The smile that follow'd too,—that had its meaning.
Lame and not lame, and leaning on his arm !
The stroke darts through me like an adder's sting,
Though but so slightly given.

Re-enter GUZMAN with MAURICE.

Guz. Maurice is come with me to tempt thee out,
If we may be so bold. The fairy cave
Is a short ride from hence, the day is cool,
And we will wait thy pleasure.

Maur. I pray you be entreated, good my lord.

Rom. I thank ye both ; I mean to stay at home.

Maur. What ! here alone, the ladies being re-tired ?

On such a day as this, when the blue waves
Heaving and sinking in the sunny gleam,
Show all the changes of their crisped sides
Like the seam'd foldings of a silken robe ;
When every sea-bird is upon the wing
Skimming and diving for his finny prey ;
When distant vessels, tacking to the breeze,
Seem dames whose snowy kirtles are stretch'd out
To the slow measure of some courtly dance ;—
On such a day as this to stay at home
In gloomy chambers pent—

Rom. Surprises thee.

Maur. In truth it does. Methinks on such a day,
Did not we see above the glassy brine
The mast of that wreck'd vessel still appear
To tell the dismal tale of last night's storm,
One would with buoyant heart say to the ocean,
Let us career it o'er thy surgy fields
To every coast o' th' earth.

Rom. I doubt not, sir, 'tis a fair sight to those
Who come so far afield to look upon it.
Is thine old tutor dead, or dame Magera,
That thou art rambling gallantly at large
In this our distant province?—Dost thou blush?
That is a folly, if thou hast no cause.

Maur. I fear, my lord, I have offended you.
I am as free to ramble now at large
As any he who reckons twice my years;
Nor should my visit to this distant province
Be deem'd an idle ramble; Don Fernandez,
My aged kinsman, claims some duty of me:
I am an inmate of his lonely tower.

Guz. Pooch! boy, thou'st said enough, and some-
what more:

Who cares about thy visit to thy kinsman?

Rom. Who does not care? It is an age of duty;
Nought now is cherish'd in the tender breast
But ties of blood; and his good company,
With all his lore and saws and thrice-told tales,
Will well reward the virtue of this youth.
Go to your cave, and see it in its beauty:
The billows else may wash its shelly sides,
And make it bare and little worth to-morrow.

(*Aside to GUZMAN.*) Take him away: why do ye
linger here?

Guz. (*aside to him.*) Why speakest thou so un-
kindly to the youth?

Rom. (*aside.*) Spoke I unkindly? Then 'twas
unawares,
I meant it not.

Guz. (*aside.*) Be civil to him then, and make
amends;

He stares and wonders at such taunting words.

Rom. (*aloud.*) A pleasant ride, my friends.

[*They turn to go, and he calls after them.*]

And hark, Don Maurice!

If thou prefer'st a wayward captious host
(For such I do confess myself to be),
With two fair ladies (both methinks are fair),
To thine old kinsman's company, return,
And be one night at least our honour'd guest.

Maur. I do, with thanks, accept your courtesy.

[*Exeunt MAURICE and GUZMAN.*]

Rom. (*looking after MAURICE.*) The very eye and
visage, light and thoughtless;
A woman's varying blushes with the tint
Of sun-burnt hunter mix'd; the very form,
Slight as a stripling, sturated as a man,
Which has—detested spell! so oft beguiled
The female fancy, prizing worthless show.

(*After a pause.*) Can it be so? O no! it cannot be;
I but distract myself. I'll crush within me
All thoughts which this way tend, as pois'nous asp
That sting the soul and turn its bliss to bane.

(*After another pause.*) To think of it no more, in-
deed, were good,

If it were possible. And yet to know
The truth, if fair or foul, were better still;
They are both placed beneath my observation;
'Tis well I did invite him for the night.

[*Rings a bell violently.*]

Enter JEROME.

[*A pause, ROMERO seeming unwilling to speak.*]

Jer. What do you want, my lord?

Rom. Thyself, good Jerome.
Who follow'd thee? I heard a creaking step.

Jer. It was mine own, my lord.

Rom. 'Tis well; come nearer, man. How many
oaks

Have by my brawny foresters been fell'd,
Since I left home?

Jer. I do not know, my lord.

Shall I inquire?

Rom. Of what wouldst thou inquire?

Jer. The oaks which you have just been speaking
of.

Do you not wish to know—

Rom. True; but I have another thing to say.
How many times hath this young don been here
To visit Donna Beatrice?

Jer. To visit her?

Rom. Yes, fool! to visit her.

Why dost thou look so strangely at the question?
Answer it in few words and faithfully.

Jer. He hath, for some days past, come to the
gate,

At noon-tide hour or so, but whom to visit

It suits not me to say.

Rom. Then! 'tis not Beatrice he comes to visit?

Jer. It does not so appear; it may,—it may
not.

Rom. Why dost thou hesitate and stammer thus?
Art thou afraid to speak? What is the matter?

Jer. Nothing, my lord, but you did fix your eyes
With such a keen intenseness on my face,
I fear'd I might offend.

Rom. How fear'd, unless the thing thou hast to say
Should be of bad import?

Jer. As I breathe life,
Nothing of good or bad import have I

To tell your honour.

Rom. Well, well! be it so.
Thy strange bewilder'd face made me suspect thee.
Why dost thou wait?

Jer. Your further pleasure, sir.

Rom. There's nothing else.—Yes, yes! go bid
my huntsman

Prepare him for to-morrow's early chace.

Jer. Why, good my lord! he died the very day
Before you left the castle.

Rom. Ay, true, I had forgotten. — Get thee gone.

[*Exit* JEROME.]

(*Alone.*) I like not his sear'd face and wary words :
Something is always wrong when such as he
Stammer, and stare, and weigh their phrases so.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Night. *A grove near the walls of the castle, which
is seen in the background, the moon appearing be-
hind it.*

Enter MAURICE.

Maur. (after listening). No footstep near, no
stirring of the boughs, [motionless,
Which cast their darken'd forms, distinct and
Athwart the paly lustre of the moon!
No gentle messenger to meet my hopes! —
Ah Hope! who makest the lover still thy fool!
Do I not know that she would give her presence
To no man living at an hour like this,
In such a spot as this, yet twice already
Some birch's shiny stem or blossom'd shrub
Hath been to me her very form and semblance.
She may despise my billet — tear it — burn it,
Yet my heart beats as though — Ha! here comes
Jerome.

Enter JEROME.

What news?

Jer. Good news.

Maur. I'd smother thee with kisses,
But that thou art such an unseemly hound.
How look'd she? Was she angry? Was she
pleas'd?

Will she vouchsafe to hear me plead my suit?

Jer. She will.

Maur. And where?

Jer. In the long gallery,

Now unfrequented. I will be on watch

That no intruder break upon your meeting.

Maur. Prince of Castile, go doff thy hat and
plume;

I am a prouder, happier man than thou! [without.

Jer. Hush, hush! begone, — I hear a noise

Maur. Where?

Jer. To the right. We'll take the other path;

Though I must needs return by this again.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter ZORADA and Nurse by the opposite side.

Zor. Stand thou aside, good nurse; I'll on some
paces,

And softly call; if he be near at hand,

He'll know my voice.

[*Coming forward to a thicket near the front of
the stage.*]

Ho! art thou there? come forth; — come forth and
fear not.

Perhaps he has mistaken thy direction,

I think he is in covert farther on.

I hear a rustling, yonder, to the left.

[*Returns again to the bottom of the stage, and
enter* SEBASTIAN. *They embrace each other,
while nurse stands apart.*]

Seb. My child! my dear Zorada!

Zor. Dear, dear father!

Seb. And thou must meet me as a man pro-
scribed:

Child of a parent, reft of name and honours,
Bann'd by the church, and by the laws condemn'd
E'en to the traitor's death of degradation :
One whom to name were pain and insult to thee ;
One now despised of all, forgot, accurst.

Zor. O not accurst! for I will bless thee, father,
Though every other tongue should blast thy fame.
O not forgotten! I'll remember thee ;
Ay; nightly, daily, hourly, in my thoughts
Shalt thou have place; more cherish'd — more
endear'd,

For that all hearts beside have shut thee out.

O not despised! for I will honour thee,

And in my pious thoughts, as now in act,

Kneel at thine honour'd feet in faithful duty.

Seb. Rise, dearest, kindest, best, mine own Zo-
rada!

Yes, child; thou shalt be all the world to me;

But it must be a faint, ideal world.

I may in dreams, in thought, in musing fancy

Behold thy face, thy form, — may hear thy voice —

But many a league of ocean and of land

Must lie between us. E'en my dying day

Will not be lighten'd with one look of thine.

Zor. (after weeping on his neck). We do not
know what heaven appoints for us.

Seb. Has Don Romero spoken aught to thee

Respecting my sad fate?

Zor. He has: 'tis true — the dreadful tale is
true.

The king has bound him by the horrid oath

Which thou didst mention to me. — Base com-
pliance!

Seb. Nay, blame him not; he took it in the faith

That I was safe, beyond the reach of power.

But this being so, I needs must rest in hiding,

Secure and close, till thou canst find a vessel

To take me from the coast.

Zor. There is within the precincts of this wood

An old abandon'd chapel, where the dead

Rest undisturbed. No living tenant there,

But owl hooting on the ruin'd tower,

Or twitt'ring swallow in his eaves-screen'd nest,

Will share the dismal shelter: for a time

Thou mayst be there secure. My good old nurse

Has all things duly stored for food and rest,

And will conduct thee to it. Come, dear nurse!

Greet thine old master in his time of sorrow,
And take of him good care.

Nurse. Yea, that I will; for unto me and mine
He hath been ever kind and bountiful.

O woe the day! that I should have occasion
To do him such a service!

Seb. Ay, nurse; there be sad changes in men's
fortunes.

The day when first I saw thee to thy breast
Lay this dear child, a little toothless infant,
Whilst o'er ye both bent with fond beaming eyes
The best and fairest lady of the land,
For so she was,—that was indeed a day—
A day of brightness. Ah! how different
From this most dismal hour!

Nurse. She was a noble lady, fair and gentle!
This wicked world did not deserve to hold her,
And so her time was short. And for her babe—
My babe;—I call'd her mine, and still will call
her,—

A very cherub, peeping from the clouds,
As our fair pictures show them, is less beautiful
Than she half-covered with her cradle-clothes,
When waking from her morning's sleep, appear'd.
Ah me! the pleasant days that I remember!

Zor. (*alarmed.*) I hear a noise.

Seb. Thou art, my dearest child, alarm'd for
nothing.

Zor. Yes; I fear every thing. But, right or
wrong,

Go instantly, nor linger longer here.
Nay, go: we do not part: I'll see thee soon.

Seb. Heaven bless thee, then! Come, nurse, I'm
now thy child,

Cherish me kindly.

Nurse. Ay, bless your honour! I will do my
best.

I'd give the life-blood in this poor old heart
For you and yours.

[*Exeunt* SEBASTIAN and nurse. ZORADA goes
by the opposite side, meeting JEROME, who
enters at the same time, and hurries along,
covering her face as she passes him.

Jer. Who's that who starts aside with guilty
haste? [Following her.

Ho! damsel, mistress, whosoe'er thou be,
Let me have words of thee. I swear, good faith!
I'll take thee safely to thy rendezvous,
If thou wilt trust me.

[Following her off the stage, and then returning.
What have I done? What have I seen? No face,
For that was closely cover'd, but the figure,
The robe, the air,—if it be not Zorada,
I am a fool—a purblind, mazy fool,
And do not know my right hand from my left.
What brings her here? Were't any other woman,
It were an easy thing to guess her purpose.
Well, who lives long may see strange things, they
say;

And if I needs must give my thoughts the rein,
I'll curb my tongue. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*An outer room in the apartments of ZORADA, with a
wide door opening in the bottom of the stage, which
shows a magnificent bedchamber, where ROMIERO
is discovered walking to and fro in a distracted
manner; he then rushes hastily from it to the front
of the stage, and bends his ear to listen.*

Rom. No footstep yet: all's still: 'tis past en-
durance.

So late! the first night, too, of my return!
Is it the tardiness of cold aversion?

'Tis more than that; some damned conference
Elsewhere detains her. Ay, that airy fool
Wore at the supper-board a conscious look,
Glancing in concert with the half-check'd smile
That mov'd his quiv'ring cheek, too well betraying
His inward triumph: 'twas a curs'd smile;
I would have cast my javelin at his throat,
But shame withheld me.—She the while did sit
With pensive fearful eye, that always fell,
Beneath my keen inquiring look, reproved.
Is virtue thus demure, restrain'd, mysterious?
She, too, who was as cheerful as the light,
Courting the notice of my looks! no, no!
Some blasting change is here. What can be done?
For something must be done.

[*A pause and listening.*

Ho there without!

Who walks at this late hour?—A heavy step;
Have they their emissaries on the watch
To give them notice of my movements? Ho!
Ho there without!

Enter Servant.

What dost thou up? Why art thou not abed?

Serv. My lord, it is not yet our hour of rest.

Rom. Thou liest! 'Tis late; 'tis past the mid-
night watch.

Serv. I do believe scarce half an hour has past
Since I did light your honour from the hall.

Rom. Peace! thou art fool or knave, I know not
which.

I've pass'd since then two hours as truly told
As sun on dial moves.—Why shrinkst thou back?

Serv. I hear my lady coming.

Rom. Coming at last! Haste! leave me; go thy
ways. [*Exit servant.*

[*Putting out a lamp which stands on a side table.*
Out light! The partial gleam from yonder door,
Will, as she enters, fall upon her strongly;
I'll stand aside, and mark her face unseen.

Enter ZORADA, who stops short to wipe tears from her eyes, &c., as if preparing herself to appear composed; whilst ROMERO, in the shade, after eyeing her suspiciously, bursts suddenly upon her.

Have done with all this smoothing of thy features,
And look as sad and rueful as thou wilt.
The tardy, slow unwillingness, and all
Thy strange demeanour of this day, too well
Speak that which e'en the smiles of Hebe's cheek,
Hadst thou more female art such smiles to copy,
Could not gainsay.—Where hast thou been so
long?

Wilt thou not answer me?

Zor. You frighten me, Romero, as I reckon
'Tis little past our usual hour of rest.

Rom. Thou dost evade the question. Not the
time;—

Where hast thou been?

Zor. Have patience—O have patience!
Where I have been I have done thee no wrong:
Let that suffice thee.

Rom. Ha! thou'rt quick, methinks,
To apprehend suspicion. Done no wrong!
What call'st thou wrong? Yea, by that sacred
band

Which linketh soul to soul in wedded love,
Pure, fervent, and confiding,—every thought,
Fancy, and consciousness, that from thy husband,
Unfitting for his ear, must be withheld,
Is wrong to him, and is disgrace to thee.

Zor. Then woe is me! Since wives must be so
perfect,

Why didst thou wed Zorada de Modinez?

Rom. Dost thou upbraid me for it? Then too
well

I see the change.—Yes, I will call it change,
For I must still believe thou lovedst me once.

Zor. Yes, yes! I loved thee once, I love thee
now,
And will for ever love thee, dear Romero,
If thou wilt suffer me.

Rom. Suffer thee, dear Zorada! it is paradise
To think thou lovest me, hell to doubt of it.

Zor. Then doubt it not. If I am cold and sad,
I have a cause,—I must repeat my words,—
Which does to thee no wrong. Some few days
hence

Thou shalt know all, and thou wilt pity me.
Did I e'er tell thee that which afterwards
Thou foundst to be untrue?

Rom. Thou never didst.

Zor. Then why suspect me now?
Rom. Give me thy dear, dear hand, my own
sweet wife!

Yes, I will trust thee, and do thou the while
Think charitably of my stern rebuke.
Love can be stern as well as tender, yet
Be all the while most true and fervent love.

But go to rest, dear child, and I will follow thee;
For it indeed is late.

[*Stands musing as she retires, then turning sud-
denly.*

Zorada!

Zor. (*returning*). What, my lord?

Rom. Forget not, love,
That soothing ointment of such efficacy.

Zor. For what, I pray?

Rom. Didst thou not wrench thy foot?

Zor. O, not at all.

Rom. Didst thou not say thou hadst?

Zor. O that was but a feint to cheat Don Maurice.

Rom. To cheat him! wherefore cheat him? for
what end?

Was it a time for childish freaks like that?
And the deep colour crimsoning thy cheek—
What does it say?—Go to! thou needst not speak.

Zor. Indeed, indeed you err; my heedless
words—

Rom. Were very, very heedless.—Go to bed;
Go, go! my hour of rest is distant still.
Linger not here, I say; retire to rest.

[*Exit ZORADA into the chamber.*
(*After musing some time.*) I do not think her wicked,
but there lurk

Within her fancy vain and dangerous things.
Those striplings,—those light, beardless playfellows!
The devil himself hath not an imp more subtle
Than one of these.—They laugh, and mock, and
mimic,

And cast upon the lovely face of virtue,
The gloomy veil of cloister'd melancholy,
While vice is all so gay and deftly trick'd,
That who can choose but range them on her side?
To break down every sacred tie, what is it?
'Tis but a merry trick!—

Ay, she was wary, too, in her expressions:
"Did I e'er tell thee that which afterwards
Thou foundst to be untrue."—Equivocation,
A half-corrupted woman's poor device.

[*Muses and mutters to himself a few moments
longer, and then paces up and down with slow
irresolute steps.*

—A half corrupted woman!
If it be come to this, who shall restrain
The hateful progress, which as rapidly—
Restrain it! No! to hell's profoundest pit
Let it conduct her, if she hath so far
Debased her once pure mind, and injured me.
I dare not think on't, yet I am compell'd;
And at the very thought a raging fire
Burns in my head, my heart, through every vein
Of this distracted frame. I'll to the ramparts,
And meet the chillness of the midnight wind;
I cannot rest beneath this hateful roof. [Exit.

SCENE II.

An old Gothic gallery, with doors leading to different apartments.

Enter JEROME, carrying a light, and followed by DON MAURICE.

Maur. I am the first at our appointed place,
Which is beseeching in affairs of love.
I hope, meantime, she is upon the way.
List, dost thou hear a step?

Jer. My ears are not so quick. [nothing?]

Maur. Am I again deceived? and hearest thou

Jer. I hear the swallows stirring in their nests,
Disturb'd with sudden light. Such creatures build
In ev'ry crevice of those mouldering arches.

Maur. Didst thou not tell me these adjoining
chambers

Are all untenanted, and no one near us.

Jer. (pointing). Yes, all are empty but that fur-
ther room,

In which Don Guzman chooses to abide,
That from its lofty windows he may see
A more extensive prospect.

Maur. Would he were at the utmost verge of all
That may be thence survey'd!—I like it not:
He is a dangerous neighbour.

Jer. But he is tired and gone, ere this, to rest:
You need not fear to be disturb'd by him.

Maur. I hear a footstep now: she comes, she
comes!

O she is good and punctual to my wish!
Do thou retire, good Jerome.

Enter BEATRICE attended, and JEROME with her
female attendant keep on the background, while
MAURICE, running eagerly to her, leads her nearer
the front.

My charming Beatrice! may I indeed
Believe that thou art here; that thou vouchsafest
To come with thoughts of favour for thy slave?

Bea. Perhaps I do but dream I am so bold.
It is so strange,—my mind is so bewilder'd!

Maur. And why bewilder'd, love? There's nought
to fear.

Bea. I've heard sounds of alarm, and seen faint
forms,

That seem'd to follow me, and yet were nothing.
I thought the very stones of the old walls
Did call my name and know me as I pass'd.

Maur. Fear nothing, love: this place is unfre-
quented:

Swallows or bats may whisper of our meeting,
But nought besides.—Oh! how I have desired
To tell thee all my heart; on bended knee
To plead my cause!—My fate is in thy hands;
And since thou hast such pity of my pain
As thus to listen to me, may I hope
Thou wilt be better still?

Bea. Go not so fast: perhaps I am but come
To chide thee for thy most presumptuous message.

Maur. And if thou do, I'll bear it all so meekly,
That thou wilt say within thy cunning self,
"This man, in truth, is made to be a husband."

Bea. It were no cunning but a foolish self
Could hold such inward parley. Every gallant
Would laugh most certainly within himself,
On hearing such a sober, grave conclusion
Join'd to the noted name of gay Don Maurice.

Maur. Nay, do not twit me now with all the
freaks,

And levities, and gambols charged upon me
By every lean-faced dame that wears a hood.

I will be grave, and dismal, and punctilious
As heir at miser's funeral, if thou wilt,
And all the while as blithe o' heart as he.

I have as many fashions and demeanours,
As mantles in a lady's wardrobe; choose,—
I'll be what'er thou wilt, if in return
Thou wilt obey me but for some few hours.

Bea. I hear a noise.

Maur. Only the wind that moves yon creaking
door.

Step further this way.

[Leading her to the opposite side of the stage,
near the door of GUZMAN'S chamber.

The time is precious, my most charming mistress!
Let me speak plainly in few words. Thou knowst
How much I fear Romiero's apt suspicion.
Delay were dangerous: therefore by the dawn,
In the dark grove of pines, meet me, prepared
To quit with me the castle, and for life
To share my lot. Deny me not: time presses:
O let me urge thee!—As for life I plead.

Bea. (after a pause). What can I say?—I feel
I should not say it,

And yet I feel thou dost not plead in vain.

Maur. Thou'lt meet me then,—do not retract
thy words.

There is no time for slow deliberation.

Thou'lt meet me by the dawn?

Bea. Yes; I will meet thee in the grove of pines.

Enter at the bottom of the stage a Servant, who
whispers to JEROME, and then retires, upon which
JEROME advances hastily to MAURICE.

Maur. What is the matter?

Jer. Romiero is not yet in bed. A spy
Who stood on watch without has given me notice.
He wanders through the house like one possess'd,
And may at last invade your privacy.

Maur. He is not yet so near us. We shall hear
him

Ere he approach.

Jer. His motions oft are sudden.

Bea. Retire, retire! I'll meet thee by the dawn;
So, till that time, adieu. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

DON GUZMAN's chamber, who is discovered sleeping in his chair.

Enter ROMERO.

Rom. Not yet abed! Ay, but he is asleep. Happy unwedded! Thou canst soundly sleep; Nor woman's fickleness, nor woman's guilt, Can bring disgrace or agony to thee. I'll not disturb him.

[After remaining for awhile on the front of the stage musing and muttering to himself, he speaks, but in a low voice.

The heart, the heart! What prize we but the heart! [Mutters again, then breaks out in loud and vehement utterance.

No; though his lips had never touch'd her hand, If that be lost, I'm wretched!

Guz. (waking). What sound is that? Who's there? Ha! thou, my friend!

Rom. What has so startled thee?

Guz. The voice that woke me.

Thou must have heard it; 'twas a human voice.

Rom. It was mine own, Don Guzman.

Guz. What has befallen? Why wert thou so alarm'd?

Or was it some sharp pang of bodily pain?

Rom. No, no! it was not that; and I am here Only to share thy chamber for the night.

Guz. And why? I am amazed.

Rom. I've paced o'er ramparts, halls, and galleries, Till I have need of rest.

Guz. And thou wouldst find it here? What strange caprice

Debars thee from the fair Zorada's chamber; That place which gives the rest of paradise?

Rom. Ah! so it did to me. It was a spot Where every lovely—every sweetest thing

In seeming shelter, bloom'd i' th' early sun, Till the first sultry breath of southern winds

Blasted its freshness, leaving nought behind But tainted fragrance—sere and faded flowers.

It was the magic palace of a dream, Changed in an instant to some dismal den:

It was a bower of healthful innocence, Changed to a lazar's vile and loathly ward:

It was—Oh, oh! I know not what I say, Thinking of what I was and what I am. [pause;

Guz. Nay; give thy ruffled thoughts a little Be well assured things are not as thou fearest. She did appear so good.

Rom. Alas! she did.

If I but droop'd or look'd a little pale, The stroke of her soft hand, her kindly words, Her sweet breath on my cheek,—O! it did turn The hour of pain to bliss!—And all this happiness Was but delusion—but a hovering vapour That covers for awhile the fenny pool.

Guz. No, say not so! Is it not far more likely That the delusion rests with thee, my friend?

Rom. (after musing, and without heeding what GUZMAN has said). Ay, if I did but droop, her look of sympathy

Went to my soul. Or if I parted from her, Though only for a week—a day—

Guz. Cease, cease! Be well assured it is not as thou fearest.

Try to compose thyself: what are thy proofs That she has been unfaithful?

Rom. No; what a worldly judge would deem unfaithful

I trust she has not been; but what avails it?

He whom her fancy follows, he who pleases Her secret thoughts and wishes, is her lord,

Let who will, by the power of legal right,

Her body hold in thralldom.—Not unfaithful!

If I have lost her heart, I've suffer'd all.

No further outrage can enhance my wretchedness.

[Turning quickly and taking hold of him. But thou believest that, e'en in this, my fears Are mere extravagance.

[Pausing and looking earnestly in his face. Dost thou not think so? Dost thou not, Don Guzman?

Guz. I hope they are.

Rom. That hope implies a doubt; Ay, and a doubt which, when I saw thee last, Did not exist. Speak, speak! If thou mistrust her, It is on no slight grounds.

Guz. Be more composed, and I will tell thee all. Rom. There's something then to tell; some

damned thing. [all, Guz. Nay, think not so; for, when I've told thee

'Twill make no certain proof against Zorada. And since thou thinkst her love for thee is changed, Caring but for her love, thou mayst the better Endure to learn the worst, if such should follow.

Rom. (in a faint voice). I understand thee. Guz. Two hours since, perhaps—

I've been asleep, and cannot say how long— But pause we now. Thy quiv'ring lips are white,

Thine eyes are fix'd: lean upon me, my friend. Rom. A sickly faintness passes o'er my heart.

Guz. (supporting him to the chair). Lean here awhile; thou canst not hear me yet.

Rom. I'm better now.

Guz. But we will pause awhile.

Rom. Proceed, proceed! I'll listen, though thy words

Were each the spik'd tooth of a martyr's wheel.

Proceed:—Some two hours since— [sleep,

Guz. Some two hours since, as, not disposed to I was perusing that old book of stories,

I heard, and, as I judged, close to the door,

Two persons speaking in the gallery.

The voice of Maurice I could recognise,

The other was a woman's.

Rom. (starting from the chair). And Zorada's.

Guz. Use not such frantic gestures of despair; I say not it was her's: perhaps it was not; Perhaps 'twas Donna Beatrice.

Rom. No, no! It was Zorada. Absent from her chamber I found her at that time. When she return'd, At a late hour, we had some wrangling words, Glaz'd o'er, but poorly glaz'd, with female fraud, Which soon betray'd itself, and then I left her.

Guz. 'Tis very strange; and what I heard them say —

Rom. Ay, ay! proceed with that; and make no pause

Till thou hast told the whole, though it should make me

A very fiend of agony and shame.

Guz. Thou grasp'st my throat so hard, I cannot speak.

Rom. Well, well, then! Out with all their damned words,

Till they have proved the blackest tint of guilt, And then will come the fatal end of all; The sabre clutch'd in strength; the stroke of vengeance;

The horrible joy, that lasteth for a moment! Let all this be; let horror be unstinted! Let every misery light upon the head Of that most wanton—No, the word would choke me;

I will not utter it.

Guz. Thou art beside thy wits; thou canst not hear me.

The words they spoke, prove against her, and no one,

An act of guilt, but only the intent.

Rom. Intent! O monstrous! foul deliberation! If life-blood warm his heart another day, I am bereft, debased, and brutified, Unmeet to wear the outward form of manhood.

Guz. Wilt thou not hear my story?

Rom. I have heard it, Knowing the cursed purport; ne'ertheless, Relate it all, minutely as thou wilt, I'll listen to the end. [words

Guz. I drew close to the door, and heard these distinctly spoken in Don Maurice' voice: —

“Thou knowst I fear Romiero's apt suspicion; “Delay were dangerous; therefore, by the dawn, “Meet me beneath the grove of pines, prepared “To quit the castle. We will fly together:” —

Or words to this effect, which indistinctly Fell into softer whispers, till, alarm'd, As I suppose, they left the gallery.

'Twas my intent to give thee early notice; Therefore I shunn'd that tempting couch, and sought

Here, in my chair, to snatch a little sleep, And be in readiness ere break of day.

Rom. Thou hast done well. [After a pause.

Come to this pitch of secret profligacy, Who was so modest and so timid once! Was I a tyrant, that she is so ready, To doff the virtuous an' respected wife — For the base mistress of that minion too? Some spell, some devilish witchery, hath subdu'd her,

Ere it could come to this.

Guz. Ay, so I think, if that in verity It be Zorada.

Rom. O 'tis she! 'tis she! Thinkst thou I am a fool to be deceived By such affected doubts, in pity utter'd? Speak truly, plainly, treat me as a man. Call them — yea call that woman, an' thou wilt, —

Guz. Fy, fy! Zorada is not yet a —

Rom. (putting his hand on the lips of GUZMAN). Hold!

Speak not the word; I'm weaker than I thought: Is it not near the dawn?

Guz. I think 'tis distant still.

Rom. Surely it is not. We'll to the eastern turret, and look forth: Should they escape! — My brain burns at the thought. [Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A grove of pines, and the sky of morning, before sunrise, seen through them.

Enter ROMIERO and GUZMAN, from a thicket at the bottom of the stage.

Rom. The dull light through yon bank of misty clouds

Hath changed its tanny hue for silver grey; 'Tis near, 'tis actually, 'tis past the time.

Guz. Have patience; for the sun, I guess, is still Behind the eastern hills.

Rom. Should they escape! — Some cursed emissary,

Upon the watch, perhaps, hath given alarm. Should they escape us by some other path! — It must not be: I will look out.

Guz. (drawing him back to the thicket as he is about to advance). Keep still.

I see them now; but let us be conceal'd Till they are nearer.

Rom. They move tardily, With their damn'd dalliance. — So very fond That they forget the peril of their state, Lost in the present bliss. —

Ay; smile with lips which shall, within an hour, Be closed in death; and glance your looks of love

From eyes which shall, ere long, in coldness glare
Like glassy icicles.

Guz. Stay; rush not on them now.

Rom. See that! see that! her hand, and then
her lips!

Shall I look on, and give another moment
To such abhorred transport.—Where's my weapon?

[*Snatching his sword from GUZMAN, who attempts to remove it.*

Guz. Be not a madman in thine ecstasy,
And foil thine own intent.—See, they advance.

Enter MAURICE, leading BEATRICE muffled in her mantle.

Maur. Come, sweetest mistress mine, move we
more quickly;

Our horses wait us some few paces off;
And by the baiting hour, when labouring hinds,
Under some tree, sit round the loos'n'd scrip,
Holding on homely fare a merry feast,
We will, like them, in all security,
Enjoy a welcome rest.

Rom. (*rushing forth*). Which shall to doomsday
last, thou damned villain!

[*Draws fiercely upon him, while BEATRICE runs away. They fight, but she presently returns and rushes between them, favoured by GUZMAN.*

Rom. Forbear, thou shameless woman.—Beatrice!

Bea. It is, my lord; and O have pity on me!
It is myself who am the most to blame.
Pardon my dear, dear Maurice.—Yes, you will.
Your look of strange amazement, changed to joy,
Emboldens me—Our hearts have long been join'd;
O do not sever us!

Rom. No, simple girl:
Sever ye! by the holy rood I will not!
I am right glad that ye are so united.
Stick to it then; be thrifty of your love,
To make it last; be doves in constancy.
Good sooth, young fools! I will not sever ye.

Bea. (*kissing his hand*). Thanks, noble, kind
Romero!

Maur. Thanks for this frank and unexpected
pardon!

I fear'd, my lord, that you might deem it right
To thwart my suit with Beatrice, who lived,
Protected, as her friends might haply think,
Beneath your roof.

Rom. And thou thoughtst justly too.
In cooler blood so ought I to have felt.
Beshrew me! whither fled my wits the while?
I have most freely given what is not mine.
(*To GUZMAN.*) Do thou, my friend, untie this
ravel'd knot.

(*Turning again to MAURICE.*) I'll plead thy cause,
at least, and prove, perhaps,
A powerful advocate.—Speak to them, Guzman;
And promise in my name, without reserve,

All that my honour warrants. I, meantime,
Must make my peace where I have need of pardon.

[*Exit in eager haste.*

Maur. How placable and kind beyond belief!
Would I had fairly own'd to him my love,
Since he is thus inclined! But he appear'd
Hostile, and stern, and fretful at my stay,
Unreasonably prolong'd. I had not courage
To risk my happiness, which his caprice,
Stern sense of honour—call it as you please—
Might in a moment blast.

Guz. I blame thee not; hadst thou at first de-
clared it,
Thou wouldst have found him hostile.

Maur. Then, pray, Don Guzman, what strange
freak hath changed him?

Guz. That he is changed, is your good luck;
improve it,
Without inquiring why you are so favour'd.
Maur. And so we will, sweet Beatrice; we will
Delay our happiness, to make it surer.

Bea. Yes, Maurice; run no further risk; we'll
both
Return again and bide within the castle.

Guz. No; be advised. (*To BEATRICE.*) Do thou
return alone;
Some foolish freak may yet disturb his mind.

I know he'll favour Maurice most when absent.
(*To MAURICE.*) Dost thou not comprehend me?

Maur. Not very clearly: jealousy of one
Whose love is fix'd on an acknowledged mistress,
So fair, so lovely, were absurd—impossible.

Guz. Nay, only say absurd; for there be husbands,
Ay, lovers too, who, should you cross their way,
New-mated with the Queen of Love herself,
And their own dame or mistress were in form
Black as an Ethiop, would ne'ertheless
Suspect you of designs against their peace.
Then wonder not, Zorada being fair,
If fanciful conceits disturb his brain.

Maur. But I'll be circumspect.

Guz. Go, foolish boy!
Thy very shadow on the wall will show
Some indication of sinister wishes.

School thou the substance as thou wilt. Go, go!
And be assured I'll prove thy friend when absent,

Maur. (*to BEATRICE.*) And must we part?

Bea. We shall not part for long.

Maur. No, not for long, sweet maid: beneath
thy window
I'll hold my midnight watch; and when thy case-
ment

Moves slowly on its hinges, I'll look up,
And see thy beauty, by the moon's pale light,
Sending sweet smiles to bless me.—
When thou walkst forth, I'll in some thicket lurk,
To see thee pass—perhaps to touch thy robe.
Wilt thou not give me, dear, before we part,
Some token of thy love?

Bea. Yes, gentle Maurice, thou shalt have a token,
Which every hour thou'lt look upon, and think
How dear, how true——

Guz. I'll leave you for awhile
To settle all this nonsense as you will;
That done, we'll meet again in yonder alley,
And I'll conduct the lady to the castle.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

The apartment of ZORADA. — She enters with nurse, who carries a basket in her hand.

Zor. (*speaking as she enters.*) And see, good nurse, that where the cold wind enter'd
Thou stop the crevice well. Oh! that his head,
His dear and honour'd head, should so be laid,
While I am couch'd on down! Thou sayst his face
Look'd not so sadly as before. [cheerily,

Nurse. Indeed I thought so, madam: he spoke
And listen'd to my stories of past days,
As if he liked to hear them.

Zor. Alas! the very sound of human words,
Address'd to him in peace, is now a solace
Enjoy'd but rarely. — I must talk and smile,
And keep my station at the social board,
While my sad heart is thinking of his silent
And lonely state. — There is my picture then,
Since he desires to have it.

[*Giving her a picture, which she puts into the basket.*]

Nurse. Yes, madam, he did earnestly desire it.
He bade me say to you, no lover ever
Gazed on the features of a plighted mistress
With such intense and yearning love, as he
Will gaze upon this image.

Zor. Yes; he will look, and think that in return
It looks with love on him; but woe is me!
He cannot know how dearly in my heart
His image is impress'd. I call to mind
His kind caresses in my infant years;
His noble form in warlike harness braced,
When he returning caught me to his heart,
And heard my simple welcome with delight,
Filling his eyes with tears. I well remember —
Dost thou not also, nurse? the voice of fondness
With which, e'en when I cross'd his graver mood,
He call'd me little Zada. O 'twas sweet!
I thought so then; but now it haunts mine ear
Like portion of some broken melody,
Which mocking bird is so enamour'd of,
He will not learn the whole. — And say, good nurse,
That I will surely see him ere he go,
If it be possible. [*Exit nurse.*]
(*After a thoughtful pause.*) "My little Zada! tush,
my little fool!

I will not have thee for my playfellow,

If thou be so perverse."

No more than this; this was my worst rebuke.
He set no heartless stepdame o'er my head,
Though many ladies strove to win his love.
He was both sire and mother to his child,
Gentle as her I lost.
Then for his sake I'll willingly endure
The present misery. O, my Romiero!
Wilt thou not trust my conduct for a day? —
Absent all night! To what a state of passion
His brooding fancy must have work'd his mind!
Alas, alas; 'tis his infirmity.

Enter ROMIERO.

Rom. My dear Zorada! dear, dear wife! thy
pardon:

I crave it on my knees. O pardon one
Who has offended from excess of love.
I might have thought all eyes that look'd upon thee,
With more than admiration look'd; but, Oh!
To think that thy pure mind could e'er be moved
To aught which blessed saints might not approve,
Was monstrous, vile — yea a most vile suggestion —
Though all the while 'twas an offence of love.
Thou art amazed, I see, and well thou mayst.
I have but now discover'd what my fears ——

Zor. Fears! What hast thou discover'd? [thee.

Rom. Be not alarm'd; nought that can injure
For if thou hast been privy to their love,
Though I might chide thee as a cunning wife,
Who from her husband hath a secret kept,
The bane of confidence; yet being myself
So deep in trespass, I must needs be meek,
And say thou art not very, very naughty.

Zor. Thy words are wild; I do not comprehend
them.

Rom. Dost thou not know thy fair but thought-
less friend

Has to young Maurice's suit such favour given,
That she this morning, short while since, was caught
Escaping in his company?
I watch'd and stopp'd them in the grove of pines.
How glad a sight it was to me, when, wild,
With terror wild, she rush'd between our weapons
To find it was but Beatrice!

Zor. But Beatrice? whom didst thou fear to find?

Rom. Oh! spare me! Crimson shame upon my
cheek,
Betrays too plainly that for which already
I've craved forgiveness.

Zor. (*drawing herself up proudly.*) Yes, I com-
prehend thee. [anger

Rom. Oh! but that look, that air, that flush of
Which ne'er before so stain'd thy lovely face,
Speak not of pardon.

[*She turns away, and he follows her.*

I have much offended:
But he who like offence hath ne'er committed:
Who ne'er hath look'd on man's admiring eye

Fix'd on the treasure of his heart, till fear,
Suspicion, hatred hath bereft his soul
Of every generous feeling; he who never
Hath, in that state of torture, watch'd her face
Till e'en the traits of saintly innocence
Have worn the shade of conscience guilt; who never
Hath, in his agony, for her dear sake
Cursed all the sex; — may, as the world conceives,
Be a most wise, affectionate, good husband;
But, by all ecstacy of soul, by all
That lifts it to an angel's pitch, or sinks it
E'en to perdition, he has loved but slightly —
Loved with a love, that is, compared to mine,
As cottage hearth where smould'ring embers lie
To the surcharged unquenchable volcano.

Zor. What creed is this which thy perturbed mind
Repeats so boldly? Good my lord, discard it,
As a false faith. I have believed true love
Of such a noble, high, confiding nature,
That neither scandal's breath, nor seeming show
Of fitful echange, could shake its gen'rous trust.
'Twere agony for me to think thee false;
But till thou front me with a rival — yea,
Till thine own words have own'd that thou art
faithless —

I will believe thee true.

Rom. Believe, believe it! and on these dear hands,
A thousand times caress'd, let me be vow'd
Ne'er to offend again thy noble nature
With e'en the slightest movement of suspicion!
Dost thou relent, Zorada? Dost thou love me?

Zor. Indeed I do; have I not often said it?

And yet, it seems, thou didst mistrust my words.

Rom. Eye on that gibe! let me have perfect
pardon.

Zor. (*embracing him*). Thou art forgiven. Now;
art thou satisfied?

Rom. I were a Tartar else, or sullen Turk.

Sweet partner, lovely mate, my gentle wife!

O the soft touch of this dear hand thrills through me,
So dear! as dear as when thou first wert mine.

[*Stroking her hand, and then pressing it to his
forehead and cheek.*]

If word, or look, or circumstance, again
E'er tempt me to conceive unworthy thoughts,
I am a vulgar wretch, debased and mean,
Unworthy even to look thee in the face,
Or hold myself akin to virtue. No;
I will no more offend.

*Re-enter Nurse, who is busy arranging her basket,
and then looking up, starts on seeing ROMIERO.*

Nay, start not, worthy nurse; pray thee advance.

Nurse. I came — I thought my lady was alone.

Rom. And so she is; for we are so united

In every thought and wish, that thou shouldst
reekon

When with each other, we are still alone.

Is it not so? — Thou comest for some good purpose,

I'll swear. To whom bearest thou that tempting
fruit?

Nurse. To no one, sir; I come to show its beauty;
It is my lady's basket.

Rom. Thou'st cull'd the best: my lips are parch'd
and dry.

May I — [*Putting his hand to the basket.*]

Nurse. Nay, good my lord, I'll choose you one.

Rom. (*rejecting what she offers*). Not that: the
further peach my fancy pleases.

[*Putting his hand into the basket.*]
But there be dainty viands and cakes besides!

Zor. A charitable dole for age and want.

[*Looking to the nurse significantly.*]
That is the reason why I bade her show it,
Ere she should take it to the poor distress'd.

Rom. Ha! let me then restore my robbery;
And here, to make amends.

[*Putting money into the basket.*]
What have we here?

[*Taking out a picture.*]
Is this a present for your villager? [*see it.*]

Nurse. Yes, please you. — No, she but desired to

Rom. (*with bitter irony*). A most refined and sen-
timental gossip!

Or does she mean to use it as a charm
To cure old aching bones?

Nurse. You've guess'd it well, my lord. Quoth
she to me,

Could I but see your lady's blessed face!

Quoth I to her, thou canst not, by good reason:

My lord is now return'd. Quoth she again,

Could I but see her picture, lack a day!

Rom. Have done: I see thy drift. Be not so eager
To tell me how it is. I'm satisfied.

Zor. Come to my closet, nurse; there is besides
What I must charge thee with.

[*Exeunt ZORADA and nurse, the last speaking
loudly as she retires.*]

Ay, ay, quoth she, poor soul! I have a longing

To see that picture. Foolish man, quoth I,

'Tis but a painted —

[*Her voice still heard as she retires.*]

Rom. Foolish man, quoth I! — The cunning jade
Hath made a slip: it was a woman first.

[*A pause, and he stands musing and muttering
to himself before he speaks aloud, then in a
low smothered voice.*]

Ay, and such thoughts
Which in the breast had perish'd unreveal'd,
Are by these cunning beldames brought to utterance.
Words follow thoughts, acts follow words, and all
The steps of infamy, from which the mind
By nature shrinks, are thus familiar made:
A blighting bane, corroding to their core
Beauty and innocence.

[*Mimicking the voice of a nurse.*]

"My dearest child!
Thou needst not fear to tell thy thoughts to me;

I know thy tender heart, I know thy fears."
Would the whole race were blasted from the earth !
[*In his own voice, and stamping on the ground.*]

Enter JEROME.

What brings thee here ?

Jer. Old Pietro is below,
And craves to speak with you.

Rom. The irksome fool !
He trows that I am always in the humour
To hear his prosing proverbs.

Jer. He does, my lord ; and oft presuming on it,
Has grown familiar.

Rom. Art thou his judge ?
Tell him I cannot see him now. To-morrow
I'll find him in his cottage.

Jer. But what he has to tell you, please you, sir,
He bade me further add is of importance,
And may not be delay'd.

Rom. I'll see him, then, since it must needs be so.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

An antechamber.

Enter PIETRO and a domestic.

Pie. (*speaking as he enters.*) A blessing on thy
simple head ! impatient !

I have, good sooth ! been wont to speak with him
As though he were my fellow. Much shrewd counsel
He hath received from me right pleasantly.
He looks not grave or proud when poor men speak ;
At least I'm sure he was not so inclined
Before he married.

Enter JEROME behind him, and listens archly.

Ay, he knows mankind,
With all their knavish arts ; ay, and he knows
I know them also. Bless the day ! full often
He listen'd to me with a merry face :
Much shrewd discoursing we have had together.

Jer. (*advancing.*) True, but such shrewd dis-
coursing, as thou callest it,
Should only upon rainy days take place,
When idle folk, from field and sport debarr'd,
Are glad to while away the weary time
With aught to save the kicking of their heels.

Pie. Will he not see me then ?

Jer. I said not so.
He'll see thee presently ; but do not tease him
With a long-winded tale, choked up with saws ;
He is not in the humour for it now.
It would, to say the least on't, be a present
More prized by him who gives than who receives it.

Pie. Go to ! I have no need of thee to school me :
I know as well as thou dost when to speak,
And when to hold my tongue.

Enter ROMERO and GUZMAN, and the domestics
withdraw.

Rom. Good morrow, Pietro ! thou wouldst speak
with me.

Pie. Yes, please your honour, I'm a simple man ;—
That is to say, I am not school'd or learn'd
As many be, who set great store by it ;
But yet I think I can, as well as others,
Scent mischief in its covert. Ah, good lack !
This is a wicked world.

Rom. I know it well.
Thou'st told me so a thousand times, good Pietro.
What is the matter now ? Rehearse it briefly,
And plainly too, my friend : enough of comment
Will follow after. Speak,—what is the matter ?

Pie. Ay, something is the matter, take my word
for't.

For there be ill enough in this sad world,—
In court and cot, in city and in village.

Rom. (*interrupting him impatiently.*) There is
among your villagers, I hear,
A person much afflicted.

Pie. We were all well, both young and old of us,
When I left home scarce half an hour since. No ;
My story is of other matters ; villagers
Are not therein concerned, unless it be
As hired emissaries : for, I trow,
No wealthy devil e'er lack'd poorer imp.
No rich man ever wants—

Rom. A truce with proverbs !
What is it thou wouldst tell me ?

Pie. Marry, that mischief, in or near your castle,
Is hatching secretly.

Rom. Why dost thou think so ?
Pie. A ghost was seen by some benighted fools,
As they report it, near the ancient chapel,
Where light pour'd through the trees, and strangely
vanish'd

They know not how. I much suspect your ghosts.
'Tis said they're ominous of death ; but weddings,
Or worse than weddings off'ner follow after.
You have a rich and beauteous ward : Don Maurice
Is young, ambitious, and cunning :—No !
It is no ghastly spectre haunts your woods.

Rom. Was it a female form those fools beheld ?

Pie. Yes, by Saint Jago ! and it wore, they say,
Donna Zorada's air, who is, you know,
Not much unlike, in size and gait, to Beatrice.
Guz. We know all this already, worthy Pietro ;
Nought ill will follow it ; be thou content.

Rom. If Beatrice hath in the shades of night
Gone forth to meet her lover, she hath err'd
Beyond what we believed. (*Calling loud.*) Ho !
Jerome there !

Re-enter JEROME.

Thou wert the secret agent of Don Maurice ;
In this thou'st sinn'd against thy master ! Say,

And I'll forgive thee all if thou speak truly,
Did Donna Beatrice e'er, by night, steal forth
To meet him in the forest?

Jer. No, good my lord; that I will answer truly;
She never did.

Rom. Good Pietro tells a story
Of frighten'd villagers, who have, at night,
Seen wand'ring in the wood a female form.
Thou seem'st confused; thou, too, hast heard of
this?

Jer. Not heard of it, my lord.

Rom. Then thou hast seen it.

Jer. I must confess I saw a form, last night,
Glide hastily before me, through the wood:
The face I could not see.

Rom. It was a woman?

Jer. It was, my lord.

Rom. Its stature tall or short?

Jer. Neither, my lord.

Pie. Did I not say it seem'd —

Guz. (*pulling PIETRO back*). Hush, thou art wise,
and shouldst not waste thy words.

Rom. (*to JEROME*). Did it resemble any female
figure

Familiar to thine eye? Why dost thou hesitate?
Speak truth; speak freely; think not to deceive me:
Seem'd it a form familiar to thine eye?

Jer. I was confused — I knew not. No, my lord,
It was no well-known form.

Rom. Thy words are false!
[*Walks perturbedly to and fro, then returning to
them.*]

Why stand ye here to gaze upon me? Go!

Guz. (*to PIETRO*). Retire, and do not speak to
him again.

Save thee, good Pietro; and thou, too, Jerome.

[*Exeunt PIETRO and JEROME.*]

(*Going up to ROMERO*.) Thou art bereft of reason.
In the dark

A gliding form is seen, nor tall, nor short,
Nor having any mark by which to prove
It is, or is not any woman breathing;
And thou in thy diseased conceit hast shaped —

Rom. Thou speakest in ignorance: I have good
cause —

Cause which thou knowst not of. I'll tell thee
more

When I have breath to speak. —

My dame, my wife, she whom I made my wife,
Hath secret myst'ries — hath a beldame nurse —
Hath one conceal'd to whom she sends — O shame! —
Outrageous, frontless shame! the very picture
Which I have gazed upon a thousand times,
Tears in my eyes, and blessings on my lips.
How little thought I once — vain, vain remem-
brance!

It is a thing most strange if she be honest.

Guz. How strange? — that thou thyself shouldst
be deceived

As many men have been, which is a marvel
Of daily note, amongst the sons of Adam? [*eyes,*

Rom. Deceived! be there witch-powder in mine
To make that seen which is not; in mine ears,
To make them hear false sounds? I've seen; I've
heard:

I am deluded by no gossip's tale. —
O would I were! I loved — I worshipp'd her;
She was the thing that stirr'd within my soul,
Which had no other life. Despise me not;
For tears will force their way. — She was to me —
When I have power to speak, I'll tell thee all.

Guz. Yes; pause awhile, my friend. Thou art
too vehement.

Rom. (*lowering his voice*). Have they o'erheard
me? Has it come to this,

That such as they should know my misery?
I will match wiles with wiles, and borrow of her
That damn'd hypocrisy. Come thou with me,
And give me counsel: thou thyself wilt own
It is no weak conceit disturbs me thus.
But stop, and stand aside.

[*Stops on seeing nurse pass by a low window
on the outside.*]

Guz. What wouldst thou now?

Rom. Here comes the beldame nurse of whom I
spoke;

Returning from her mission, as I guess.
Stand thou aside whilst I engage with her,
And, with her own deceits, deceive the witch.
Do thou observe her visage as I speak. [*ment*

Guz. Nay; trust not to deceit; for at this mo-
Thou hast not o'er thyself as much control
As would deceive the simplest soul on earth.
She will outwit thee; leave the task to me,
And do thou stand aside. — I hear her steps.

Enter Nurse, while ROMERO goes behind the arras.

Ha! my good nurse; thou art a stirring person,
And one of service in this family,
If I mistake it not. How could fair damsels,
And dainty dames, and other tender souls,
Endure the thraldom of stern lords and masters,
Brothers, and jealous guardians, and the like,
Were it not for such useful friends as thou?

Nurse. I know not what you mean by service,
sir;

I serve my mistress honestly and fairly.

Guz. And secretly, when it must needs be so.
Do I not know it well, and well approve
Thy wary vigilance? Take this broad piece;
(*giving gold*)

A token of respect for all thy virtues.
Thou art, I know, the agent of Zorada
In all her secret charities: how fares it
With that poor invalid?

Nurse. What invalid?

Guz. To whom thou tookst that basket of fair
fruit.

Let me attend thee when thou goest again ;
I have some skill in med'cine.

Nurse. I thank you, sir ; I have some skill myself,

And that suffices. She will soon be well.

Guz. It is a woman, then.—Look in my face :
Look at me steadfastly.—I know it is not.

It is a man ; ay, and a man for whom

Thy lady hath some secret, dear regard.

And so, perhaps, hast thou : where is the harm ?

Nurse. And if there be, where is the harm of loving

Those near akin to us ? [that ?

Guz. Yes, fairly said ! Who can find harm in

Nurse. Whom should we love—I mean, whom should I love,

But mine own flesh and blood ? [of thine

Guz. Thy flesh and blood ! lies flesh and blood
So near us, and conceal'd ?—A son, perhaps ?

Nurse. I have a son ; but where he is conceal'd,
Or far, or near, I know not.

Guz. Nay, nay, good nurse ; think of next
month's confession,

When lying must be paid for. Father Thomas
For a small penance will not let thee off.

[*Here ROMIERO appears from behind the arras,
with gestures of impatience, but draws back
again.*

Guz. Knowst thou not where he is, this son of
thine ?

A handsome youth, no doubt.

Nurse. As ever stepp'd upon the blessed earth.
When but an infant, he with fair Zorada

Play'd like a brother. Such a pretty pair !
And the sweet children loved each other dearly.

Would he were here ! but where he is I know not.

Rom. (*bursting out upon her.*) Vile wretch ! thou
liest ; but thou shalt tell the truth.

I'll press the breath from out thy cursed body,
Unless thou tell me where thy son is hid.

Nurse. My son, my lord !

Rom. Ay, witch ; I say thy son ;
The ugliest hound the sun e'er looked upon.

Tell me, and instantly, if thou wouldst breathe
Another moment. Tell me instantly.

[*Shaking her violently, while GUZMAN interposes,
and ROMIERO, struggling with him, falls to
the ground, and nurse escapes off the stage.*

Guz. (*endeavouring to raise him.*) I pray thee,
pardon me, my noble friend !

When passion led thee to disgrace thyself,
This was an act of friendship.—Rise, Romiero.

Rom. No ; here upon the ground, my bed of
agony,

I will remain. Sunk to this deep disgrace,
The centre of the earth were fitter for me

Than its fair surface, and the light of heaven.
Oh ! this exceeds the worst imagination

That e'er found entrance to this madden'd brain !

That he—this hateful, vulgar, shapeless creature—
Fy, fy.

Guz. If thou canst harbour such a thought,
Thou art in verity beside thyself.

It is not possible that such a one
Could please Zorada, were she e'en unfaithful.

Rom. (*rising fiercely.*) Not please her ! every thing
will please a woman

Who is bereft of virtue, gross, debased.
Yea, black deformity will be to her

A new and zestful object.

Enter ZORADA behind him.

Guz. (*making her a sign to retire.*) O lady ! come
not here.

Zor. I heard Romiero loud ; what is the matter ?

Rom. O nothing, madam ; pray advance. O
nothing !

Nothing that you should be surprised to hear.
That ladies can be fair and delicate,

And to the world's eye e'en as saints devout,
Yet all the while be coarse, debased, and stain'd

With passions that disgrace the vulgar kind.

Zor. Alas ! what mean you ?

Rom. Thou'st played me false ; thou art a worth-
less woman ;

So base, so sunk, that those whose appellation
Brings blushes to the cheeks of honest women

Compared to thee are pure.—Off ! do not speak !
It is a sick'ning sight to look upon thee,

Fair as thou art. Feign not to be surprised :
Begone, I say, I cannot for a moment

Say what I may not do.

[*Taking his dagger from his side, and giving it
to GUZMAN, who snatches it hastily from him.*

Now thou art safe ; but go, thou shameless creature

Guz. Madam, I pray you go, for he is furious,
And would not listen to a saint from heaven.

[*Exit ZORADA, wringing her hands.*

Come, leave this spot, Romiero ; some few hours,
I am persuaded, will reveal this mystery.

Meantime, let me constrain thee as a friend ;
Thou art not fit to speak or act with reason.

Rom. Thinkst thou to bind and lead me like a
maniac ? [trice.

Guz. Like what thou art : but here comes Bea-
Wouldst thou to her expose thy sorry state ?

Enter BEATRICE.

Rom. To her or any one, what boot they now,
Fair seemings and fair words ?

Bea. Are you not well, my lord ?

Rom. No, damsel ; well was banish'd from the
world,

When woman came to it.

Bea. Fy ! say not so.
For if deprived of women, what were men ?
Like leafless elms stripp'd of the clasping vine ;
Like unrigg'd barks, of sail and pennant bare ;

Like unstring'd viols, which yield no melody.
Banish us all, and lay my life upon it,
You will right quickly send for us again.

Rom. Ay, as for parrots, jays, and kirtled apes,
To make vain sport withal. It makes me sick
To think of what you seem and what you are.

Bea. But say not *all*, because there are a few.

Guz. Fair lady, hold no further parley now.
(*To ROM.*) And come with me, my friend.

[*Exeunt ROMIERO and GUZMAN.*]

Bea. (*looking after him.*) What strange tormenting
fancy haunts him now?
She leads a life worse than an Eastern slave,
Who weds with such as he. Save me from that!

*Enter MAURICE by the window, having previously
peeped in to see if she were alone.*

Maur. Dear Beatrice! to find thee thus
alone —

Bea. Good heaven preserve us! What has
brought thee back?

Maur. To see and hear thee, love, and yet again
To touch thy fair soft hand.

Bea. An errand, truly,
To make thee track thy steps so many miles!

Maur. An errand worth the toil e'en ten times
told.

To see thy figure moving in thy veil,
Is worth a course of five good miles at least;
To see thy glowing face of welcome is,
At lowest reck'ning, worth ten score of leagues
By sea or land; and this soft thrilling pressure, —
O! 'tis worth all the leagues that gird the globe.

[*Taking her hand.*]

Bea. What idle words! how canst thou be so
foolish?

I needs must chide thee for it, thoughtless boy!

Maur. Chide me, indeed, who am two years thy
elder,

And two good months to boot! — Such high pre-
tension!

Have sixteen summers and a woman's robe
Made thee so very wise and consequential?

Bea. (*giving him two mock blows on his shoulder.*)
Take that, and that, for such discourteous
words.

Maur. (*catching both her hands and kissing them
separately.*) Ay, marry will I, and right
gladly too,

When this and this are added to the gift.

Bea. Forbear such idle rapture, 'tis a folly:
So tell me truly what has brought thee back
To this disturb'd and miserable house.

Maur. What, miserable still? Not yet con-
vinced

That thou, and not *Zorada*, art the queen
Of my impassion'd heart?

Bea. Of this, indeed,
He is convinced; but what doth it avail?

Some other fancy, yet I know not what,
Again possesses him. Therefore depart;
Quickly depart, nor linger longer here,
When thou hast told me wherefore thou art come.

Maur. When some way off, it came into my
head

That Don Romiero — the occasion past,
Which has excited him to favour us —
May be remiss, or may repent his promise.
I therefore quickly turned my horse's head,
Nor drew I bridle till within the forest
I found me once again, close to the postern.

Bea. What wouldst thou do? for in his present
state

Thou mayst not speak to him.

Maur. But I would speak to Guzman; he has
power

To keep Romiero steadfast in his promise.
I should have thought of this before I went,
And urged him earnestly that no remissness
With thy relations may retard our bliss. [bliss?

Bea. Are we not happy now? Is marriage
I fear to think of it.

Maur. Why shouldst thou fear?

Shall I be jealous? O, my gentle Beatrice!

I never will believe thee false to me,
Until such proof as that heaven's sun is bright
Shall flash upon me, and the agony
Will be my death-blow and prevent upbraiding.

Bea. And art thou, then, so tender in thy nature?
In truth it makes me weep to think thou art.

Maur. Let me wipe off those tears, my gentle
love.

Think hopefully and cheerfully, I pray thee.

I feel within my breast a strong assurance
Thou never wilt prove false, nor I suspicious.

Where may I find Don Guzman? [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The scene dark; the forest.

*Enter JEROME and another domestic, by opposite
sides of the stage.*

Jer. Hast thou seen any thing?

Dom. No; but I spy a distant moving light
Far to the left.

Jer. Then run and see who bears it.

[*Exit domestic.*]

Here come my lord and Guzman, slow and silent.
Surely they have not seen it; and, perhaps,
My comrade is deceived.

Enter ROMIERO and GUZMAN.

Rom. Ha! Jerome! is it thou!

Jer.

It is, my lord:

Rom. Hast thou seen aught? hast thou heard any sound?

Jer. Nothing, my lord.

Rom. Yet still be on the watch: Revisit every path; let nought escape thee.

Jer. No, nothing shall. I'll use both eyes and ears

Intently; nothing shall unnoted be.
An owl shall not turn him in his nest
But I shall be aware of it, nor hare
Scud 'cross the path without my observation.

Rom. Well, say no more: I trust thee. To thy duty! [*Exit* JEROME.]

Guz. I am persuaded we shall range this wood
The livelong night, nor meet with any thing
But such small denizens as Jerome mention'd,
Or these benighted trees that skirt our path,
So black and motionless.

Rom. Oh! if the light of day return again,
Nought being found to justify my fears,
I'll hail it as the wretch whose op'ning dungeon
Receives the light, as through its portal passes
Some glad friend, bearing his reprieve. Oh, Guzman!

The felon, chain'd to meet his shameful doom,
Hath not more agony of thought, nor starteth
With greater horror from the brink of death,
Than I do from that moment of despair
Which shall make manifest the thing I dread.

Guz. I trust that moment never will arrive.

Rom. Dost thou, my friend? dost thou, in very truth?

I bless thee for that noble confidence:
Would I could feel it too! Repeat thy words.

Guz. I do believe that moment will not come.

Rom. No, no! it was not thus: thy words are changed;

Thy tone of voice is changed; thoughts of recoil
Pass o'er thy mind, and turn their force to weakness.
Thou dost not trust, — no, nor believe it neither.

Guz. Indeed, I think — I hope thou art deceived.

Rom. Shame on such timid tam'ring with my passion,

Provoking it the more! If she be guilty,
I am prepared with dreadful preparation.
If she be innocent, — tears choke my voice:
To say, "if she be innocent!" —

Her look, her smile, her easy lightsome gait, —
She was th'embodied form of innocence;
The simple sweetness of a cottage child,
Join'd to a lady's grace.

Guz. Hers seem'd, indeed, the loveliness of virtue.

Rom. Even so; but that is changed. She cannot now

So look, so smile, so step; for if she could,
I should defy all proof of circumstance
To move me to suspicion.

Guz. Nay, good Romiero, know thy nature better,
A circumstance as trivial as the glance

Or meaning smile of some young varlet page
Would tempt thee to suspect a saint of heaven.
But cease debate; your scout returns in haste.

Enter Domestic.

Dom. My lord, they're in the wood: I've seen them.

Rom. Whom?
Dom. The nurse, my lord, went first, and close behind her

Donna Zorada stole like one afraid.

Rom. (*seizing him by the throat*). Hell choke thy blasted breath, thou croaking fiend!
Thou darest not say 'twas she.

Dom. I did not say so, certainly.

Rom. Thou didst.

Dom. I spoke unwittingly; I will unsay it.

Rom. (*casting him away from him with violence*).
And be a damned liar for thy pains.

All that my darkest fancy had conceived!
Uncover'd shame, degrading infamy! —
Come quick, unstinted, terrible revenge!
If the base wantons live another hour,
I am as base as they.

Guz. Be not a maniac: think before thou act, —
Before thou do what cannot be undone.

Rom. Think ere I act! Cool, sober, gentle friend!
Hadst thou not better say, "Good sir, be patient.
Thy wife is faithless, and her minion bless'd;
But pray, good sir, be patient." — Oh, my heart!
The seat of life will burst ere it be done:
Hold, hold till then! (*To domestic*.) Where were they? near the castle?

Dom. No; in the beechen grove beyond the chapel,

To which we did suspect their steps were bent,
Taking, no doubt, that further winding path
The better to avoid detection. — See,
There's light now faintly peering from its window.
They must be there already. (*To Guzman*.) Look,
Don Guzman!

Guz. I do; it vanishes and re-appears,
And vanishes again, and all is dark.

Rom. Yes; all shall soon be dark:
That flame of guilt, those glow-worms of the night,
That bright deceitful sheen of foul corruption,
Shall be extinct, trod out, earth bray'd with earth.
Which of these paths leads to th' accursed spot?

[*Rushing into a path, and then turning back and taking another.*]

I am bewild'rd! this will lead me right. [*Exit.*]

Guz. We must pursue his steps, and try, if possible,

To keep his unrein'd ire from desp'rate acts.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter, by the opposite side, BEATRICE and her woman.

Bea. He should be here, or somewhere near this spot.

I am afraid in these dark forest paths.
Each crooked leafless stump or dwarfish bush
Seems beast or man prepared to pounce upon us ;
And then to make a vain and short amends,
Each slender, graceful sapling is my Maurice.
I dare not venture further.

Woman. Perhaps we're wrong, and have mista'en
the place ;

Let us turn back, and try some other alley !

Bea. Turn not ; I hear his foot. (*Listening.*)

Woman. My ears then must be dull, for I hear
nothing.

Bea. Yes, they are dull ; thou hast not in thy
heart

That which doth quicken mine.—It is his footstep ;
I know it well !

Woman. Indeed, I should have guess'd ——

Bea. Nay, hush, Theresa ;
I love to bend mine ear and listen to it.

[*Listens again as before, and presently enter
MAURICE.*]

Is 't thou, my friend ?

Maur. Yes, dearest ; further on
I waited for thee, and became impatient.

Bea. How glad I am to hear thy voice again !

Maur. What hast thou done ? How hast thou
sped with Guzman ?

Since thou wouldst take that office on thyself,
I trust thy parley with him was successful.

Bea. As heart could wish, although it was but
short.

He'll be our friend, and keep Romero so ;
And will, besides, to my stern uncle speak,
Who, as thou knowst —— But here comes one in
haste.

Enter JEROME.

Jer. Remain no longer here ; for Don Romero,
And Guzman with him, wanders through the wood ;
You may encounter him in any path.

Maur. What shall we do ?

Jer. Be still, and follow me,
And I will lead you to a safer spot,
Free from intrusion, near the ruin'd chapel.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The inner porch of a ruined chapel.

Enter Nurse and a Sea Captain, meeting.

Nurse. Are all things ready then ?

Capt. The breeze is faint,
But it is fair ; my seamen are on board ;
We shall weigh anchor by the early dawn,
And bear us out to sea. Go, tell my passenger
To join us presently upon the beach. [*Youth,*

Nurse. I will, good captain : 'tis no thoughtless
Who trows the very winds should wait his bidding ;

He will be punctual. He hath seen good days,
Although I may not tell thee who he is.

Capt. Nor do I ask thee.

Nurse. He hath seen good days,
And evil too, and hath been buffeted
By wayward fate.

Capt. Good mother, so have I.
But what of that ? The foul, the fair will blow,
And we must weather it even as we may.
Speak not in such a lamentable tone ;
I will be kind to him.

Nurse. I hope thou wilt.
Heaven will reward thee, and Saint Jago too.

Capt. Tut, woman ! wherefore make so much ado
About some kindness to a fellow sinner ?
I shall expect him ere the morning break ;
And give him notice, for the time is near. [*Exit.*

Nurse (alone). I will not yet break on their sad
farewell,

But in the outer porch remain on watch.
Ah, woe the day ! that they must thus, by stealth,
Take their last leave. I fear 'twill be their last. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

*An old Gothic chapel: SEBASTIAN and ZORADA are
discovered in earnest conversation.*

Seb. And wilt thou bear these lessons in thy mind ?

Zor. I shall forget to say my daily prayers
When I forget to think of thee, dear father !
And, when I think of thee, thy words of kindness,
And words of counsel too, shall be remember'd.

Seb. Sweet child ! stand back and let me look
upon thee.

Ay ; so she look'd. O ! it is sweet in thee
To look so like thy mother, when mine eyes
Must take their last impression, as a treasure
Here (*his hand on his heart*) to be cell'd for ever.
Many looks

Thy varying face was wont to wear, yet never,
But in some sad or pensive mood, assumed
The likeness of that countenance ; — to me
Thy loveliest look ; though, to all other eyes,
Thy mother's beauty never equal'd thine.

Zor. I still remember her : the sweetest face
That e'er I look'd upon. I oft recall it,
And strive to trace the features more distinctly.

Seb. Be good as she was ; and when I am gone,
Never again let myst'ry and concealment,
Tempting the weakness of thy husband's nature,
Which but for this were noble, break the peace
And harmony of marriage. — For this oath —
This fatal oath — he was constrain'd to take it.
Then so consider it, nor let it rankle
Within thy gentle breast : that were perverse.
When I am gone, all will again be well,
And I will write to thee and comfort thee.

Our minds shall still hold intercourse, dear Zada,
And that should satisfy.

Zor. Alas! alas!
When I shall read thy letters, my poor heart
Will but the more yearn after thee, dear father!
And pine to see thee. Suffer me to hope
That we shall meet again. — Call it not vain,
But suffer me to think —

Enter Nurse in alarm.

What is the matter?
Nurse. You are discover'd: Don Romiero comes;
I heard his voice approaching through the trees.
I heard the hollow tread of many feet.

Zor. (to SEBASTIAN.) O fly! farewell!
Seb. Farewell, my dearest child!
Heaven bless and guard thee ever! O farewell!
[*Embraces her, and exit.*]

Zor. If he should be discover'd!
Nurse. Fear it not.
He knows the nearest path, and on the beach
The captain will receive him. Ere 'tis light,
He will be safely in the vessel lodged.
O all good saints of heav'n! he's here already.

Enter ROMIERO.

Most wretched and degraded woman! Now
Thy shameful secret is discover'd. Now,
Vice unveiled and detestable must have
Its dreadful recompense. Where is thy minion?
Zor. O cease! you frighten me with such fierce
looks.

I have done thee no wrong.
Rom. Provoke me not with oft-repeated words,
Which I do know are false as his who fell
Apostate and accursed. Where is thy minion?
[*In a still louder voice, and stamping on the
ground.*]

Tell me without delay: speak briefly, truly,
If thou hast hope to live another hour.
Zor. O pity, pity! be not so enraged!
Thou shalt be told the truth a few hours hence;
Then, to that time, detest me as thou wilt,
But spare my life.

*Re-enter SEBASTIAN, while ROMIERO has, in his rage,
stridden to the front of the stage. ZORADA, uttering
a shriek, runs to her father, and throws her veil
over his face, endeavouring to push him back.*

Seb. What! fly and leave thee in a madman's
power?
I heard his stormy voice, and could not leave thee.
[*ROMIERO turns round, and, running furiously
at them, stabs ZORADA in aiming at SEBAS-
TIAN; GUZMAN, who enters in alarm, followed
by MAURICE and BEATRICE, endeavouring, in
vain, to prevent him.*]
Guz. Hold! hold! thou wilt not strike a cover'd
foe!

Zor. (still clinging round her father). Strike me
again; I will not quit my hold.
I'll cling to him; within my dying grasp
I'll hold him safe; thou wilt not kill him there.
[*Sinking to the ground, while the veil drops from
the face of SEBASTIAN.*]

Rom. Her father!
Zor. Yes; my father, dear Romiero!
Thou wilt not slay us both. Let one suffice!
Thou lovedst me once; I know thou lovest me now;
Shall blood so dear to thee be shed in vain?
Let it redeem my father! — I am faint,
Else I would kneel to thee.

[*Endeavouring to kneel, but prevented and sup-
ported by nurse and BEATRICE.*]
Nurse. Do not, dear murder'd child! [thee not.
Bea. My dear, dear friend, forbear. He heeds
Guz. Romiero, dost thou hear her sad request?
Rom. I hear your voices murmur'ing in mine ear
Confused and dismal. Words I comprehend not.
What have I done? Some dreadful thing, I fear.
It is delusion this! she is not slain:
Some horrible delusion.

Zor. (aside to SEBASTIAN). Fly, fly, dear father,
while he is so wild.
He will not know and will not follow thee. [will,
Seb. No, dearest child! let death come when it
I'll now receive it thankfully. Romiero,
Thou wretched murderer of thy spotless wife —
Romiero de Cardona!

Rom. Who is it calls me with that bitter voice?
[*Gazing on him; and then with a violent gesture
of despair.*]

I know thee; — yes, I know what I have done.
Guz. Forbear such wild and frantic sorrow now,
And speak to her while she is sensible,
And can receive thy words. She looks on thee,
And looks imploringly.

Rom. Zorada, my Zorada! spotless saint!
I lov'd thee far beyond all earthly things,
But demons have been dealing with my soul,
And I have been thy tyrant and destroyer,
A wretch bereft of reason.

Bea. She makes a sign as if she fain would speak,
But her parch'd tongue refuses. (To MAURICE.)
Fetch some water
To moisten those dear lips and cool that brow.
[*Exit MAURICE.*]

She strives again to speak.
Rom. (stooping over her.) What wouldst thou say?
What means that gentle motion?
Zor. Come close to me; thou'rt pardon'd, love,
thou'rt pardoned.

Rom. No, say that I am blasted, ruin'd, cursed,
Hateful to God and man.

Re-enter MAURICE with water, which she tastes.
Zor. Thou art not cursed; O no! then be more
calm.

(*Endavouring to raise herself up.*) Look here; he is my father: think of that.

Thou'rt pardoned, love; thou'rt pardoned. [*Dies.* Rom. She call'd me *love*. Did she not call me so?

Guz. Yes, most endearingly.

Rom. And she is gone, and I have murder'd her!

[*Throws himself on the body, moaning piteously; then starts up in despair, and looks furiously at SEBASTIAN.*

Thou restless, selfish, proud, rebellious spirit!

Thy pride has work'd our ruin, been our bane;

The bane of love so bless'd! Draw, wretched man!

I've sworn an oath, which I will sacred hold,

That when Sebastian and myself should meet,

He should to royal justice be deliver'd,

Or, failing that, one of the twain should die.

[*Drawing his sword fiercely upon him.*

Guz. (*holding him back*). Hold, madman, hold! thy rage is cruel, monstrous,

Outraging holy nature.

Rom. (*breaking from him*). Off! thinkst thou to restrain or bind despair

With petty strength like thine?—Proud rebel, draw!

I am thy daughter's murderer, and thou Destroyer of us both.

Seb. Yes, Don Romero, we are match'd in ruin, And we will fight for that which cures despair.

He who shall gain it is the conqueror.

[*They fight, each exposing himself rather than attacking his adversary.*

Rom. No; to't in earnest, if thou wouldst not have me

Deliver thee a felon to the law.

Defend thine honour, though thou scorn thy life!

[*They fight again, and ROMERO falls.*

I thank thee, brave Sebastian: O forgive

Harsh words that were but meant to urge contention.

Thou'rt brave and noble; so my heart still deem'd thee,

Though, by hard fate, compelled to be thy foe.—

Come hither, Guzman: thou hast sworn no oath.

Give me thy hand; preserve Sebastian's life,

And lay me in the grave with my Zorada.

[*The curtain drops.*

THE ALIENATED MANOR:

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

CHARVILLE.

CRAFTON.

SIR ROBERT FREEMANTLE, nephew to CRAFTON.

SMITCHENSTAULT, a German philosopher.

SIR LEVEL CLUMP, an improver.

DICKENSON and ISAAC, domestics of CHARVILLE.

SANCHO, a black.

WOMEN.

MRS. CHARVILLE.

MARY, sister to CHARVILLE.

MRS. SMOOTHLY.

DOLLY.

Scene CHARVILLE'S house in the country, and the woods, &c., belonging to it or near it.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A wood, with a view of CHARVILLE'S house in the background, seen through the trees.

Enter CRAFTON, who immediately stops short, as if looking earnestly at something off the stage.

Craf. Who can it be? Ho! paper and pencil in hand; and the broad-brimmed hat, too, with its green lining:—I heard he was with them. Fit crow for such a rookery!

Enter SIR LEVEL CLUMP.

Your servant, Sir Level Clump; I wish you good morning.

Sir Level. Good morning, Mr. Crafton; I am delighted to see you. Do you often, in your morning rambles, trespass thus far on your neighbour's premises?

Craf. I trespass not at present, I hope, being directly on my way to pay my compliments to Mr. Charville on this happy occasion.

Sir Level Right, Mr. Crafton; you are above any little resentment for the extravagant demand with which he so ungraciously met your late reasonable offer regarding this manor. I know all about it; and the very unfair advantage which the late Mr. Charville took of your uncle's distresses to get possession of it. I know all about it. Mr. Charville is my friend and employer, but I am too candid not to feel and to perceive: indeed he was wrong—much in the wrong, in that matter.

Craf. And in other matters too, perhaps. But one must keep up some intercourse with the world as it is; the grass would grow on my threshold, were I to confine my visits to the immaculate. You are come down, I presume, to improve the pleasure grounds. He means upon his marriage to have every thing in the modern taste.

Sir Level. And shall have it, if I can do any thing; but he is so conceited of his own notions, so suspicious, he will trust nobody but by halves.

Craf. What; not trust Sir Level Clump implicitly in matters of taste! Conceited indeed!—But what are your own ideas, sir! Have you surveyed these woods with all their winding paths, and ferny dells, and dark covert nooks, and tangled thickets? I am, perhaps, too partial to the ancient possessions of my forefathers, but this place seems to me full of sylvan beauty.

Sir Level (tardily). Yes,—O yes.

Craf. Don't you think so?

Sir Level. Assuredly: it is at least practicable ground. If you saw my plan, you would be astonished at what may be made of it. A few hundred pounds spent in clearing away the underwood, and cutting out that heavy mass of forest trees into separate groups, would give it a very elegant, tasteful, parkish appearance.

Craf. Cut out the mass of forest trees into separate groups! I should be astonished indeed.

Sir Level. Ay, ay! I knew you would. Lightness, variety, and plan—these are the grand principles; there is nothing like these. For you know very well, my dear sir, if there be no plan, there is no meaning in what you do; *ergo*, no taste; and if there be no taste, it is all one as if there were no plan.

Craf. Not exactly, Sir Level.

Sir Level. Nay, you don't exactly comprehend me. You'll catch it by-and-bye, when I show you my sketch. Why, these woods, as they now are, compared to what they will be when the plan is completed, are as a rude, untamed clown to a gentleman.

Craf. Say, rather, a savage chief to a posture-master. But you have been in the north lately, Sir Level. What progress is taste making in Lochaber?

Sir Level. Totally impracticable! What could I do for them there?

Craf. I'm sure I can't pretend to say; but you did attempt something, I suppose.

Sir Level (shrugging up his shoulders). Ay; the Laird of Glenvorlich, who is lately returned from Calcutta, with a large fortune at command, did indeed take me over his estate and put a *carte blanche* into my hands; but in vain. There was a burn (as they call it) running past the house, with water enough in it to have beautified the domains of a prince; but with such an impetuous, angry, perverse sprite of a stream, spade or shovel never contended. It would neither serpentine sweep, nor expand in any direction but as it pleased its own self.

Craf. And having no plan, Sir Level, it would, of course, have no taste.

Sir Level. Ah! sad discouraging work there for improvers!

Craf. Was there nothing to be done?

Sir Level. I could, no doubt, have collected its stores in the dell beneath, and made as fine a sheet of artificial water as heart could desire; but what purpose could this have answered with a lake fronting the house, in which you might have floated half the small craft of the British navy?

Craf. A perverse circumstance, indeed.

Sir Level. In short, all that I could do was to remove some rough woody knolls that intervened, and, instead of a partial view of the lake, open it entirely to the mansion, as a grand, unbroken whole. A hundred sturdy Highlanders, with wheelbarrows and mattocks, made it, in a short time, a very handsome, smooth, gradual slope, that would not have disgraced the finest park in Middlesex. This piece of service I did for him.

Craf. And had you done as much for me, Sir Level, I should have acquitted you from all further trouble.

Sir Level. Ay; you are a reasonable man, Mr. Crafton. Why, what could I have done better for such an obstinate place?

Craf. Nothing that I know of, unless—

Sir Level. Unless what? Pray let me have your idea. Successful as I have generally been, I hope I still bear my faculties too meekly not to be willing to profit by a friendly hint from a person of discernment.—Unless what, my dear sir?

Craf. Unless you had let it alone altogether.

Sir Level. O no, no! that was impossible. The Laird had a lady,—a young bride, too;—she was new, the house was new, the furniture was new, and the grounds also were to be made suitable: I was obliged to operate upon it.

Craf. A hard necessity.

Sir Level. However, since no better could be, they have my plan hanging in the library, to show what the place ought to be, if it will not; and this must even vindicate their reputation for taste to all

the strangers and travellers who may visit the house of Glenvorluch.

Craf. Very good, Sir Level; the lady must be satisfied with that.—But pray let us talk of another new-married lady. How do you like Mrs. Charville? Is she handsome?

Sir Level. She is very fond of my plan.

Craf. O, no doubt; and this would have been a decided answer, had I inquired after her mental perfections. But being a plain country squire, and pretending to little refinement, I simply inquire if she is handsome.

Sir Level. I believe people do think her so, though the rules of art are against her.

Craf. Never mind the rules!—I beg pardon. She is handsome then; and gay, I suppose.

Sir Level. Yes, yes: she is too gay; perhaps the world will say thoughtless; but I must still think there is a fund of good sense at bottom. She really perceived the beauties of it with great quickness, and took to it wonderfully.

Craf. Took to what?

Sir Level. To my plan.

Craf. O very true! how could I lose sight of that? And how will a gay thoughtless wife suit a man of Charville's disposition? He is very suspicious, you say.

Sir Level. They jar a little, as other married folks sometimes do; but if they put my plan into execution, it will occupy them more pleasantly—for a time at least.

Craf. If separating the trees will unite them, there is sense in the plan, and its taste is, of course, unquestionable.—And how do you like Charville's sister, who is so much admired—the gentle Mary?

Sir Level. She is gentle enough; but she has no quickness, no perceptions, no brains at all.

Craf. Poor girl; I fear she has not wit enough to comprehend the plan.—But here comes my nephew; he is going with me to the mansion.

Enter SIR ROBERT FREEMANTLE.

Come, Freemantle; I have waited for you here some time, and am indebted to this worthy gentleman for not finding it tedious. Let me present Sir Robert Freemantle to you, Sir Level.

Free. Sir Level Clump, I presume. We should have a paradise about us presently, were we but worthy to enjoy it.

Sir Level. You do me honour, Sir Robert. You have a pretty place in the west, I am told, though the park is somewhat in disorder: but, no doubt, you mean to improve it.

Free. I must improve my corn-fields in the first place, to get money for other improvements.

Sir Level. The readier and more common method, now-a-days, is to cut down the wood on one part of the ground, to pay for beautifying the other.

Free. A good device, Sir Level; but my worthy

mother likes the old woods as they are; and you might as well bring her own grey head to the block, as lift an axe against any veteran oak on the estate.

Sir Level. Ah! those old people, with their prejudices, are the bane to all taste and improvement.—Good morning; I see Mr. Smitchenstault in search of me.

Craf. Is that the German philosopher we have heard of?

Sir Level. Yes; so he calls himself. I only pretend to make these grounds visibly beautiful; he will demonstrate, forsooth, that they become at the same time philosophically so. Poor man! though mighty clever in his way, he is altogether occupied with his own notions; and to indulge him a little, I have promised to meet him in the further part of the wood. Have you a mind for a lecture?

Craf. Not at present, my good sir; excuse us.

Sir Level. Good morning to you. [*Exit.*]

Free. (*running after him.*) I have a mind for the lecture, though. (*Checking himself and returning.*) No, no; we will go to our visit: she may possibly be there; she is probably there; she is certainly there: the brightness of the sunshine, the playful fanning of the wind, the quick beating of my heart tells me so. Uncle, are you going? You are in a deep reverie, methinks.

Craf. (*aside, without attending to him.*) His suspicions, her thoughtlessness,—the idea fastens itself upon me strangely.

Free. Ha! speaking to yourself, sir! What is it that fastens upon you?

Craf. A thought for your good too.

Sir Robert. Pray let me have it, then, for very few such thoughts have any immediate communication with my own brain.

Craf. Charville has a pretty wife, whom he loves to a folly.

Free. And a pretty sister, too, whom he loves but moderately; yet some other good person might be found, who would be willing to make up that deficiency.

Craf. I understand thee well enough. But she has no fortune unless she marry with her brother's consent; and his robbing (I must call it so) thy poor simple cousin at the gaming-table shows plainly how much he loves money.

Free. Nay, nay! Since I have seen the sister, I would forget that unhappy transaction entirely.

Craf. I only mention it now to show his disposition; and surely thou art poor enough to justify his refusal of thy suit to his sister.

Free. I have never made any suit to her.

Craf. I know thou hast not; but if thou shouldst, how wouldst thou relish a flat denial from his formal importance? Therefore, if thou hast any thing of this kind in thy head, I would counsel thee to begin with paying thy particular attentions to his wife, who will afterwards plead thy cause with her

husband.—Come, come; it is a very good thought; let us speak of it as we go.

Free. But not so loud; we may be overheard.

Craf. Very true; give me thine arm. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

CHARVILLE'S house; a saloon opening into the garden.

Enter MR. and MRS. CHARVILLE, speaking as they enter.

Mrs. Char. No, no! I can't wear them so of a morning, my dear Charles: positively you sha'n't make such a witch of me.

[*Pushing him gently away as he endeavours to stick flowers among her hair.*]

Char. And art thou not a witch, little Harry? with spells enough about thee for any man's perdition, if thou wert not at the same time a good—a very good little witch, mine own little Harry! Do wear them so; they look pretty.

Mrs. Char. They look awkward, and affected, and silly; I can't endure them. Why will you be so teasing?

Char. And are my expressions of attachment become teasing? A cold indifferent husband, then, would please you better. You reject the simple offering of a devoted heart: as my fondness increases, yours, alas! declines.

Mrs. Char. Come, come; don't look so grave! I'll stick those foolish roses into my hair, if you will, though I am sure they are only fit for a holiday nosegay.

Char. I gathered them, love.

Mrs. Char. And I am sorry, love, you had not the wit to gather better. They are such as a village schoolmistress would strew in her drawer to sweeten her kerchiefs and aprons. They are two full blown for the flower-pot on her window. But never mind; I'll wear them.

Char. I knew you would, for all your saucy words, mine own little Harry; and I'll tell thee what I'll do in return for all thy sweet condescension.

Mrs. Char. And what may that be, I wonder?

Char. You objected to my going to Middlemoor this morning.

Mrs. Char. No, I did not.

Char. Nay, but you did. I read it in your eyes, gentle Harry. But now I set that journey aside: I will not leave thee a week; not half a week; no, not a day.

Mrs. Char. O what a tide of goodness flows upon me now! I shall be drowned therewith.—Not a day! Do you think I wish to have you always by my side? No, my dear Charles: go from home when you please; and when you return, you will bring your sister and me all the news, and let us

know how the world is moving. All the married folks, I know, are sometimes separated.

Char. And are they as happy as you would wish to be?

Mrs. Char. They are happy enough, I suppose.

Char. I suppose; *suppose.* The cold, formal, miserable word! I hate the very sound of it.—I may go from home, then, as often as I please. My absence, I *suppose*, would be no interruption to your happiness?

Mrs. Char. Your occasional absence, perhaps, might increase it. The most wretched pair of all my acquaintance is the only one always together.

Char. Who are they, pray?

Mrs. Char. Lady Bloom and her jealous husband. The odious man! She can't stir, but he moves too, like her shadow. She can't whisper to a friend, nor examine a picture or gem with an old cognoscente, but he must thrust his nose between them.—But how is it now? You are as grave as a judge, and twisting off the heads of those very flowers, too, that have occasioned all this commotion? How is it with you now?

Char. You take part against the husband very eagerly, I perceive.

Mrs. Char. Not very eagerly; but I hate a man who is so selfish that he must engross his wife's attention entirely. What do you think of the matter?

Char. It is indifferent to you what I think of it; I am no longer your care—your only care.

Mrs. Char. Did I ever tell you that you were? Heaven forbid I should be so uncharitable, so narrow, so confined! I have cared for some people in the world besides you, and I have told you so.

Char. Yes, madam; I should have remembered how long Henry Devonford disputed with me the prize of your heart: you favoured us both.

Mrs. Char. True, Charles; but where would have been the merit of preferring you, had I cared for nobody else? If I did show some favour to him, it was you whom I married.

Char. Very true, very true! It was I whom you married, married,—married.

Mrs. Char. Nay, foolish man! If you will stride about the room so, let us give something of a figure to it. We are too grave for a rigadon, so we had better make it a minuet. (*Holding out her gown, and always facing him, as he turns away, with so much coaxing good humour, that he is at last overcome, and clasps her in his arms.*)

Char. My dear, dear Harriet! you treat me like a fool, but I must bear with it. I know thou lovest me better than thou professes to do.

Mrs. Char. O not a whit!

Char. Nay, but thou dost. I know it. (*Putting his hand fondly on hers.*)

Mrs. Char. Indeed you know a great deal that nobody else does. You study deeply for it; you are fond of occult learning.

Enter a Servant, announcing company.

Char. And we must be pestered with such interruptions!

Mrs. Char. Don't fret; I like to see new faces.

Enter CRAFTON and SIR R. FREEMANTLE.

Craf. I am happy, Mr. Charville, to offer you my hearty congratulations, and to have the honour of paying my respects to this lady.

Char. I thank you, sir. I am happy to have the honour of seeing you and Sir Robert Freemantle in my house;—and Mrs. Charville too—we are both glad to have that honour.

Mrs. Char. (after making a formal curtsey to CRAFTON, and then turning to FREEMANTLE). And must I do my ceremonies to you too? (Makes a very affected stiff curtsey, and then holding out her hand to him with great vivacity.) My old friend and playfellow, I am delighted to see you. So unexpected! Do you belong to these parts?

Free. No; but my good fortune makes me a temporary resident at present.

Mrs. Char. It is good fortune to us all. Is it not, Charles? He is brother to my friend Charlotte. (CHARVILLE bows gravely.) And how does dear Charlotte? is she near us too?

Free. No; she is in Shropshire.

Craf. I could not prevail upon my niece to come to me at this time.

Mrs. Char. O but she will come, when she knows that I am here: do write to her: it is so long since we met. Do tell me about her, Sir Robert; I have many things to ask. (Drawing him aside.)

Craf. (to CHARVILLE.) What a charming frank disposition!—a most charming woman! You are a happy man, Charville, and a bold one, too, after the dealings you have had with this wicked world, to become responsible for such a treasure. But you will tell me she is all perfection, and I will believe it.

Char. Nay, good sir, if you are disposed to think well of my choice, I had better trust to that for doing her justice.

Craf. Ay, ay; I understand this grave restraint: you have applied the point of ridicule to many a poor Benedick; and when it comes to your own turn, you shrink from it. You are but a new recruit in this service of matrimony, and still belong to the awkward division.

Char. (smiling faintly.) Perhaps so. It is a pleasant morning: did you come by—(Here MRS. CHARVILLE and FREEMANTLE pass from the bottom of the stage into the garden.)—by the common!

Craf. Why, that lies miles off on the other side, you know.

Char. True; I mean the garden.

Craf. When you are kind enough to give me a key to it, I may come that way.

Char. No, no! I mean the woods.

Craf. You have named my way—my favourite way, at last. But I fear it will not long be so; for Sir Level Clump pronounces it to be practicable ground, and that is a death-warrant to nature and simplicity.

Char. Nature and simplicity are very antiquated personages; and Mr. Crafton is particularly kind in taking any interest in the latter, who has assuredly no kindred claim to his protection.

Craf. And is it for the same reason that you would drive her from yours?—But let us both befriend her on more liberal principles: I shall be proud at all times to follow your good example.

Char. You expect to keep up with me on some of the easy-pacing virtues.

Craf. I don't know; even so mounted, you may run me harder than I like. But I may strive to do it, were it only out of spite.

Char. I'll trust you for that.

Craf. Do so, by all means: trust me or any body for any thing, if you can, and you will cultivate a disposition of mind that is good for man in every condition, particularly in the married state. Under another name, you know, it is one of the cardinal virtues.

Enter SMITCHENSTAULT.

Smitch. O you talk of de vertues cardinals, de great, de grand, de sublime vertues; dat be de ting, de one only ting.

Craf. Mr. Smitchenstault, I presume. (Bowing.)

Smitch. Yes, yes; hear you me: my name is Smitchenstault. Hear you me. De sublime vertue is de grand, de only vertue. I prove you dis.—Now we shall say, here is de good-tempered man; he not quarel, he not fret, he disturb no body. Very well; let him live de next door to me: but what all dat mean?—O, dat he is de good-tempered man. Den dere is de industrious man, hear you me, de industrious man; he don't love idle, he work, he toil, he do every ting dat be to do;—very well, all dat very well: let him build my house, let him make my shoe, let him—

Char. (who has been all this while watching with his eyes MRS. CHARVILLE and SIR R. FREEMANTLE, as they walked to and fro in the garden, seeing him now take a letter from his pocket, calls out, off his guard). A letter!

[Moves towards the garden.

Smitch. (pulling him back). Letter! I say no letter: I say make my shoe. O, let him make—let him do all dat; dis be well too. And dere be de sober man: he not love wine; wine make him ill; and he have always de great commendations, O, he be de sober man! But, I say, now hear you me—

Craf. We do, Mr. Smitchenstault; and no disparagement to your argument: it is a virtue of necessity.

Smitch. No, he don't hear. (*To CHARVILLE.*) What you always look dere for? (*Turning round himself.*) O, de lady is in de garden!

Char. Shall we join her, Mr. Smitchenstault? She is fond of your reasoning.

Smitch. No, no! She love de flowers and frivolities. I say, hear you me. I say, let him make my shoe.

Craf. But you had got beyond that, my good sir.

Smitch. O, very well den, you understand.—But of what value is all that pigging, niggling,—you call little thing pigging, niggling?

Craf. Sometimes we do, perhaps.

Smitch. Very well: what is it, I say, but de pigging, niggling driblets of virtue? But de grand, de sublime, is in what you call—not de heart—(*Striking his breast*)—not de heart.

Craf. Stomach!

Smitch. No, no!—Soul—(*Striking his breast with greater energy*)—ay, de soul, dere be de sublime vertue. My sentiment, my entusiasam, my love for my friend do flame here; what tough in my rage I do cut his throat?

Craf. That were but a trifle. But suffer me to transpose the matter, and make the sublimity of sentiment to belong to your friend, and the throat to yourself.

Smitch. Pardon, pardon! you do turn upon me de very vulgar reply. Observe well de turn of my argument. Actions be noting: it is de high soaring of de soul. (*To CHARVILLE.*) But you don't attend: you don't look at me.

Craf. Pardon him, sir: his eyes follow a still more agreeable object. Shall we join the party in the garden, Charville?

Char. O no! 'pon my soul, I was looking at that window frame; the idiot of a carpenter has bungled it abominably.

Craf. I see no fault in it. But you are difficult; Mr. Smitchenstault's pigging virtues are not in favour this morning. Good day.

Char. Ha, ha, ha! 'Pon my life, I am in the best humour imaginable. You will not go without taking leave of Mrs. Charville.

Craf. I am a person of no ceremony.

Char. But your nephew.

Craf. He will walk home when he likes it: I take no charge of him. Good day, Mr. Smitchenstault.

Smitch. O! but you have not hear where de sense of my argument lies.

Craf. I have not indeed.

Smitch. But you must, tough. I go wid you. (*Taking him by the arm, and speaking busily as they go off.*) De soul is de sublime energy; it is de subtile matter, de, &c. &c. &c.

[*Exeunt CRAFTON and SMITCHENSTAULT.*]

Char. (*now looking without restraint to Mrs. CHARVILLE and FREEMANTLE in the garden.*) Very good friends, truly, with their letters and their confidences. That coquettish animation too: they must have some merry joke to laugh thus. No, hang it! 'tis their own vile pleasure in being together.

[*Runs to them in the garden and the scene closes.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

MRS. CHARVILLE'S dressing-room. She is discovered with MARY, sitting by a table at work, &c.

Mrs. Char. And you have seen him at Lady Melford's?

Mary. Yes.

Mrs. Char. And at Harrowgate?

Mary. Yes.

Mrs. Char. And have danced with him?

Mary. Yes.

Mrs. Char. And have found him very agreeable?

Mary. Yes.

Mrs. Char. Well, fair befall thee for answering Yes to this last question! for I did believe thee hypocrite enough to have answered No.

Mary. Your opinion of me is flattering.

Mrs. Char. How could it be otherwise, seeing you receive him as you did when I called you into the garden? You came forward like a blushing school girl, sent into her governess's parlour to speak to her town cousin of the fifteenth degree. I'm sure I think Sir Robert Freemantle a godsend to us, in our present condition.

Mary. In your present condition! Is not this your honeymoon with my brother? At least, I should think it is not yet entirely at an end.

Mrs. Char. O dear no! But would it had less honey and more shine; we want lemon juice for our sweetness.

Mary. And you are in the way to have it. Indeed, my dear Harriet, if you are not aware, you will soon have too much of it.

Mrs. Char. Then, if you are afraid of this, do you apply the remedy.

Mary. Willingly, if it be in my power; but what can I do?

Mrs. Char. Give me something to amuse and interest me. I know Freemantle will be in love with you, if you take any pains with him. Nay, don't look so proud, lady,—I don't mean disingenuous pains; and then I shall have something to think of—something to talk of.

Mary. Have you ever been without this last resource?

Mrs. Char. O no, Heaven bless me ! I can talk of the last foreign mail, or the changing of an old turnpike road, or any thing, rather than hold my tongue.

Mary. But you are not reduced to this necessity surely, with Sir Level's taste and Mr. Smitchenstault's philosophy at command.

Mrs. Char. But I mean something that is worth talking about. Something that one whispers in the ear ; something that one watches an opportunity to communicate ; something that one speaks of busily in the twilight, in some private alley, with the bats wheeling over one's head ; something——O dear, O dear ! I can enjoy this now only by sympathy.

CHARVILLE enters by a door behind the ladies, but stops short on hearing their conversation.

Mary. What a long sober face you put on ! What are you thinking of now ?

Mrs. Char. Matrimony is a duller thing than I took it to be.

Mary. Indeed !

Mrs. Char. I was too foolish : I might have had my amusement for another good winter at least, and have married him after all, if I liked it.

Mary. So you married to amuse yourself ?

Mrs. Char. My dear girl, what could I do ? I was with my stiff grave cousins in the country : I was disappointed of a trip to the continent ; the Bath season was still distant, and there was neither county ball, horse-race, nor strolling players in all the country round : so when Charville presented himself again, and renewed his addresses, I was ready to have flown with him to the moon. And now, my dear little sister, if there be any grace in thee, let us have some amusement.

Mary. Willingly, if I knew how.

Mrs. Char. Get into some attachment, and difficulties, and correspondences ; for, next to receiving a love-letter one's self, there is nothing so delightful as peeping into the love-letters of one's neighbours.

Mary. Ha, ha, ha ! You might be easily satisfied ; for I have only to give Mr. Smitchenstault a little encouragement, and we shall have love-letters enough to peep into.

Mrs. Char. Somebody is coming.

[*CHARVILLE retires softly without being perceived, and SMITCHENSTAULT, by the opposite door, enters, with heavy creaking steps.*

Mary. See ! the old proverb verified ; speak of him, and he appears. Mr. Smitchenstault, you come in good time to give us the benefit of your exquisite sensibility. My sister there is painting a rose, and two buds which seem newly separated from it ; and she must not put dew-drops upon each, you know, because that would be formal : now, whether should

the rose appear to be weeping for the buds, or the buds for the rose ?—the parental or the filial affections prevail ?

Smitch. O de nice question ! de sweet affection ! de dear sympathy ! de pretty affection ! What you wish me to say ? I am no moder ; I am no bud ; but I have de tender heart.

Mrs. Char. So my sister knows, Mr. Smitchenstault.

Smitch. She know ? O de incredible delight ! (*To MARY.*) Do you know mine heart ? de heart of one who feel all de sublime delicacies, all de pretty commotion, all de genteel ecstasies of de soul of one lover. (*Ogling her absurdly.*) Have mine eyes told you all ?

Mary. Not entirely, my good sir ; for that would have been using your tongue exceedingly ill.

Smitch. O no ! no-tongue, no tongue ! all heart, true heart, devotoned heart. (*Laying his hand on his breast.*) It be all here trilly, trilly, like de strings of an instrument, de poor instrument dat you will play upon.

Mary. Not I, Mr. Smitchenstault ; I want skill.

Smitch. Let me teach you den. O de sweet tuition !

Mrs. Char. O the charming preceptor !

Smitch. (*bowing conceitedly.*) O, dear madam ! I am de poor unworthy.

Mrs. Char. Say not unworthy, my dear sir ; don't, I pray you, do yourself that wrong.

Smitch. (*bowing again.*) You are very good. But if dere be in me any ting good, any ting noble, any ting amiable, it be all from de passion of mine heart,—dat dere passion dat do make me, one poor philosopher, become like de lofty hero.

Mrs. Char. O the surprising transformation ! if one's eyes were but gifted enough to perceive it.

Smitch. (*turning again to MARY.*) And you do know dat I have de tender heart ?

Mary. I have not quite so much penetration ; but I really know that you are very polite and obliging ; and perhaps you will have the goodness to hold this skein of silk while I wind it.

Smitch. De very great honour. (*Holding out his hands, upon which she puts the skein.*)

Mrs. Char. Yes ; that rose-coloured silk looks, indeed, like the bands of love ; but those don't look quite so like the hands of love : you have been making too free with your snuff-box this morning.

Smitch. O it is always so ; when I am in de great agitations, I take de great snuffs.

Mary. So, by this, one may guess at the strength of your passion.

Mrs. Char. And I am sure, for these few days past, there is no man in the kingdom who has been within half a pound of tobacco so fervent a lover as Mr. Smitchenstault.

Smitch. You do me de great honour.

Re-enter CHARVILLE.

Char. Ha, Smitchenstault ! What do I see ? Hercules with Omphale ! A philosopher forgetting his dignity, and condescending to amuse himself with girls !

Smitch. O, dere is de potion dat put all dignity to sleep.

Char. I believe so ; and, by my faith ! yours is sometimes drugged pretty handsomely. But beware of this potion, which you have, I presume, received from one of these ladies ; it may be dangerous.

Smitch. O no ! it be only for de sweet mutual enjoyment.

Char. Well, let it be so ; that's prudent ; as much of it as either of them will share with you, may be taken with safety. But if this potion should have the same effect upon your genius as on your dignity, what will the admiring and expecting public say to it ?

Smitch. Let it have patience ; I will give de public, by-and-bye, all dat it will desire.

Mrs. Char. And a little more into the bargain, no doubt, to do the thing handsomely.

Char. Yes, I'll be bound for it ; your doctrine of energies will not be dealt out by such a scanty measure. And pray, amongst all your powers, have you discovered any that can bind the fickle fancy of a woman ?

Smitch. O no ! no bind !—I do bind nothing, —loose all : dat is my plan ; de free plan of nature : so I do teach my pupils.

Char. A most agreeable lesson, truly : and you will find some ladies very willing to become your pupils ; if, indeed, they are not already more qualified to teach than to learn.

Mary. Dear brother, how severe you are ! But a truce to philosophy ! It is in matters of taste that we have been craving Mr. Smitchenstault's instruction, though he has not yet told us whether the dew-drops—emblems of sensibility—should be hung upon this rose, or the buds which have been torn from her. (*Pointing to the flowers Mrs. CHARVILLE has been painting.*)

Char. (*eagerly to Mrs. CHARVILLE.*) Is it the flower I gave you this morning ?

Mrs. Char. O dear, no ! It is the one Sir Robert Freemantle wore in his button-hole : we have not one in the whole garden of the same species. Come, do you tell us where these same dew-drops should be disposed of on this drawing ?

Char. Dip it into the well, if you please, and it will have drops enough.

Mrs. Char. Dear me ! you are angry.

Char. No, faith ! It should take a thing of more importance to make a man angry.

Mrs. Char. Indeed, I think it should.

Enter SIR LEVEL CLUMP, skipping joyfully.

Sir Level. Huzza, huzza ! Come out to the lawn

with me ; come out to the lawn with me, gentles all, and I will show you a thing.

Char. What is the matter ?

Sir Level. Such a discovery ! Such a site for a ruin ! Such a happy combination ! A dilapidated wash-house for the foundation ; an old stag-headed oak, five Lombardy poplars, and a yew tree in such skilful harmony, the rules of composition could not offer you a better.—You must have an erection there, Mr. Charville ; you positively must. There sat a couple of jackdaws upon the oak too, in such harmony with the whole ; but they would fly away, hang'em.

Mrs. Char. That was very perverse of them ; I suppose those same daws belong more to Mr. Smitchenstault's school than to yours, Sir Level.

Sir Level. But you lose time, my dear madam : come away, come away ! a hundred pounds or two laid out on the ruin would make it a morsel for the finest ducal park in the kingdom.

Mary (*to SMITCHENSTAULT, as they are going.*) But we shall interrupt your instructive conversation.

Smitch. Never mind : de poor good man ! I always indulge de good peoples in dere little folly.

[*Exeunt all but CHARVILLE.*]

Char. (*after musing moodily on the front of the stage.*) Such a craving for dissipation and change !—A curious busy imagination.—“Next to receiving a love-letter of one's own, nothing delights one like peeping into the love-letters of one's neighbours ;”—the true spirit of intrigue ! Ay, but receiving love-letters of one's own ; that is the best. A married woman and love-letters ! How should she think of love-letters ? A bad, a suspicious, a dangerous disposition. I think I know myself ; I am not prone to suspicion ; but for those strange words, I should not have cared a maravedi for her painting that cursed flower. (*Dashing his hand over the papers, and scattering them about.*)

Re-enter SIR LEVEL CLUMP.

Sir Level. My dear sir, why do you stay behind—you who are most concerned in this piece of good fortune ? You must come out and behold it. A few hundreds—a mere trifle laid out upon it. If I could give it the form of an ancient mausoleum, it would delight you.

Char. Not a jot, unless you were to bury yourself under it. [*Exit the other way.*]

Sir Level. What is the matter ? What is the matter ? How can I have possibly offended him ? I am sure nobody is less teasing or obtrusive than I am. [*Exit.*]

Re-enter CHARVILLE.

Char. Is he gone ? He will suspect something : they will all suspect. I must join them, and pretend it was only a feigned displeasure. Married, married ! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Mrs. SMOOTHLY'S room. *She enters speaking, and takes a bandbox from a servant, who immediately retires.*

Smoothly. All nonsense! if you had waited for it last night at the waggoner's, you would have got it. *(Alone.)* 'Tis well it comes at last: my lady's present bonnet will surely fall to my share now. *(Opening the box.)* Let me see. O how smart and pretty! Did it but fall to my lot, now, to wear such things with their best new face upon them! *(Going to the glass, and putting the bonnet on her head, and then curtsying to herself affectedly.)* Indeed, I beg ten thousand pardons: I thought for to have come for to ride in the park with you earlier; but my lord,—Sir John (ay, that will do), would not allow me; for you know I have not always command of my own horses, and them things we married ladies must submit to. O dear, dear! will it ever come to this? Such fine clothes, such a carriage, such a husband some girls have got, who are not, I'm sure, half so handsome.

Enter SMITCHENSTAULT softly behind her, and looks over her shoulders.

O merey on me! *(Shrieking out.)*

Smitch. Hush, hush! What is de matter?

Smoothly. O, it is only you, sir!

Smitch. Why, who did you tink?

Smoothly. La, sir! they say that when people are vain, the devil is always near to take his advantage of it; and when I saw in the glass such a face staring over my shoulder,—O dear! I was frightened out of my wits.

Smitch. Fy, fy! dere is no devil nor nonsense. I will teach you better dan dat. But dere be de little god of Love: you have heard of him, pretty minx?

Smoothly. With his bow, and his quiver, and all that there?

Smitch. Ay; he it be who do take de advantage, —who do tempt you, who do tempt me, who do tempt every body.

Smoothly. O, sir!

Smitch. Now, be you quiet; be not so fluster. You call dat fluster? *(She nods.)* Very well; it be him who do tempt every body. Do you know any body in dis house dat he is tempting now? Tink well before you answer me.

Smoothly. You said yourself, sir.

Smitch. Yes, but beside me dere is another.

Smoothly (coolly). La, sir! how should I know?

Smitch. What you tink now of your pretty mistress, de sweet Mary Charville?

Smoothly. O, sir! if that is your point, I know nothing of that *(sulkily).*

Smitch. Come now, be free wid me: dere is for

you. Buy ribbon, or de shoe buckle, or what you please. Now you tell me; don't she sometimes speak of me? make de little confidences?

Smoothly. O dear, no! ha, ha, ha!

Smitch. Come, come, no laugh; you not mock me. I know very well; tell me de truth. Dere is more money; dat will buy de little gown, if you please. Don't she sometime speak of me when you are alone?

Smoothly. You are so sinuating!—O dear! to be sure she sometimes does.

Smitch. I knew it; I knew dat she did. Now, pretty minx, when she speak of me again to you, and sigh, and do so *(linguishing affectedly)*, den do you speak of me too, you know.

Smoothly. And what shall I say, sir?

Smitch. All dat you tink.

Smoothly. I fear, sir, that would be of little service to you. You had better tell me precisely what I am to say.

Smitch. Why—why, you may say dat I am handsome.

Smoothly. Very well, sir: if she is in love with you, she will believe me. And what more shall I say?

Smitch. Say, dat in her place you would love me too.

Smoothly. O dear, sir! that would be presumptuous.

Smitch. Pooh, pooh, pooh! not presumptuous. Say you dat, pretty minx, and I'll tell you a secret: when I marry your lady, I can love you bote.

Smoothly. Dear, sir, would not that be wicked?

Smitch. Wicked, pretty fool! what be dat ting wicked? I tell you dere be no devil in de world.

Smoothly. Truly, sir, he does not seem to be wanted, while you are here.

Smitch. Come, come, don't be afraid: I will love you bote. *[Bell rings.]*

Smoothly. My lady's bell: I must go to her immediately. She is in a hurry for her new bonnet.

Smitch. Remember, den, and take dis wid you. *(Offering to kiss her.)*

Smoothly. O no! I am in a great hurry: we'll put that off for the present. *[Bell rings again.]*

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE III.

The wood near the house.

Enter MARY and SIR ROBERT FREEMANTLE by opposite sides.

Mary. Sir Robert Freemantle!

Free. Yes, even so; both morning and noon, always Sir Robert Freemantle. However, I don't make this second visit entirely without pretence. My unele sent me—a very willing messenger, I

own—to inform Mrs. Charville that the botanical work she mentioned this morning is out of print, so she need not take the trouble of writing to town for it; but he has it in his library, which is entirely at her service, and will take the liberty of sending it to her.

Mary. He is very obliging; and so are you. Shall I turn with you, and meet Mrs. Charville? She is just coming out to walk.

Free. This spot is very delightful: had we not better wait for her? Do you begrudge me one moment of your company, which will so soon pass away? How fleetly that time passes in reality, which from the imagination passes never!

Mary. Ay, so it does.

Free. Do you remember the evening when we danced together at Lady Milford's? And the morning when I met you on your sorrel horse, crossing the heath at full speed, with your locks scattered on the wind like the skirts of some drifted cloud? And that little party to the cottage too?

Mary. Yes, I remember it all very well.

Free. Very well! I remember it too well. But I distress you, Miss Charville; for you guess what I would say, and my motives for remaining silent on a subject so closely connected with every idea I have formed to myself of happiness. I will not distress you: yet permit me to see you sometimes. Let me call myself your neighbour or your friend.—Ha! Mrs. Charville already!

Enter MRS. CHARVILLE.

Mrs. Char. I saw you at a distance. How good you are to come to us again! for I have been thinking of many inquiries I should have made after my friend. However, I need not scourge my poor brains to remember every thing at once; for you are our neighbour, and we shall often meet.

Mary. Mr. Crafton has sent by Sir Robert a very obliging message to you. The book you wished to see is out of print, and he will send it from his own library.

Mrs. Char. Good, dear, sensible Mr. Crafton, to keep such delightful books, and such a messenger to do his errands withal. To-morrow he will send me a novel to read—a very scarce, clever work; and the day after that, some verses by a friend (we are great critics in poetry, I assure you); and the day after that, a charade; and the day after that, a riddle, of his own writing, perhaps; and the day after that—O, we shall make a great many days of the riddle! We need not guess it all at once; that would be improvident.

Free. But, my dear Mrs. Charville, will you trust nothing to my own ingenuity in finding out reasons for doing what is so agreeable to me?

Enter CHARVILLE.

Mrs. Char. (to her husband). You saw Sir Robert

at a distance too, I suppose. We are all gathering round him, I think, like pigeons round a looking-glass.

Char. (to her). I heard your voice at a distance, and guessed you had some cause for such lively animation.

Mary. Is my sister often without it?

Mrs. Char. If I am, it is but of late. When you look grave (*to CHARVILLE*) it would be undutiful in me to be merry.

Char. (peevishly). You are dutiful, and that makes you grave. (*Striding away from her, waltering to himself.*) I comprehend it; it is all plain enough. (*Checking himself, and returning to FREE-MANTLE.*) This beautiful morning, Sir Robert, has tempted you to prolong your rambles in the wood: but what has become of Mr. Crafton?

Free. He went home some time ago: he dislikes sitting down to dinner fatigued.

Char. He is right; it is not good for any body.

Mrs. Char. Then Sir Robert will stay and dine with us, and go home in the cool of the evening. He has walked a great deal, and must be fatigued, if he return now. (*Looking wistfully to CHARVILLE, who is silent.*) This would be a most agreeable arrangement. (*Looks to him again, and he still remains silent.*) Don't you think it would?

Char. Undoubtedly, if Sir Robert will do me the honour.

Free. I am very much obliged to you and Mrs. Charville; but my uncle expects me: it is near his hour. I must deny myself a very great pleasure: I must return immediately.

Char. Since we are so unfortunate, perhaps you are right. The clouds seem to be gathering for rain.

Mrs. Char. It is only the shadow of the trees overhead: the sky is as clear as a mirror.

Char. Is it the trees? There are shadows somewhere.

Mrs. Char. So it seems: but blow them away, pray. I can't endure shadows.

Mary. Yet you like moonlight and twilight, I think.

Mrs. Char. O, to a folly! When owls are hooting, and beetles humming, and bats flying about, making as many circles in the air as a summer shower does on the pool. Did you (*to CHARVILLE*) see the bat we caught last night?

Char. A bat?

Mrs. Char. Yes, a horned bat; the ominous creature, you know that fanciful people are frightened at. O yes, you must have seen it, for you are drawing in the muscles of your eyes and face at this very moment, in mockery of the creature.

Mary. Did you not see it, brother? It was very curious.

Mrs. Char. He looks at no creatures but those

which are bred in his kennels and his stable. I'll describe it to Sir Robert.

[*Going to SIR ROBERT, and walking with him to the bottom of the stage, talking and demonstrating with her hands, while CHARVILLE and MARY occupy the front.*]

Char. So fond of natural curiosities! this is a new fancy, methinks.

Mary. No; she is fond of painting butterflies, you know.

Char. So it seems, so it seems.

[*Striding away, and pacing round the stage with his eyes fixed upon SIR ROBERT and MRS. CHARVILLE, till he gets close behind them, while they move towards the front.*]

Mrs. Char. (*continuing to speak as she and FREEMANTLE come forward*). But that kind is larger, and speckled like a wild bird's egg, or a cowry, or the back of a trout, so pretty, and so minute.

Char. (*thrusting his head between them*). My love, you are too minute. You forget that Mr. Crafton is waiting for Sir Robert.

Mrs. Char. Bless me! is your face there? I thought you were on the other side of us.

Free. I am just going, sir.

Char. O! Sir Robert, I beg that you will not go sooner than—Mr. Crafton, I know, is apt to be impatient.

Mrs. Char. And you have a fellow-feeling for him.

Free. (*to MRS. CHARVILLE*). So I may venture to tell my uncle that you receive the liberty he has taken in good part. Good day. [*Going.*]

Mrs. Char. (*calling him back*). But when do you write to your sister? There are many things which I wish to say to her.

Free. (*returning*). I shall have the honour to receive your commands on that subject whenever you please.

[*She walks with him, again busily talking, to the bottom of the stage.*]

Char. Does she mean to detain him the whole day?

Mary. He has been here but a very short time.

Char. A long half hour by the clock.

Mary. It is a clock of your own keeping, brother, and the wheels of it are in your own brain. I reckon it ten minutes.

Char. Are you bewitched to say so? He goes; see he goes now. No, hang it! he does not go yet.

Mary. Why are you so impatient?

Char. I am not impatient: let him stay till doomsday, if he will; but I hate people who are always going and going, and never go. (*Stepping on to them hastily.*) It will rain presently: it rains now: would you stay here to be wet?

Mrs. Char. Rain!

Char. I felt a drop on my hand this moment: look there.

Mrs. Char. It fell not from the clouds then; but verily, I think, from your own forehead. How warm you are! (*Turning to FREEMANTLE.*) Good day, then, I will not detain you. (*Exit FREEMANTLE.*) (*To CHARVILLE.*) Well, dear Charles, since you are so afraid of the clouds, let us go into the house. But I must visit my bower first.

[*Exit swiftly among the trees.*]

[*Char. (after stalking slowly away in another direction, stops short, and returns to MARY, who stands in the front, looking after FREEMANTLE).*]

Mary. Well, brother!

Char. My dear Mary!

Mary. Well, brother; what would you say?

Char. I am going to ask a very foolish—I mean an idle—I should say, an unmeaning question.

Mary. Never mind that; what is it?

Char. Has Freemantle really a sister?

Mary. Is it possible that you have forgotten the young lady whom you used to think poor Mordant resembled?

Char. Very true; it went out of my head strangely.

Mary. Strangely indeed! Could you think he would talk of a sister, if he had none?

Char. O no, no, no! I have not an atom of suspicion about me; but I thought it might be a sister-in-law, or a brother's wife, or—there is no saying how many intricate relationships people have, now-a-days.

Mary. He could have no sister-in-law: for poor Mordant, though distant, is his nearest male relation.

Char. Don't mention that poor wretch. He would be ruined: it was not my doing.

Mary. Did you dissuade him from playing? and were you obliged to receive all that he lost? My dear brother, let me speak to you on this subject when you are composed and at leisure.

Char. I am composed enough, but certainly not at leisure. [*Exit severally.*]

SCENE IV.

An outer court adjoining to the house.

Enter ISAAC with a letter, and immediately followed by MRS. SMOOTHLY.

Smoothly. Where are you going with that letter, Isaac?

Isaac. To Squire Crafton's.

Smoothly. Is it for the squire himself?

Isaac. I ben't good at reading handy writ, as how my wit never lay that way; but I guess that it is either for the squire himself, or some of the gentlefolks of his family.

Mrs. Smoothly. A clever guess truly; thy wit, I

think, must lie that way. Give me the letter; I'll take it; I'm going there at any rate.

Isaac (giving her the letter). There it is: I know you like an errand to that house to see somebody.

Smoothly. Dost thou think I would go to see nobody? foolish oaf!

Isaac. Ha, but a favourite somebody. Ay, ay! I knows what I knows. John, the butler, is a mighty fine man, and goes to church dressed like a squire of a Sunday, and the poor silly tits of the village curtsy as he passes, and call him "sir." I knows what I knows. *[Exit.*

Smoothly. Do they suspect me, then? I'll hide this in my bosom, and nobody else shall know where I am going.

Enter CHARVILLE.

Char. What letter is that you are hiding so carefully?

Smoothly. O dear, sir.

Char. What, you are nervous, are you? I say, what letter is that? Who is it for?

Smoothly. La, sir, I never read the direction, it's for the post.

Char. Why need you go out with it, then, when the letter-box is in the hall? Give it to me, and I'll put it in.

Smoothly. O, sir, that won't take it to the place it is going to.

Char. Did you not tell me this moment that it is for the post?

Smoothly. Did I, sir? I was wrong, sir; I must take it myself.

Char. Come, come; no more waiting-maid prevarications! Give me the letter, I charge you, and I'll take it where it should go. Give me the letter this instant.

Smoothly (giving it unwillingly). There, sir.

Char. (looking at the direction). Just what I expected. *(Sternly to her.)* And you did not know to whom this letter is directed? *(Motioning her to go as she is about to speak.)* Away, away! Tell me no more lies: I'll take care of this letter.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE V.

The butler's room. Enter DICKENSON with a paper in his hand, which he looks upon ruefully.

Dick. Ay, this was the state of the cellar: what it will be soon, if all these palavering people, with their improvements and philosophy, stay much longer in the house, the Lord knows! That good bin of claret is melting away most piteously. Who's there?

Enter CHARVILLE.

My master. I beg your honour's pardon.

Char. Hush! Let me be here for a little while.

Dick. What is the matter, sir? you are very pale.

Char. Nothing, nothing. Watch on the outside of the door, and prevent any body coming in: there is not a room in my own house where I can be at peace for a few minutes to read a letter.

Dick. Are they in your study, sir?

Char. Yes, yes! Sir Level is there with his cursed plans: they are in my dressing-room too; they are everywhere. Watch by the door, I say, for a few minutes. *[Exit DICKENSON.]*

[Taking out the letter with agitation.] "To Sir Robert Freemantle." Her own handwriting; that fair character for such foul ends! What man on earth would not do as I do? *(Breaking open the seal.)* A cover only. The enclosed. *(Reads again.)* "To Miss Freemantle." Is this all? *(Examining the envelope.)* What's here? A coarse scratched drawing of a horned bat. *(Reads again.)* "You will understand what I mean by this, though it is but a scratch."—No more! 'Tis certain there is some mischievous meaning under this! It is my likeness she would give under that of a bat, and she will add the horns to the original, if she can. *(Reads again.)* "To Miss Freemantle." If this should be a device now, lest the letter should be opened! I'll pawn my life it is. "To Miss Freemantle." We shall see; we shall see. *(Tears open the enclosed letter.)* Mercy on us! three pages and a half, so closely written!

Dick. (without). You shan't come in, I say.

Char. Who's there? *(Huddling up the papers.)* I must have time to read all this. *(Noise of voices without.)* What's that?

Re-enter DICKENSON.

Dick. They are inquiring for you, sir. Ladies and gentlemen, and all; they are going to walk.

Char. Let them go where they please. I'll take my walk elsewhere.

Dick. You may go out by the back stair, sir.

Char. So I will; that is well thought of by thee, good Dickenson! *[Exeunt.]*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

CHARVILLE'S private library. He is discovered sitting by a table with the letter in his hand.

Char. (reading.) "My dear Charlotte, I rejoice so much in the happy chance."—Psha! I have read it a hundred times since yesterday. I'll look upon the hateful scrawl no more. *(Tosses it from him, paces in a disordered manner about the room, then returns to it again.)* What, does it take hold of

me still? the fascination of a snake is about it; I cannot keep away from it: I must read that passage once more. (*Sits down again and reads.*) "Ah the cross fate that separates us so cruelly! We were once, as you know, within an ace of coming together, of consummating that dearest wish of my heart. Those dear woods of Oakenly! how dear they would then have been! The tender green boughs of spring with all their lovely blossoms would have smelt more fragrant; the birds would have sung more melodiously; the fair face of nature would have smiled more sweetly." These the sentiments, these the expressions of one woman to another! It is as evidently a love-letter, as that my clenched fist presses this table. Some part indeed seems irrelevant; but far less ingenious commentators, than our ancient text-books have been handled by, would find no difficulty in it at all.—Ay, plain enough: here is a good rule to try it by: substitute Robert for Charlotte, and there is sense in it; without this, it is a mass of absolute absurdity. All these pains! Why not? I have heard of most intricate ciphering made use of in such clandestine matters. This is simple and more ingenious still—and yet—pest take these tormenting incongruities! Go, vile scrap! I must tear thee to atoms or thou wilt craze my brain. (*Tearing the letter furiously.*)

Enter DICKENSON.

(*Angrily.*) Who's there?

Dick. Mr. Crafton wishes to speak with your honour.

Char. Let him speak with the devil! are not the ladies below?

Dick. Yes, sir; but he has express business with yourself, and would follow me up-stairs.

Char. (*in a whisper.*) Is he behind thee?

Dick. Yes, sir, close at hand.

Char. (*in a low voice.*) Let him come then, since it cannot be helped! (*Gathering up the torn papers hastily while CRAFTON enters.*)

Craf. Good morning, sir; pray let me assist you.

Char. O, sir, I beg—I shall do it myself in a moment.

Craf. (*stooping.*) Pray allow me; the pieces are as numerous, as if you had been plucking a goose, yet from your countenance I should rather have expected it to be a crow.

Char. No, nothing; an old tailor's bill that gave me trouble once, and I had a spite at it.

Craf. And you have wreaked your vengeance on it unsparingly.

Char. I think Dickenson said you were come to me on business. Have the goodness to be seated.

Craf. No, I thank you; it can be settled in a few words.

Char. Well, sir.

Craf. Our neighbour Dobson is going to sell his little farm; now it is a desirable possession for either of us, and I should like to add it to my own estate; yet I would by no means enter into competition with a purchaser of your calibre.

Char. I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Crafton; I'll consider of it; it is a very good aspect for apple trees.

Craf. For apples! you surely mistake me: it is Dobson's farm I mean; it is not my own little paddock, I assure you; that I will never part with.

Char. I beg your pardon: I heard you imperfectly. The farm! well, I shall consider of it. I am greatly obliged to you. Are you alone this morning?

Craf. Yes, my nephew is gone.

Char. Ha! gone! It is a delightful day for his journey: I am glad—I mean glad of the fine weather he is getting. I wish him a pleasant journey with all my heart.

Craf. He is not gone a journey; he is only sporting with Squire Ruddley; I expect him to dinner.

Char. That's all—I was afraid—I thought somebody had told me he was going to leave you soon.

Craf. Myself, perhaps; for I had no idea when he came to me that he would have staid so long. But he has been so happy since he came, and you have become such a kind and agreeable neighbour to him, that I don't know when he will go.—However, it is all very well, he has no agreeable home to go to, and I am the better for his company. I should not wonder now if he were to spend the best part of every summer with me.

Char. A very bad—I mean a very extraordinary arrangement. Why does he not marry?

Craf. Why, in the first place, he has little money to keep house upon, and he is so whimsical and scrupulous that he will marry no woman, forsooth, unless he be in love with her; and a young man's inclinations, you know, Charville, will not be controlled by prudence and propriety: they will wander here and there.—O dear! everywhere, where they should not. (*After a long pause.*) Well, you say you will consider of it. (*Another pause*) Yes, I see you are considering of it.

Char. O no, not at all. The orchard-field that you wish me to purchase.

Craf. No, no, my dear sir; the little farm which I do not wish you to purchase.

Char. I mean so, I mean so; I'll think of it at leisure.

Craf. And when you have done so, you will have the goodness to let me know the result.

Char. Certainly.

Craf. Good morning; I'll intrude upon your time no longer.

Char. Good morning.

[*Exit* CRAFTON.]

(*Alone, after musing for a little.*) "Every where, where they should not." Did he not glance at something in these words? "Young men's inclinations will not be controlled."—"Every where, where they should not."—I'll go live in the Hebrides—at John o' Groat's house—I'll travel for improvement to Kamschatka, rather than live here with such a neighbour as this at my elbow.—What noise is that?

Enter DICKENSON.

What do you want?

Dick. Would you have the closet doors set to rights, sir? the locksmith is here.

Char. Who sent for him now?

Dick. My mistress, sir.

Char. For what purpose?

Dick. To have a better lock put upon the north door of her dressing-room.

Char. On that door? has it not been nailed up for a long time?

Dick. Yes, sir, but she has a fancy to have it opened.

Char. A fancy! I'll have no locksmiths: I'll have none of his jobs done here.

Dick. It would be so convenient for my lady, sir; for it leads to the back staircase.

Char. It leads to the black devil!—Let him take his smutty face out of my house, I say; I'll have none of his jobs done here. (*Exit* DICKENSON.) Preparations making for some wicked plot or other. O, if I could but devise some means of coming at the bottom of it!—Wonderfully anxious that I should go from home now and then; to amuse myself; to bring her the news, forsooth.—Could I but devise any means. (*Stands a while considering, then takes a turn across the room with slow thoughtful steps, then rouses himself suddenly, and rings the bell.*)

Re-enter DICKENSON.

Yes, it is you that I want. I have something to say to you.

Dick. At your pleasure, sir.

Char. It is the little cottage by the brook which you wished to have for your sister?

Dick. Yes, please your honour, but you said it could not be spared; so I would not tease you about it any more.

Char. She shall have it.

Dick. Bless your honour! and the widow's blessing shall be upon you also. It is so very good of you to think of that just now: it is more than I could have expected.

Char. Well, say no more about it: the cottage is hers.—(*Dickenson bows gratefully, and is gone as far as the door, to go away.*)—Come back, Dickenson.

Dick. Your honour?

Char. This is not all I have to say, my good Dickenson.—(*A pause, DICKENSON expecting what he is further to say.*)—Hast thou ever been frolicsome in thy youth?

Dick. Sir!

Char. I don't mean in any bad way, Dickenson. Don't look so surprised, man: yet I think thou wilt be somewhat surprised when I tell thee what has come into my head.

Dick. It is not for me to judge of your honour's notions.

Char. Thou wilt hardly guess what I am going to say.

Dick. No, sir, but something for your own good, I doubt not.

Char. Nay, don't look so grave; I am only going to try a little frolic.

Dick. That is what I should never have guessed, I confess.

Char. O! only a mere whim; every body has their whims: it is a whim in your mistress, now, to have that door opened.

Dick. Belike, sir.

Char. But then you must hear what my whim is. I am to go from home, you know, this morning with Sir Level; but I shall soon leave him and return again, unknown to every creature in the family but thyself. Now, couldst thou provide some disguise for me that I may not be known?

Dick. Indeed, sir! every body in the house will know that anxious look of yours, and the sound of your voice.

Char. Do I look so very anxious, then?

Dick. Of late, sir, you have; just, if I may be so bold, as though you thought somebody were hatching a plot against you.

Char. Ha! dost thou know of any plot?

Dick. Heaven forbid, sir! I'm sure that claret has been as honestly drunk at your table—

Char. Hang the claret! thou art as honest a butler as ever drew cork.—But as I said, Dickenson, I should like to remain for some time in the house disguised: is the new servant, who is coming to be trained under thee, known to any one in the family?

Dick. No, sir, not a soul has ever seen him.

Char. Let me put on the livery intended for him, and prevent him from coming till my turn is served.

Dick. Oh, sir, would you so far demean yourself?

Char. Never trouble thy head about that. Come and show me the livery, and I'll tell thee more about it afterwards. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The drawing-room. A table for tea set out. Enter DICKENSON *carrying a tea-board, which he places on the table; and on the opposite side* MRS. SMOOTHLY, *who goes prying about the room.*

Dick. What are you looking for, Mrs. Smoothly?

Smoothly. Only my mistress's work-bag: she desired me to finish the collar she has been working at so long. We poor waiting gentlewomen have all them tedious matters to *finish*, as it is called; that is to say, to do two thirds of the whole.

Dick. Yonder it lies: I desired my new man to clear the table for tea, and he has put every thing upon the chairs, I see, which he should not have done. But he'll know better by-and-bye.

Smoothly. It will always be by-and-bye with him, I fear, poor stupid oaf. I wonder you could bring such a creature into the family. Isaac tells me he has spilt a plate of soup on my mistress's gown at dinner, which is very hard upon me, Mr. Dickenson. To have the fingerless fool spoiling my perquisites!

Dick. You'll get the gown all the sooner for that: why, he's serving you, child.

Smoothly. Serving me! I should have had it in a fortnight, and not a smutch upon it. And what do you think of his sneaking behind doors, and listening too?—Speak of the devil and he appears: I see him at this very moment lurking in the passage. (*Calling off the stage.*) Come in, sirrah; it is you I am talking of, and I'll say all I have said to your face. (*Enter CHARVILLE, disguised in livery, with a silver waiter in his hand.*) I say, sirrah, you are a dirty, sneaking, curious fellow. What business had you to stand listening at my lady's door when I was dressing her for dinner?

Char. I mistake the door, gentlewoman, judging as how it was the parlour.

Smoothly. Take you care again, lest I mistake your nose for the handle of the door, and give it such a turn as sha'n't be for the beautifying of that knave's face of yours.

Dick. Fy, Mrs. Smoothly! don't rate him so for a mistake.

Smoothly. Mistake truly! he mistakes every nook and corner in the house, where he can stick himself up to listen, for the parlour.—Take care, sirrah; for if I catch that snout of yours again where it should not be, I'll take the tongs in my hand, and treat you as St. Dunstan did the devil. I'll teach you to sneak, and to pry, and to haunt one so: I'll teach——

Dick. Nay, nay, Mrs. Smoothly, perhaps he is in love with you: you should have pity on the young man.

Smoothly. In love, indeed! Such a creature as that in love with me! I wonder, Mr. Dickenson, that a man of your sense and discretion should take upon you to bring such an oaf into genteel service. Wait till your master return; he'll not suffer such a shambling fellow in his house, I'll assure you.

Char. Mayhap measter may think better of me than you trow, gentlewoman.

Smoothly. I trow this, however, that he'll make

thee pay for thy prying. He likes that business himself too well to share it with thee, I can assure thee.

Dick. For shame, for shame! to put yourself in a passion for such trifles. Don't you hear the company coming from the dining-room?

Smoothly. Are they? (*Snatches the work-bag from the chair, and exit.*)

Char. (looking after her). The fair, obliging, pretty-spoken Mrs. Smoothly! Heaven preserve us! What creatures we may find women to be when we get behind the curtain!—(*To DICKENSON.*) They're coming, you say. I'll retire to the darker end of the room; for Smitchenstault gave me such a look of examination at dinner, that I began to dread detection.

Dick. You need not fear him now, for he has taken his coffee below, and is retired to his room for the rest of the evening.

Char. Did my wife give him a hint to retire?

Dick. No, sir! Why should she?

Char. O nothing!—No reason at all. I only thought she might have done so. He is tiresome enough sometimes, and—O no, no reason at all.

Dick. I think he has got some stones in his pocket, and is going to write something about his jolly.

Char. He said that himself, did he?—Ha! Here they come.

Dick. I think you had better retire till they ring.

[*Exit CHARVILLE and DICKENSON, and enter MRS. CHARVILLE and MARY, followed by SIR ROBERT FREEMANTLE.*]

Mrs. Char. But, Sir Robert, you have never said a word to me the whole day of the letter I sent to your care, and the elegant drawing on the envelope. You have surely received it.

Free. I most surely have not.

Mrs. Char. I gave it to the servant early in the morning. Can he have been so negligent?

Free. The fault lies with my own man probably: he is a careless knave: I shall find it on my table when I go home.

Mrs. Char. You will have a great loss, else, I assure you.

Free. A drawing, too!

Mrs. Char. Yes; a most beautiful sketch of the curious bat, which you thought might be of the same kind with that which you caught last summer in Cornwall.

Mary. But the greatest loss of all would be Miss Freemantle's.

Mrs. Char. Hush, child! keep my secret.

Mary. It won't keep.

Mrs. Char. Then I'll tell it myself. Long ago, Charlotte and I wrote romantic sentimental letters to one another, in imitation of the novels we were then so fond of; and now I have commenced my correspondence with her again in a style, that will, I

know, afford her a good hearty laugh, if she don't think my head turned altogether.

Free. Is it sealed up? Could not one have a peep at it?

Mrs. Char. Not for the world. But if you have great pleasure in reading curious letters, Mary can indulge you with one. She has a curiosity in her possession that is worth the gold of Ophir. Pray go and fetch it, my dear sister, if there be any good nature in thee, and I know thou hast a great deal.

Mary. So entreated, how can I resist?

Free. Must you have the trouble of going for it? O! no, no. I'll see it another time.

Mary. Indeed it is no trouble; I shall find it presently. [*Exit.*]

Free. And in the mean time shall we examine that bust with the light cast down upon it? You will find that it has, so viewed, a beautiful effect.

[*Takes a candle from the table, and goes behind a large screen at the bottom of the room, followed by Mrs. CHARVILLE, when, from the door left ajar by MARY, enters CHARVILLE.*]

Char. So, so, so! The philosopher sent off, and my sister sent off, and the screen to befriend them besides! (*Hearing them speak indistinctly behind the screen.*) Speaking low, too. Cautious enough, I find. Something bad in so much caution. (*Drawing softly near the screen.*)

Free. (*behind the screen.*) Such beauty and expression!

Char. Ay, ay, ay! The devil himself hath no need of the forbidden fruit, if he will talk to a woman of her beauty.—(*They speak again indistinctly.*) What are they saying now? It sounded like husband. O, virtuous lady! she recollects that she has a husband.—Some little impediment to be sure.

Free. (*as before.*) And that look of modesty, too, forbidding all—(*The rest of the sentence spoken indistinctly.*)

Char. Her modesty indeed! that won't stand in the way.—They speak low again; they are whispering now. They are; flesh and blood can endure it no longer.

[*Running to the table, and throwing some of the china on the floor, when FREEMANTLE and Mrs. CHARVILLE, alarmed by the noise, come hastily from behind the screen.*]

Mrs. Char. That awkward fellow again breaking your china!—(*To CHARVILLE.*) This seems to be your only occupation in the family, Barnaby! Ha, ha, ha! how bewildered he looks! What brought you here now? You should never come but when the bell rings.

Char. They be always ringing in my ears, bells here and bells there, and silver cups a clattering. I does not know when I be wanted.

Mrs. Char. I'm sure, Barnaby, I does not know neither; for I know nothing on this earth that one

could want thee for, unless it were, for spite, to hand a cup of tea at a time to scald a neighbour's fingers.—(*To FREEMANTLE as CHARVILLE retires.*) Did you ever see such a creature?

Free. I don't know; he puts me strangely in mind of somebody or other, and I can't recollect whom. Where does he come from?

Mrs. Char. Dickenson says from Yorkshire.

Free. It may be so, but his dialect belongs to no county in England that I am acquainted with.—(*MARY heard speaking without.*) Don't stand here, young man; keep below till you are called for.

Re-enter MARY.

Mary. Here is the letter,—a love-letter from an old schoolmaster to his mistress: but you must read it, sister, for I can't do it justice.

Mrs. Char. As you please, but make us some tea first; the cramp words that are in it require a ready articulation.

MARY begins to prepare tea, when enter DICKENSON, and CHARVILLE peeping behind him.

Dick. Ladies, I am sorry to alarm you, but there is a man below, who says he has found a person at the foot of a tree, not far from the house, who seems to be in pain, and that when he spoke to him the voice which answered him again resembled my master's.

Mrs. Char. Foolish fancy! but let us relieve the poor man whoever he may be. (*Exit MARY and FREEMANTLE hastily.*) It is a cold night, sister; stay and put on a shawl.—(*To DICKENSON.*) Bring me that shawl from the next room.—(*CHARVILLE gives a sign to DICKENSON, and goes for the shawl himself.*) Surely, Dickenson, you don't believe that it can possibly be Mr. Charville: you would be more alarmed if you thought so. There is some trick in this: I know it by that smile on your face. (*DICKENSON retires without answering, and CHARVILLE re-enters with the shawl.*) That is a lace shawl, foolish fellow, bring me the other. That would keep nobody warm, and be torn on the bushes besides.

Char. (*rending the shawl in anger, and speaking in his natural voice.*) And let it be torn into a thousand pieces! A bit of paltry lace, or any thing, is of more importance to you than the fate of your miserable husband.

Mrs. Char. Ha! is it you?

Char. Ay, you may start as if you saw an apparition from another world.

Mrs. Char. Nay, there is nothing like the other world about you. That coat and wig, and that ludicrous visage of yours, belong neither to angel nor demon, and are altogether earthly, I assure you; much more an object of laughter than of fear. Ha! ha! ha! What made you put on such a ludicrous disguise? If I were a vain woman, now, I should think you were jealous.

Char. Call it by what name you please, madam; but the levity of your conduct, the unblushing partiality shown on every occasion to that minion of your fancy, your total want of regard for myself, but poorly concealed under the mask of easy general carelessness, has raised up that within me which every man must feel, who is not as insensible as the earth on which he treads?

Mrs. Char. And you have, in serious earnestness, thus disguised yourself to be a spy upon my conduct. And you have, no doubt, made some notable discovery to justify your suspicion.

Char. Madam, madam! this is no time for trifling. It is for you to justify—I mean, explain those appearances, if they have indeed deceived me. Why is Sir Robert Freemantle so often in this house, and received by you with such indecorous pleasure and familiarity?

Mrs. Char. Had you asked me that question before with open and manly sincerity, you should have had an answer as open and sincere; but since you have preferred plots, and disguises, and concealment, even make it out your own way. It would be an affront to your skill and sagacity to satisfy your curiosity independently of them. *(Going.)*

Char. Do you mean to expose me to the whole house?

Mrs. Char. No, Charles; you can never be exposed, cruel as you are, without my sharing in the shame.—Oh! oh! has it come to this!

Char. Ha! does she weep? *(Running after her, and then stopping short.)* No, no! she does not: there is too much parade with her cambric handkerchief for real tears: she does not weep; and yet I could tear my hair for spite that she does not.

[Exit.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A back court, belonging to the house; SANCHO discovered waiting by the gate.

San. Now, we see—we see. White man great deal of money—read book—know all tat be good. We see—we see. I wait long—O here he come!

Enter DICKENSON.

Well, friend, what say your massa to my massa?

Dick. He has nothing to say to him at all. He is very angry with your massa.

San. Very angry! Ay, my massa be poor, and every body be angry wit him.—Your massa not angry, your massa very fond of him when he shake a te dice, and take all te money from him. Te tevil

will shake him over te great fire for tat.—You tell him, he be in prison; he be cold; he be hungry?

Dick. I told him every thing you desired me, but he has nothing to say to you. He is very angry, and won't see you.

San. Angry! won't see me! He shall see me. I watch him; I speak to him; I deal wit him. Angry! White man angry! Black man angry too. *(Going.)*

Dick. Stay a little: he sent this for yourself to pay your way back again to London. *(Offering him money, which he scornfully casts away.)*

San. None for myself; me will beg my way back; me will take noting of him but his heart's blood, and tat I will take if I should give him mine own in return.—May his money choke him! May te white tevil tear him! May his moter cure him!—Angry! Sancho be angry too. *[Exit.]*

Dick. Poor creature! I pity him: but he'll beg his way back well enough. He has been used to it, no doubt, in his own country. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II.

An old dismal-looking chamber.

Enter MRS. SMOOTHLY and DOLLY by a concealed door in the panelling of the walls, carrying lights, which they place on a table.

Dolly. What a dismal ghastly-looking place! It looks as like a chamber where some wicked thing has been done as any I ever see'd.

Smoothly. But no wicked thing has been done in this chamber, foolish creature! though a wicked man died here.

Dolly. Ay, no wonder he comes back again, since he was so wicked. I marvel you thought of taking the haunted chamber for playing your tricks in with that poor 'losopher: I durst as soon think of taking the church or the vestry.—What's that?

Smoothly. I heard nothing. Poor creature! you are so ignorant, Dolly, and that makes you frightened. Don't you know that ghosts and all them terrible things never appear till midnight?

Dolly. And if so be, why did you ax me to keep you company? Housekeeper wants me below to pick raisins.

Smoothly. O la! I aint frightened; but I thought I should weary somehow to wait by myself.

Dolly. Ah, Mrs. Smoothly, it don't become me to say so, but I be feared that you and the 'losopher mean to do some'at that aint right.

Smoothly. Nothing worse than cajoling him out of a little money, which he loves like his own life; and punishing him for being so conceited as to believe that my mistress, forsooth, would make an appointment with such a ragamuffin as him.

Dolly. Hark; he's coming now. Good luck to you. *[Exit.]*

Enter SMITCHENSTAULT (hastily and alarmed).

Smoothly. My dear Mr. Smitchenstault; dear deceiver!

Smith. No honey words.

Smoothly. What's the matter?

Smith. Some one pursues me: hide me somewhere.

Smoothly. Mercy on us! (*Opening the door of a small closet.*) Go in there. (*Puts him in.*) I'll get off altogether. (*Runs to the concealed door by which DOLLY had gone out.*) She has shut it so hard, stupid idiot, that it won't open. What shall I do? O, I remember. (*Opens an old wardrobe press, and creeps into it.*)

Enter CHARVILLE, followed by DICKENSON.

Char. (*speaking as he enters.*) No; I could not be deceived. I'll take my oath it was he. If I had not stumbled in the gallery at that other cursed door, I should have got up to him.

Dick. Surely, sir, your eyes have deceived you: it could not be Sir Robert Freemantle that you saw.

Char. Deceived! Do I not know his form, his size, his manner? I know them too well: they are before mine eyes all day long.

Dick. Then, perhaps, they were only before your eyes now in the same manner.

Char. No, no, no! Thou makest me mad. Do I not know one thing from another? Cannot one know one hateful face from another, though one be not absolutely within arms' length of the pest?

Dick. Nay, if your honour saw the face.

Char. Saw it or saw it not, I'll be sworn it was he. Did you not say yourself that you saw a man run hastily up-stairs.

Dick. Yes, sir; but it appeared to me to be Mr. Smitchenstault.

Char. Smitchenstault! thinkst thou I should not know a hog from a greyhound? Is Smitchenstault tall?

Dick. I cannot say he is.

Char. The figure I saw was tall. Is he slender?

Dick. I cannot say he is.

Char. The figure I saw was slender. Has he, in any respect, the appearance of a gentleman?

Dick. Not much of that, I confess.

Char. Then, tease me no more by saying it was Smitchenstault; it was the devil as soon. Where can he have disappeared? There is no door for him to escape by.

Dick. What if it should be some apparition that has deceived you? This is the haunted chamber which has been shut up so long, and why it is open to-night, and lights burning, I cannot imagine.

Char. Ay, ay! There is always a ghost or a

haunted chamber wherever intrigue and treachery are at work. But if it be not a spirit, I will dislodge it.

Dick. The closet door seems to move.

Char. (*running to the door.*) I cannot open it; somebody presses it to in the inside. Go fetch my pistols: I'll send a brace of bullets through it, and prove if the thing within be flesh and blood, or not. Run for my pistols, I say.

Smith. (*bursting from the closet.*) Don't fire de pistol! I am blood and flesh.

Char. You here! Where is Freemantle? It was he I followed along the gallery, if there be any truth in vision.

Smith. Yes, dere be great trute in vision: it is one of senses. I feel, I see, I taste, I smell, I hear; —one of de laws of nature which do force belief.

Char. Pest take your philosophy! Where is Freemantle? Where is the man I saw before me in the gallery?

Smith. Gone out by dat door. (*Pointing to the panel.*)

Char. Is there a door here? (*Searching for it.*)

Dick. (*to SMITCHENSTAULT.*) Pray, sir, how did you see him?

Smith. I peep tro' de chinks of de closet, and see him pass.

Dick. And what brought you here, Mr. Smitchenstault?

Smith. Only to take de little pleaseance wid Mrs. Smoothly, who is very fond of me.

Dick. How could that be, when there is no door there?

Char. (*having just discovered.*) Faith! but there is though, which confirms every word he has said. (*Bursts open the concealed door, and exit, followed by DICKENSON.*)

Smoothly (*bursting from her hiding-place in a rage.*) O you lying serpent! Pleaseance with Mrs. Smoothly, indeed! Very fond of you! Pretty pleaseance, indeed! I could burst with vexation.

Smith. Dear, dear: what for all dis?

Smoothly. And to take my name in your mouth too! Would not Dolly or the dairy-maid have suited as well for your excuse?

Smith. Dear me, pretty moute! too pretty to speak de scold.

Smoothly (*pushing him off.*) Keep your distance, I say. Pleaseance with me, indeed! Such a lie; such an aggravated lie; I detest all lies! Pleaseance, indeed!

Smith. Don't be so angry; dere be no pleaseance in dat, and dere be no reasons neider: and every body ought to speak wid reasons.

Smoothly. You provoke me worse and worse with your reasons. Pleaseance with such a creature as you! I shan't be able to hold up my head in the family again; no, never. I'll let them all know what kind of a man you are. I'll let Miss Char-

ville know that you only court her for her fortune. I'll —

Smitch. Hush, hush, hush! de poor pretty, angry, goody girl: here is de money for you.

Smoothly. I'll have none of your money. (*Going off disdainfully.*)

Smitch. (*following her*). O but you will to': it is gold money, my dear, pretty, honey moute.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The library.

Enter CRAFTON and SIR LEVEL CLUMP, by opposite sides.

Sir Level. Good morning, sir; you have followed my intimation pretty rapidly.

Craf. Sooner than you expected? too soon?

Sir Level. By no means; I am heartily glad of it; for it argues that you still bear the same partiality for this delightful place, and now is your favourable opportunity.

Craf. Has Charville at length resolved to sell it?

Sir Level. Resolved! I should not say resolved.

Craf. Then say what you please, and I'll listen.

Sir Level. Mr. Charville, I don't know how, for I am but just come from a little expedition in the way of my profession, has taken a disgust to it.—I don't mean such as will incline him to sell it for an old song either; but, in short, I give you notice as a friend, that you may have it now if you please.

Craf. And you do so with Charville's permission.

Sir Level. Yes—no—ay, in some measure I may say—I don't know that I can say so altogether.

Craf. Nay, my good Sir Level, you have taken so much pains in matters of taste to make every thing plain, and smooth, and orderly, be so obliging as to infuse a little of this same improving simplicity into matters of business. It does not signify to me two straws whether Mr. Charville sends me this notice directly or indirectly. The same reasonable offer which I made him for the property two years ago I am willing to make him again, and more than this I cannot and will not give.

Sir Level. Property! what a bargain-making name you give to it now! the place of your nativity, the beauty of which you so much and so justly admired. Can any thing of sylvan scenery be more charming?

Craf. And your tone is somewhat altered also, my good Sir Level: this same sylvan scenery was only practicable ground when you last spoke of it to me. I must c'en repeat to you again, that I will make the same offer for it which I made to him two years ago.

Sir Level. But consider, my dear sir, how much it has been improved since then. My plans have been already executed, and this, though it may not become me to say so, should weigh with you greatly.

Craf. I am sure it weighs heavily.

Sir Level. And look here at this sketch (*unrolling a large plan upon the table*)—look what groves, what lawns, what sweeping declivities and acclivities, what harmonious undulations! you shall have this plan—the benefit of all this tasteful design into the bargain.

Craf. No, Sir Level; I am not such a Jew as to crib that in, along with the rest. I'll first, if you please, purchase the estate in my own plain way, and then you may ask as much as you like for your plan afterwards. This is, in my simple conceit, the best way of proceeding. (*SIR LEVEL turns peevishly away.*) You think differently, I see. But here comes Mr. Charville himself.

Enter CHARVILLE.

Sir Level (*aside to CHARVILLE as he enters*). He's a cunning hunk, — can make nothing of him. Will only give the old price. Deal warily with him.

Craf. I am greatly obliged to you, Mr. Charville, for communicating to me, through Sir Level, your intention respecting this house and lands.

Char. You have a right to be first informed of it.

Craf. (*bowing*). I shall be most happy to become the purchaser at what has been considered by competent judges as a reasonable price.

Char. This estate is a more desirable purchase to you, Mr. Crafton, than to any other man.

Craf. I have, it is true, sentiments of affection for it, the old home of my forefathers, but I am not rich enough to indulge them to the injury of a moderate fortune.

Char. Sir, I ask no more, if we can agree upon what really is a reasonable price. I should not wish to exact exorbitantly from the amiable and tender feelings of your nature.

Sir Level (*aside to CHARVILLE*). Pshaw! you may make him pay for all those amply enough, and take but little out of his pocket.

Enter MRS. CHARVILLE.

Mrs. Char. Good day, Mr. Crafton.

Craf. And to you, madam, this and many good days.

Char. (*to MRS. CHARVILLE*). We meet upon business. (*Turning to CRAFTON*.) Let your agent and mine, Mr. Crafton, meet together, and —

Mrs. Char. (*drawing her husband aside*). Are you wrong in the head to part with this house so suddenly, so unadvisedly?

Char. (*aside sarcastically*). Ay, you advise me

to keep it, I suppose; you have your tender feelings too, and partiality for the dear place. (*Turning indignantly from her to CRAFTON.*) The place is yours, sir, if our men of business can agree upon the terms, and I make no doubt they will.

Sir Level (*pulling him aside*). Rash, very rash to say so: he'll cozen your poor attorney, depend upon it.

Char. (*turning again to CRAFTON*). That is to say, Mr. Crafton, if, after examining their report, I myself approve.

Mrs. Char. (*pulling him again aside*). Do not be angry with me for interfering; but where will you find such a pleasant residence?

Char. (*as before*). Ay, madam, and such pleasant—very pleasant neighbours.

Mrs. Char. What do you mean?

Char. O you cannot possibly divine. (*Turning to CRAFTON.*) Sir, let the business be settled as soon as you please. You shall have it at the price which you formerly offered.

Sir Level (*pulling him aside as before*). He laughs in his sleeve at your rashness. I see too well by the smile on his face that he thinks he has jockeyed you.

Char. (*turning to CRAFTON*). I mean with reasonable expedition; I am by no means in any particular haste.

Mrs. Char. (*going up coaxingly to CRAFTON as he is about to reply to CHARVILLE*). Nay, nay, my dear sir; you must not tempt him: come to my dressing-room, and let Mary and me have a few words with you. You must positively say nothing more to Mr. Charville on this business to-day. It is too bright, too pleasant a day for such ungracious dealings. Come with me, my dear sir. You must not—you can't refuse me.

[*Exit, leading off CRAFTON.*]

Char. (*looking after them*). Yes, she will lead him as she pleases. How coaxingly, how bewitchingly she speaks to him! Ah, how it once bewitched me! she is speaking so close to his face, to the old, withered, hateful visage of Crafton—is she thus with every man? is she altogether shameless? Oh, oh, oh! this is not to be endured.

Sir Level (*returning from the other end of the room*). It is provoking enough, I'm sure.

Char. Ha! you are here: I thought you were—Yes, I have been really provoked; for he seems indifferent, and I don't know how, in this business.

Sir Level. He wants to buy the estate as a profitable speculation: he despises our improvements: he even laughs at my plan, and holds taste itself in derision.—Look here; I spread it out before him—

Char. Well, well; another time if you please: not now, I pray. (*Putting it away with his hand.*)

Sir Level. But do me the favour only to observe

—stone-headed fellow! He would let the savage brushwood remain in the forest, and I'll be hanged if he would not plant all my smooth shaven slopes with potatoes.

Char. Let him plant them with nettles and wormwood, an he will!

Sir Level. Your servant, sir; I beg pardon; I intrude, I find.—(*Aside, as he retires.*) There are nettles and wormwood planted somewhere, that I was not aware of. [*Exit.*]

Char. (*alone, pacing up and down in a perturbed manner*). Ay, ay, it is very plain, it is too plain, it is shamefully plain. (*Stopping short.*) Mighty fond of this residence of a sudden. To be sure, where will she find another house so convenient, with back stairs, and panelled doors, and haunted chambers, and so many cursed conveniences? (*After pacing up and down as before.*) Because I did not find him, I did not see what was before my face as plainly as my hand, and, forsooth, it was Smith-enstault. O woman, woman! thy mysteries of cunning and contrivance! thou wouldst deceive man as the evil one deceives thee. But it shall not be.—What can I do? This torment of my mind; this disgrace on my state I can disclose to no one. This cursed world is no place for a man like me to live in: would I were out of it!—O woman, woman!

Enter ISAAC.

What do you want?

Isaac. Please your honour, you are wanted in the justice-chamber.

Char. What's the matter?

Isaac. Goody Bullock is come to swear the peace against her husband: he has beaten her all black and blue.

Char. And he has served her right. Let him beat her black and yellow next time.

Isaac. Why, please your honour, she is a good peaceable woman.

Char. Out, fool! she is a hypocrite, and a liar, and a jade. Let him beat her all the colours of the rainbow, an he will. [*Exit.*]

Isaac (*looking after him in a bewildered astonishment*). He's surely bereft of his wits altogether. To call poor old Goody Bullock all them bad names, who goes to church every Sunday, with her stuff cloak over her arm, and knits hose for the vicar!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

A summer parlour, with a door opening to the garden.

Enter MARY and SIR ROBERT FREEMANTLE from the garden.

Mary (*speaking as they enter*). And your uncle is bent upon purchasing this place.

Free. He was born in this house.

Mary. It is natural that he should wish to possess it; yet I am sorry for it. I have an affection for it too, and so had my brother; but he has taken some capricious dislike to it, I don't know how.—*(A pause.)* And you leave us so soon?

Free. I feel, my dear Miss Charville, that it is right I should.

Mary. How can that be?

Free. Have you not perceived your brother's growing dislike to me?

Mary. He is of late more ungracious to us all; but I must confess I have perceived something of what you say.

Free. I perceive it whenever I come near him, in every gesture of his body, in every glance of his eye. I perceive too well that he has discovered my secret, and disapproves, more strongly than I had apprehended, my attachment to you.

Mary. His mind is sometimes warped; he does not always judge fairly.

Free. My precaution in paying my chief attentions to your sister-in-law, which, by my uncle's advice, I have practised, that I might not provoke him to discard me till a favourable turn in my affairs, then daily looked for, should entitle me to declare myself, and, I will also own, to engage Mrs. Charville more heartily in my interest,—all this precaution has been in vain; and I find that my own undirected, incautious conduct would have been the more successful of the two: at least I am sure it could not have been less so.

Mary. Then pursue it, now, and retrieve your error.

Free. That you permit me to do so, makes me a proud and a happy man. But you forget, my dear Mary, what I told you half an hour ago.

Mary. What was it? I ought not to be so forgetful.

Free. That the papers wanting to establish my right to the Shropshire estate, which my attorney has been searching for among our old family records, cannot be found. The letter I received from him this morning informs me, that he now despairs of finding them; and this being the case, I must despair of ever obtaining your brother's consent to our union.

Mary. Despair is a strong expression.

Free. But is it not a just one? I have not now the face, poor as I am, and poor as I shall probably remain, to propose myself as a match for you.

Mary. Well then, Sir Robert, what makes you timid makes me bold. Have the constancy to wait till I am twenty-five: three years will bring this to pass; and then, if you still think me worth the having, and do not consider me as altogether antiquated, I am yours. My fortune will then be in my own power, independently of my brother's consent.

Free. Is it possible that I am so happy? How frank, how noble! But should I take advantage of a sudden impulse of thy generous nature?—Alas! I should be more virtuous than I feel I am. My uncle has offered to settle his very moderate fortune upon me; but, in this case, my sister would be scantily provided for, and our poor cousin, who has ruined himself at the gaming-table, would be entirely destitute. I have therefore refused it.

Mary. You have done right, and this refusal gives you a value in my estimation beyond any acquisition of fortune. *(Noise without.)* We shall be interrupted here.

Free. Let us return to the garden. My formidable rival, Mr. Smitchenstault, must, by this time, have left it.

Mary. And I don't think he observed us as we fled from him. He was only passing on to his favourite haunt. *[Exeunt into the garden.]*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A grove of trees, with a tangled thicket in the background. CHARVILLE is discovered in a musing posture near the front, SMITCHENSTAULT peeping behind him, through the bushes.

Char. *(after muttering to himself confusedly.)* A cloak! a convenience! a provider for disorderly passion!—Noosed for this purpose! Her cunning, her witchery, her wickedness—who could have imagined it! *(After a pause.)* Gain her affections from me! Are his person, his manners, his intellects superior to mine? It is not so: comparison has not produced it. Any man might have had her who happened to come in her way with baseness enough to attempt it.—What can I do? There is no corroborated proof: the world would laugh me to scorn.—Oh, it is ever thus! Would I had done with this envious, malicious world!—Ha!

Smitch. *(coming forward.)* Don't start, my dear friend; I know all dat you do tink, and I am your friend.

Char. I have disclosed my thoughts to no one.

Smitch. Your tongue has not; but when you come to my room secretly to ask of me if it was really Sir Robert dat I did see pass trough dat chamber, and when I tell you dat mine own two eyes do see him, your eyes, your visage, your body, your limb, every ting dat you have, speak for de tongue, and tell me dat you love no Sir Robert in de house wid your wife.

Char. *(starting away from him.)* I cannot live and bear it. *[Exit.]*

Smitch. *(alone.)* Not live! Ah if he would be so kind! It would be good ting for me and

de dear Mary. He never give consent to our matrimony; if he die, she be free to marry me, and give me de fortune. Very goot ting! ay, very goot ting.

Re-enter CHARVILLE.

Char. Forgive me, Smitchenstault: I am a miserable man, and you have discovered it. But tell no creature the disordered state in which you have found me. You are a stranger, and therefore I am the less distressed that you do know my misery; and you say you are my friend.

Smitch. Yes, de true frent; all dat I do for you, I do for myself. Speak to me all dat you tink.

Char. That is impossible! I am miserable; I live in torture; I wish I were out of this hateful world. Could it be without crime, I would have done with it at once.

Smitch. What you call crime? Have you no more reason dat you mind all dat petty superstitions? Very pretty ting, indeed, to live, if you don't like it: who thank you for dat? I am free—I feel dat I am free. I not come here to be unhappy; when I be so, I go away.

Char. Ay, but where, my friend?

Smitch. To de good sound sleep; to de nothing.

Char. That were an effectual remedy. I am miserable!

Smitch. And what oblige you to be so?

Char. Ha, tempter! Would you have me destroy myself?

Smitch. No! I only wish you not to be miserable.

Char. How can I be otherwise?

Smitch. I teach you. Do you consider now, and do you tink, and do you say to yourself, "Why be I unhappy? I have de bad wife. O very true; oder men have de bad wife also. Dey call me cocklum." What you call de man wid de (*spreading out two of his fingers significantly*)—ay, ay, cuckold. "Very well, oder men——"

Char. (*starting from him*). I shall run distracted!

Smitch. Ay; all dis not be pleasant, but it be foolish dat you let it make you miserable. But if you cannot help dis, where is de obligation dat you should bear it! Keep a your place, dey say: foh, foh! de place where I am best is my place.

Char. If I could but leave them my misery as a legacy behind me!

Smitch. O you will leave dat to Sir Robert; he will get de bad wife to torment him.

Char. Marry! I would live to the age of Methusalem rather, were I wretched as wretchedness could make me. Marry! (*tearing his hair extravagantly*): it makes me mad to think of it.

[*Striding rapidly to the bottom of the stage.*]

Smitch. (*aside*). Foolish wort! I am all wrong here.

Char. (*returning*). And you think they would marry?

Smitch. O no, no! I speak de joke: he be too wise to marry her, and den she will say, Oh, oh! and tink of de good husband she had.

Char. Think of me! Yes, she will then think of me. She must think of me then. If I could but rend her guilty heart with remorse! If I could make her miserable!

Smitch. O no doubt of dat; she will be very miserable, and have de bitter misery.

Char. Ay, that were something; that were worth dying for. She will think of me then in the agony of repentance. If I could be sure of this,—be sure. (*A pause of thought.*) But are you a man, and advise me to such a desperate act?

Smitch. I am a philosopher, and advise you to nothing. But dere is de good reason if you will hear it;—de sober, well-considered reasons on bote sides of de question; and I will say dem all over to you in good order. First, dere be——

Char. (*impatently*). Not now—not now. I am distracted.

Smitch. (*looking after him with disappointment*). He won't do it, after all, de chicken-heart, for as well as de English love to hang demselves. If he do, I have de sweet Mary and all her fortune; but if he do not—O I will say it be all a joke dat I did say to him, and den dere will be no more about it. Chick-hearted fellow! (*Starting. A noise amongst the bushes.*) What face is dat peeping through de leaves? Dere is surely no devil in daylight. My flesh creep—foolish fear! It was nothing.

[*Exit, and presently SANCHO comes from the thicket, creeping on hands and feet.*]

Sancho. Tat talky talky man chace him from tis spot, so convenient for it. But he no escape me. (*Looking carefully round.*) O still in te wood. Yonder he walk. I be near him again presently.

[*Exit again into the thicket.*]

SCENE II.

A small glade in the wood, surrounded with high fern and bushes.

Enter CHARVILLE.

Char. (*after walking with hasty disturbed steps to the front of the stage, stops short, and continues musing for some time before he speaks*). She will think of all this when it is too late: it will embitter her days; she will then bear her torment in secret. She will know I have loved her; she will know it then. The time runs on; it should be done. O that it were done! But the doing of it is a fearful effort. (*Pulls out a pistol, and looks at it ruefully.*) Is there no way of getting rid of this hateful world but by this miserable act of self-destruction? O

that some friendly hand would rid me of my wretched life! I cannot do it.

[*Throws away the pistol, which SANCHO, bursting from the fern, &c. takes up, and runs fiercely at him, presenting it to his head.*

Sancho. Me will do it for you and tank you too.

Char. Hold, hold! For heaven's sake spare my life.

Sancho. Me spare you! you who ruined my massa! You tick, you rook; you shall now be food for te rooks!

[*Snaps the pistol, which misses fire; then CHARVILLE wrests it from him, and they both grapple with one another stoutly, when SANCHO being about to get the better of CHARVILLE, SIR ROBERT FREEMANTLE enters, and rescues the latter.*

Free. (*keeping fast hold of SANCHO*). Villain or desperado! keep still; for I will not quit my hold till thou art in safe custody.

Char. Brave stranger! How shall I thank—Ha! Freemantle. (*Turning away his head.*)

Free. Did you not know me? But that look of distress and displeasure! What does it mean at such a moment as this?

Char. Do not inquire. Your own conscience will answer your question. What has been your motive for lingering about my house?

Free. You have discovered my secret, then, and the sight of me is hateful to you.

Char. What! you own it: the poor covering of secrecy is done away; you look in my face and own it. I am degraded even to this.

[*Exit distractedly.*

Free. (*still holding SANCHO*). Is he mad? I cannot follow him for this fellow. Ho, help there! Holla, there!

Enter CRAFTON.

Craf. Ha! is it you, Freemantle? What do you here with that black creature whom you collar so tightly?

Free. He would have murdered Charville. See, his pistol is on the ground.

Craf. Would you have murdered him, you rascal?

Sancho. Me true man and no rascal. Me rascal if me not kill te base cruel rook dat ruined my massa.

Craf. Why, Sancho, my old friend Sancho, is it you?

Sancho. Me no your frien. You cruel to my massa.

Craf. Nay, nay, be pacified, faithful Sancho. I am a better friend to thy master than he is to himself, and I will prove it. He shan't remain long in prison: be pacified.—(*To FREEMANTLE.*) Let him go: I'll be his warrant that he shall follow us quietly to the house. Won't you, Sancho?

San. Me not promise.

Craf. But I will trust you without a promise.

Free. Be it so, then; but he must not have the pistol again. (*Lets go his hold, while CRAFTON takes the pistol from the ground.*)

Craf. But where is Charville? Let us go to him.

Free. I cannot. He knows my secret, and is so sternly offended, it is impossible for me to speak to him in his present unaccountable frenzy.

Craf. Never mind that. Come along; here is a letter that will make you stand firmly before him.

Free. (*snatching the letter*). The long lost papers are found.

Craf. Even so; read it as we go.—Come along, Sancho. Thy master will be the better for it too; he will soon be a free man again.

San. You say tat,—you sure of tat,—you swear tat?

Craf. Yes, yes; I'll say it and swear it too, if thou wilt not take my word for it.

San. O good Massa Crafton! me tank you, me embrace you, me kneel to you.

Craf. (*raising him*). Fy, fy, fy! Let no man be on his knees but when he is at his prayers. Come with us and fear nothing; though this was a desperate attempt, a very wicked attempt against the laws of the land.

San. Me care for te laws when te laws care for me.

Craf. Well, well, come with us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A library. Enter CHARVILLE, in violent agitation, followed by MRS. CHARVILLE and MARY.

Char. (*speaking as he enters to MRS. CHARVILLE.*) No, madam; do not follow me; it is in vain to explain it. The secret is out—the guilty secret is out: he has had the boldness to acknowledge it himself—to acknowledge to my face. I am such a creature now as he need no longer keep measures with. Away, perverted woman! Do you follow me still? Do you look me in the face? (*Beating his forehead.*) He acknowledged it himself.

Mrs. Char. Acknowledged it?

Char. Yes, madam. You disdained explanation, forsooth. Your virtuous pride was offended, and since I employed disguise in the matter, I must find it out myself. I have found it out, madam; he confessed it himself.

Mary. My dear brother, what was it he did confess?

Char. Art thou a fool? Canst thou not comprehend? That woman there, whom thou callest thy sister,—thy amiable sister,—that woman whom I married,—that woman whom I loved better than myself.

Mary. Nay, that is a mistake of yours, brother;

for if you had loved any thing better than yourself, you would never have been in this condition. Your closeness and self-love have made you always suspicious. I thought, indeed, that a wife of her cheerful temper would have enlarged your heart, and—

Char. Hold thy tongue, simpleton; she has enlarged my head. (*Stamping with his feet, and beating his forehead.*) The whole world must know it now. Since he brazens it out himself, the shame is public. I shall be known to be—

Mrs. Char. Nothing but a fool, and that you must submit to, being a distinction which you have taken so much pains to acquire.

Char. O woman, woman! thy audacity is amazing.

Enter CRAFTON and SIR ROBERT FREEMANTLE.

Craf. Excuse this intrusion, Mr. Charville. I bring a culprit in my hand, who fears he has offended you.

Char. O most courtly phrase! That black villain who would have murdered me, he fears, too, I suppose, that he has offended me.—Sir Robert, you have saved my life, and I cannot turn you out of my house; but you have made that life hateful to me, and I hate it the more for being preserved by you.

Craf. Be more calm, my good sir. He has, indeed, gained the lady's affections unknown to you, and—

Char. And may take her and her affections also, and the devil give them his benediction.

Craf. Well, Freemantle, e'en take the lady as she is offered to you, though it be not in the most gracious manner. Fortune is no object now; take her and marry her out of hand.

Free. I cannot follow more pleasing advice.

Char. Marry her without a divorce! I'll not divorce her. I'll be hanged if I give her up to any man alive.

Craf. Pray, good sir, turn your eyes upon the party. I believe this match, which my nephew has so long desired, may be accomplished without a divorce.

Char. (*turning round and seeing SIR ROBERT with MARY'S hand in his.*) My sister! you bewilder me.—Where is my wife?

Craf. Most dutifully employed laughing at you in her sleeve at the other corner of the room.

Mrs. Char. (*advancing.*) My dear Charles, I told you you would prove a fool at last.

Char. But, madam, you have not yet proved it.—Sister, let go that man's hand, and answer me a question. How long is it since he first paid his addresses to you?

Mary. His addresses have been short, but I have reason to believe he has been attached to me since we first met, some months ago, in Shropshire.

Char. And I have reason to believe he has made

thee a mere cat's paw of convenience, silly girl!—(*Turning to FREEMANTLE.*) Let me ask you, sir, why, in my family, your marked attentions were paid to that lady? (*Pointing to MRS. CHARVILLE.*)

Free. My dear uncle, you must answer this question.

Craf. Then, frankly and honestly, I'll tell you the whole truth, which, in its full extent, even Freemantle himself is ignorant of. I counselled him to pay his chief attentions to Mrs. Charville, to conceal from you his design upon your sister, lest you should forbid him your house, and blast all his pretensions in the bud, being then ill entitled to propose himself as a suitor. And besides this—

Char. Why do you hesitate? Proceed. You will make your tale hang together, some way or other, I suppose.

Craf. Besides, I thought it might engage Mrs. Charville—(pardon me, madam, you were a stranger to me, and I had heard that you were fond of such attentions), engage her to plead with you in his behalf.

Char. And this is your story? A simple plot, truly, for a simple man to listen to.

Craf. This is all my plot or story as Freemantle is privy to it; but there was another part of it concealed in my own breast, which shall be so no longer. I hoped that by making you jealous of his visits here to incline you to leave my neighbourhood, and restore to me at a reasonable price the possession of my forefathers. This sinister design has failed—deservedly failed, for I do not justify it; and now you have my sincere confession without reserve. I am sorry for the pain and trouble I have occasioned: can you forgive me, Charville?

Char. I will try to do it. I'm glad you have not obtained the manor though.—(*To MRS. CHARVILLE.*) And can you forgive me?

Mrs. Char. I'll try to do it; and if you are very good, and very penitent, and less suspicious, and less teasing, and more docile, and more obliging, I make no doubt but I shall succeed.

Char. So I find I have a great many changes to make.

Mrs. Char. Yes, Mr. Charville; and in return I'll make some too. I'll be grave, orderly, and demure before all men, smiling only on mine own wedded lord when he encourages me to do so; three times in a week, perhaps, or oftener, as it may chance. I'll not whisper in the ear of my first cousin, unless he be blear-eyed, or have a hump on his back; and I'll neither go to grove, arbour, nor closet, till I have sent you before me to see that there be nobody there.

Char. Harriet, Harriet! I thought this would have moved you differently. You triumph, no doubt; but less exultation, and more candour, would surely have been as becoming. If I am more suspicious than other men—I am not aware

that I am so—you must at least acknowledge that it was an extraordinary circumstance to have an honourable suitor to a young lady concealed in a family, and making his way through private doors, and by private stairs, to apartments which she did not occupy. This is no chumera of my brain, madam; Mr. Smitchenstault saw it.

Mary. I believe, brother, all that you really know of the matter is that Smitchenstault said so.

Mrs. Char. But here he comes; and if he says so again, when confronted with Smoothly, we shall yield that point to you entirely.

Enter SMITCHENSTAULT.

Mr. Smitchenstault, do you seriously aver that you saw Sir Robert Freemantle pass through the haunted chamber while you were in hiding there?

Smitch. Madam, I have eyes in my head; I see what I do see, and I know what I do see.

Mrs. Char. We don't doubt that in the least; but did you actually see a man pass? and was it this identical man? (*Pointing to FREEMANTLE.*)

Char. Answer me, sir, did you see this man pass through the chamber?

Smitch. In de imaginations I see one man very like dat man.

Char. In the imaginations! Then you have not really seen it, and you have told me an untruth.

Smitch. What you call false? What you call true? De imaginations is all dat we do know: de veritable real *true* is a foolish notion—is a notting. In mine imaginations I see Sir Robert, and if in imaginations he was not dere, what can I help dat?

Char. Sir, go out of my house, and never enter it again as long as you live.

Craf. Unless it be in imaginations, Mr. Smitchenstault.

Smitch. (to CHARVILLE). My good sir, you are in de passion: dere be no good reason in dat. Be not in de passion: de sweet Mary will plead for me.

Mary. Not I, Mr. Smitchenstault.

Smitch. What! you wish me to leave dis house? Ha! you only deceive; you be ashamed to own de tender toughts of your heart. You not wish me gone. It was your sweet looks dat keep me here so long.

Mary. With the help of your imaginations.

Char. Out of my house, wriggling deceiver!

Mrs. Char. Don't press him to go so immediately; for Mrs. Smoothly has some matters to settle with him before he leaves the house.

Smitch. O devil! I not wait for dat.

[*Exit hastily.*]

Craf. Now, Mr. Charville, this point being settled, let me crave your pardon for a poor criminal in custody below: he is a faithful servant to an unfortunate master.

Char. Speak no more of it: my heart has often smitten me on that subject. I have renounced the gaming-table for ever, and I restore to poor Henry all I have won from him, though it was, by every rule of honourable play, fairly won.

Craf. I believe so, entirely. But I wish the rules of honour came a little nearer to the good Bible precept, "Think not of your own matters, but think also every one of his neighbour's." You risked a small part of your ample fortune against the whole of poor Henry's, and you took it from him. However, in restoring it, you do what has seldom been done by men of honour; and, on the part of my thoughtless relation, I gratefully receive your generosity.

Mary (after a pause). Charles, you look melancholy; what are you thinking of?

Char. What I never suspected before—that I have been a very selfish fellow.—Mr. Crafton, I know that this estate was purchased by my family at an unfair price. I return it to you for the sum which was given for it.

Craf. No, sir; after the indirect means I have used to wrest it from you, I feel that I do not deserve it. I too have been a selfish fellow.

Mrs. Char. Nay, if you come to confessions, I must speak also; I have been a careless, thoughtless, vain and giddy wife.

Char. I forgive thee, Harriet; and though I cannot own entirely that character of suspicion which you would all so decidedly fasten upon me, yet I will freely confess—

Craf. Have done with confessions. We shall all be wiser, and I hope, better, for what has just passed, and therefore have no cause to regret it.

HENRIQUEZ:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

THE KING OF CASTILE (ALONZO, surnamed the Noble).

DON HENRIQUEZ, his general.

DON CARLOS, a noble soldier, attached to HENRIQUEZ.

ANTONIO, a young gentleman in love with MENCIA. BALTHAZAR.

BLAS, a youth in the service of LEONORA.

A FRIAR, confessor to HENRIQUEZ.

DIEGO, steward to HENRIQUEZ.

Courtiers, confessors, attendants, gaolers, &c.

WOMEN.

LEONORA, wife of HENRIQUEZ.

MENCIA, sister to LEONORA.

INEZ, an attendant of LEONORA.

*Scene, the castle of HENRIQUEZ, a few leagues from the town of Zamora, and in the said town.**Time, the beginning of the 13th century.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*A grove near the castle.**Enter DIEGO with a letter, muttering to himself before he speaks aloud.*

Diego. The honour of the house of Altavera, Of all those chiefs, whose bread I and my sires So many years have eaten without reproach, Must it be sullied now? — Diego Furnez Must take upon him, then, th' informer's office, With all its paltry baseness and concealment. To Altavera's lords, with manly freedom, My fathers spoke, and so have I. But then I did oppose this marriage which hath sunk His noble pride so low. Such information From me would be suspected; and his anger, When so excited, might, perhaps, — a blow! Diego Furnez could not live disgraced, And, dying unrevenged, would die disgraced.

Ay, it must be; necessity compels me.

[Lays down the letter, then looking hastily about, snatches it up again.]

Surely I hear a stranger's voice approaching.

I'll drop it farther on, and watch my time,

When Don Henriquez may be sure to find it.

*[Exit.]**Enter ANTONIO and MENCIA, speaking as they enter.**Ant.* Forget thee, Mencia! Yes, I will forget thee

When means are found to make it possible.

Thine image, independent of my will,

Where'er I am, is with me; night and day

Before my fancy's eye it smiles or weeps;

Motions its arms, as thou wert wont to do,

When distance barr'd our intercourse of words;

Is present with me more than present things;

And makes my wretched life a maniac's dream,

Lost and unprofitable.

Is there some potent spell to lay this sprite

That haunts me to my ruin? Vain, vain words!

Thou cannot be forgotten.

*[spells,**Men.* Thou but deceiv'st thyself: there are two

Absence and time, which have to many a lover

His peace restored. Fate has between us now

A barrier placed, which all my feeble strength

Could not o'erleap; therefore I have consented.

Ant. Consented! O to what hast thou consented?

To more than the rejecting of my love,

Which thy ambitious sister, since the day

That raised her, as the wife of Don Henriquez,

To greatness, which she knows not how to bear,

Regards as too presumptuous. Thou art silent.

To more than this hast thou consented, Mencia?

Men. Question me not; I cannot tell thee now;

Yet thou shouldst know. I have, alas! I have,

O'ercome by prayers, and wearied with contention,

Consented to bestow my luckless hand

On one who tried, but could not win my heart:

And I am bound —

Ant. Thou art not! no, thou art not!*Men.* Alas, I am! and so will hold myself.*Ant.* Thou shalt not! Holdst thou sacred every tie,

But those that bind thee to thy earliest friend;

To him who was thy playmate and thy guard;

Who through thy native woods ran by thy side;

Play'd with thee, sang with thee, built thy first bower,

Where thou, his mimic mistress, kept thy state,
Screen'd from the mid-day sun, when he, the while,
Still pleas'd thee, as thou lentst thine eager ear,
With tales of wonderment and tales of love?
All claims but his! O say not so, sweet Mencia!

Let me implore thee on my bended knee! [now

Men. Hush! rise! we are observed; this spot is
Traversed by busy feet, in preparation
For a gay feast to-night, held at the castle,
In honour of Henriquez' safe return.
Leave me, I pray!

Ant. By unfrequented paths,
Through rugged wilds I've travelled many a league:
Three irksome days and nights in that deep grove,
The ruin of an ancient sepulchre,
Like some unhallow'd spirit, I have haunted
To watch a lucky moment when thy steps [thee,
Should lead thee near the place; and having found
Thinkst thou to cast me off with feverish haste,
As thou wouldst shake an adder from thy robe?

Men. Nay, nay! for yonder Don Henriquez
comes;

There's danger here.

Ant. And come who will, and let what will betide,
Despair thinks not of danger.

Men. Retire, retire, and we shall meet again.

Ant. When? where? this night? to-morrow?
name the time.

Men. To-morrow by the early dawn I'll meet thee.
No; not to-morrow, but the following morn.

Ant. And at that early hour?

Men. Even so: retire.

Ant. I have thy word for this?

Men. Thou hast, thou hast. [Exit ANTONIO.

(Alone.) Ay, he has loved me as no other will,
And thus he is requited. Woe the day!
Why did my timid spirit yield so poorly
To an ambitious sister?—Must it be?
Henriquez is a man whose native feelings
Of honour and of justice rise indignant
Against the slightest breach of honest faith.
The interests of his house to him were nothing
Opposed to generous ties—to simple right.
I will to him—ah, no! I dare not do it. [his eye
(Looking out.) He is at hand. That paper keeps
Intently occupied.—What can it be?
Perhaps some letter dropp'd by poor Antonio,
And then all is discover'd.

Enter HENRIQUEZ.

You twist that letter in your hand, my lord,
As a most worthless thing. May I presume?
I am not curious.

Hen. Yet thou hast a mind,
Not being curious, just to peep into it.
Well; it might ease thy silken threads, perhaps,
Or wrap thy scented comfits. Take it then.

[Offering her the letter, and then drawing it back.
No; spells lurk in such crook'd lines as these

To work unhappy fancies out of nothing.
Perhaps same hateful witch has mutter'd o'er it
Her blasting benison; thou shalt not have it:
I'll put it up to light my ev'ning lamp.
Thou goest?

Men. I have been too long truant here,
And my neglected task calls me within. [Exit.

Hen. (alone). Why look I still upon this foolish
scroll?

As foolish as 'tis spiteful. Leonora
Has for her wicked solace in my absence
My noble friend—my second self received!
Good likely tale! [Reads again.

“An unknown friend cautions thee to beware of
Don Juan. He has played thee false in thine
absence, and destroyed thy wife's virtue and thine
own honour. Look to it, if thou wouldst not become
the most contemptible of all doating husbands: for
thy fond security will make them bold, and the
world will point at thee ere long.”

The common cant of all those friends unknown.
Juan and Leonora! blest, most blest,
In friendship and in love! This canker'd fiend
Is stung therewith. Envy most devilish,
Yet not uncommon in this wicked world.
Well; it shall serve to light my evening lamp;
God mend the wretch who wrote it. [Exit.

SCENE II.

A small ornamented apartment in the castle.

*Enter BLAS and INEZ, carrying different things in
their hands, speaking as they enter.*

Inez. I leave thee too these cases of perfume,
And this small book of tales and warlike sports.
Place them as I have said, and be thou secret:
Be sure thou tell to no one for what guest
This chamber is prepared.

Blas. But if I should, I should not break my
word.

I guess'd it out myself; thou didst not trust me.

Inez. Yes, but I did confirm thy guess, more surely
To rivet thee to secrecy. Thy lady
Will greatly be displeas'd, shouldst thou divulge it;
Therefore be prudent.—When thy task is done,
Thou'lt find me in the lower corridor. [Exit.

Blas. (murmuring to himself). Be secret, tell to
no one, and thy lady

Will greatly be displeas'd! What is't to me?
And yet I do not like this strange concealment.

[Employs himself in arranging different things,
whilst he sings part of an old ballad.

SONG.

The watch-dog bays from the southern wall,
And hounds and spaniels repeat his call;
The warders in the court are speaking,
The merlins on their perch are shrieking.

The dame she started from her seat,
And her lover's heart did quickly beat.
"The wall is gain'd, the drawbridge crost,
Your lord is return'd, and we are lost."

"Nay, fie upon thy witless fear!
See, quickly don this woman's gear;
And boldly cross the crowded hall,
'Mid serfs and grooms and spearmen all.

"They with glad greetings are, I trow,
Too busy by far to heed thee now;
Yet word or answer give to none,
But straight to the portal and swiftly be gone."

The dame put on her joyous face,
And she welcomed her lord with a hearty embrace.
Quoth she to herself, "Some warlike fray
Will call him forth another day."

A fray full soon hath called him forth,
And he is gone to the restless north;
But he—beshrew the wayward wight!
Returns again at the dead of night.

The lover's face turn'd cold and pale,
But never a whit did the lady quail.
"A friar's cowl and frock thou'lt find
Securely pent that chest behind:

"Be thou a friar instantly,
And to the castle's chapel fly,
And in the pale lamp's flickering shine,
Bend lowly at Saint Martin's shrine."

Enter HENRIQUEZ.

Hen. And is it thou, good Blas, who singst so well?

I heard thee as I cross'd the gallery,
And was led hither by the well-known tune
That, when a boy, I have so often heard.
But cease not; sing the rest of that old story.

Blas. In sooth, my lord, I have forgot the rhymes.

Hen. But canst thou not, without the rhymes, remember

The third escape which for her lawless lover
The wily dame devised?

Blas. Yes, in a groom's attire she sent him forth
To hold her husband's stirrup at the gate,
As he alighted from his warlike barb.

Hen. Was not her simple lord at length revenged?
And how was that, I pray?

Blas. She had a step-son, who from Palestine
Return'd, and hearing of his father's wrongs,
Swore to revenge them.

Hen. E'en so; I now remember it distinctly,
And the concluding lines sound in my ears.

They fought in the portal,
They fought in the tower,
They fought in the hall, and the lady's high bower,
There they struggled and fought, till the lady at last,
A pale bleeding corpse, from the lattice was cast.

Ay, many a time I've listened to that ditty:
She was a wicked dame of whom it tells.
Thinkst thou the rhymester knew of such a one?
Or be there any such?

Blas. I do not know: there may—and there may not.

Hen. May, or may not! thou needst not blush so deeply.

What's thy employment here? Some new arrangement.

Thy lady's private closet so disturb'd!

Ay, and this curtain'd couch!—For whom, I pray,
Prepare ye this, good Blas?

Blas. I do not know, my lord.

Hen. Thou dost not know!

Why dost thou blush so strangely as thou speakest?
Compose thyself; I do not seek to know.

What scented thing is this? it smells most sweetly.

Blas. It is a box of aromatic gums.

Hen. It needs must be some dainty fair, for whom

Such delicacies are provided. Ay,
And learned too, I guess, for here are books.

A soldier's book! (*Turning over its leaves.*)

Ha! 'tis mine own old friend.

Blas. His name is then upon it.

Hen. Thou seemst alarm'd, methinks: how's this? whose name?

Blas. I do not know, my lord. Your own old friend.

Hen. It was the book I call'd so: in my youth
It was my favourite study.

Blas. I had forgot; the book is yours, my lord,
And only borrow'd now for his amusement.

Hen. For her's, thou meanst: is't not a female guest?

Blushing again! What mystery is here?

Tell me for whom this chamber is prepared.

[*Pause.*

Thou wilt not answer. Nay, I will not force thee;

But tell me only—is this guest a woman?

What! silent still! 'tis not a woman then?

Blas. No, good my lord.

Hen. Some fav'rite page, perhaps, who for the night

Must near his dame be lodged?—It is not this?

I do command thee tell me who it is;

[*Taking hold of him roughly.*

For by thy face I see too well thou knowest.

What guest sleeps here to-night?

Blas. Don Juan is the guest; this is the room
Where he is wont to sleep.

Hen. Is wont to sleep! Has he been here of late?

Blas. 'Tis said he has been here; for me, I know not.

[*HENRIQUEZ, turning slowly from him, walks to the bottom of the stage.*

Blas (*aside, looking after him*). Surely he heard my words; yet calm and silent!
No further question following my reply!
Fool that I was to be so much afraid,
Since he regards it lightly.

Hen. (*returning*). Where is thy lady?

Blas. She gives directions in the pillar'd hall;
At least I left her there a short time since.

Hen. Go, see, and bring me word. [*Exit BLAS.*]

Question a youth — a menial — any one,
Of what regards the honour of my wife!
I married her in the full confidence
That she possess'd all good and noble virtues
Which should become a brave Castilian's wife,
And from herself alone will I be certified
Of what this hateful mystery imports.

[*After a pause, and then muttering indistinct words.*]

Peace, bad suggestions, from mean baseness sprung!
No! till I hear from her own falt'ring tongue
The glossing poor pretences of the guilty,
And see upon her once ingenuous face
The varied hues of shame, I'll not believe it.
I am a fool to take it so intently.
This casket here, which was my earliest gift!
And does it still contain that golden heart,
The token of my love? I fain would know.

[*Looking at it near, and taking it in his hands.*]

It is not lock'd; the lid is slightly latch'd:
In mine own house, methinks, without reproach,
I may undo the bauble. (*Opens it.*) What is here?
Don Juan's picture, and a letter, too;
I know the writing well.

[*Reads.*]

“Dear mistress of my soul! How shall I thank thee for that favour which has raised me from despair! Though thy heart has not always been mine, and I have sighed long to subdue it, yet I cherish my present felicity as if thou hadst loved me always, and no other had ever touched thy heart. I will come to the feast as a masquer, and for the reason suggested to me, unknown to Henriquez. The bearer of this will return with the key of the private door to the grove, and I shall come through the narrow path about nightfall.”

(*After a pause.*) Things have been done, that, to the honest mind,

Did seem as adverse and impossible,
As if the very centre cope of heaven
Should kiss the nether deep.

And this man was my friend!

To whom my soul, shut from all men besides,
Was free and artless as an infant's love,
Telling its guileless faults in simple trust.
Oh the coil'd snake! It presses on me here (*His hand on his heart*) as it would stop the centre throb of life.

[*Returning to the casket, and taking out other papers.*]

And sonnets, too, made on her matchless beauty,
Named Celia, as his cruel shepherdess.

Ay; she was matchless, and it seems was cruel,
Till his infernal arts subdued her virtue.

I'll read no more. What said he in the letter?

[*Reads again.*]

“The bearer will return with the key, and I'll come by the path at nightfall.”

Night falls on some who never see the morn.

Re-enter BLAS.

Blas. My lord, I've found her: Donna Leonora
Has bid me say she will be with you instantly.

Hen. I cannot see her now: I am not well.

I shall be better shortly: tell her so.

I'll rest me in my chamber for an hour,
And would not be disturb'd. Prevent her coming;
And say I would repose. Go, tell her quickly.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.

Enter LEONORA and MENCIA, followed by DIEGO, speaking as they enter.

Diego. It shall be done; I understand you,
madam;

Those lofty plumes must grace the seat of honour,
The chair of Don Henriquez.

Leo. Yes; and the chair of Don Henriquez'
wife:

See that they both be graced.

Diego. Never but once,
(*Lady, forgive the freedom of my words,*)

Never but once before was chair of state
Beneath this roof so crested: years gone by,
When Don Henriquez' father, from the king,
Held in these parts, then threaten'd with com-
motions,

A regent's power. And then his noble lady,
Although the blood of kings ran in her veins,
Did at due distance humbly take her place
On a low stool, unmark'd by any honour.

Leo. Ay, good Diego, such meek humble dames
Have lived, as we are told, in former days.
Do as I have desired thee.

Diego (*aside, murmuring as he goes out*). Lofty
dame!

Making so proud a stir, like some pert hedgeling,
Chirping and flutt'ring in an eagle's nest. [*Exit.*]

Men. Sister, you aggravate the mark'd dislike
That old domestic bears you: be more gentle.

Leo. O he dislikes me not; it is his humour.

Dislike me! Have I not to him and his
Been even profuse in gifts? The foolish thought!

Men. Ay; but the meekness of his former lady,
She, too, who had a king's blood in her veins,
Dwells in his heart, and begs all thy gifts.

Leo. Thou'rt fanciful.

Men. Nay, nay! and why so fond
Of splendid pomp? Compared to what thou
wast,

Thy marriage with Henriquez made thee great;
This doth not make thee greater; woe the day!
Nor happier neither.

Leo. Woe the day! Poor dove!
That would beneath the cottage eaves for ever
Sit moping in the shade with household birds,
Nor spread thy silver plumage to the sun.

Men. The sun hath scorch'd my wings, which
were not made
For such high soaring.

He who would raise me to his nobler rank
Will soon perceive that I but grace it poorly.

Leo. Away with such benumbing diffidence!
Let buoyant fancy first bear up thy merit,
And fortune and the world's applause will soon
Support the freight. When first I saw Henriquez,
Though but the daughter of a humble house,
I felt the simple band of meadow flowers
That bound my hair give to my glowing temples
The pressure of a princely coronet.

I felt me worthy of his love, nor doubted
That I should win his heart, and wear it too.

Men. Thou dost, indeed, reign in his heart
triumphant;
Long may thy influence last.

Leo. And fear not but it will. These pagean-
tries

Give to the even bliss of wedded love
A varied vivifying power, which else
Might die of very sloth. And for myself,
My love for him, returning from the wars,
Blazon'd with honours, as he now returns,
Is livelier, happier, and, methinks, more ardent,
Than when we first were married. Be assured
All things will favour thee, if thou hast spirit
To think it so shall be. Thou shak'st thy head.
It is not reason, but thy humble wish,
Thy low ignoble passion that deceives thee,
And conjures up those fears. Weak wav'ring
girl!

Art thou not bound?

Men. Weakness in yielding to your will, indeed,
Has fetter'd me with bands my heart disowns.

Leo. Fy! say not so. Hush! let not that sad
face

O'ercloud the joy my gen'rous lord will feel,
When he discovers what we have conceal'd,
With playful art, to make his joy the keener.
Hush! here comes Blas again.

Enter BLAS.

How is my lord?

Will he not see me now?

Blas. He will not yet.
I have been watching near his chamber door,
And when I gently knock'd, as you desired,

He answer'd me with an impatient voice,
Saying his head was drowsy, and lack'd rest.

Leo. I'll go myself.

Blas. Nay, madam, do not yet.
I guess that some cross humour has disturb'd him;
Sleep will compose it.

Leo. Humour, dost thou say!
He ne'er was cross with me. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*The private apartment of HENRIQUEZ, with his chair
and table, and a lamp burning on the table; the
stage lighted only by this lamp.*

*Enter HENRIQUEZ with a sword in his hand, which
he lays on the table in the light, shrinking back as
he looks at it.*

Hen. The blood!—this blood!—his blood!—
O dismal change!

When rose the sun of this sad day; how gladly
Would I have shed mine own, to have sav'd one
drop

Of what was then so dear! (*Pushing it into the
shade.*) Be from my sight!

It wrings my heart: and yet so black a stream,
So base, so treacherous, did never stain
The sword of holy justice. (*After sitting down, and
gazing some time on the ground.*)

This is a pause of rest from the first act,
The needful act of righteous retribution.
Oh! is it rest? The souls that fell from light
Into the dark profound, cut off from bliss,
Had rest like this. (*Pressing his temples tightly with
both hands.*)

How furiously these burning temples throb!
Be still! be still! there's more behind to do;
But no more blood: I will not shed her blood.

(*Knocking at the door.*) Who's there?

Voice. Are you awake, my lord?

Hen. What dost thou want?

Voice (without). The banquet is prepared, the
guests assembled,
Your grooms are waiting, and your vestments
ready.

Will you not please, my lord, to let them enter?

Hen. (to himself). The guests assembled! Vile
bewild'ring dream!

I had forgot all this. I must appear.

Voice (without). Will you be pleased, my lord,
to let them enter?

Hen. Be still—be still; I'll open to them pre-
sently.

[*Exit hastily into an inner chamber, taking the
sword with him.*]

SCENE II.

The grand hall of the castle lighted up magnificently.
LEONORA, MENCLA, CARLOS, and company discovered; music, which presently ceases, and

Enter a Servant.

Leo. (*aside to servant*). How is thy master?
Has he left his chamber?

Serv. (*aside to LEONORA*). Yes; he will soon appear; he is preparing.

Leo. (*aloud*). Indeed, indeed, I have been much concern'd

That Don Henriquez has, from sudden illness,
Been tardy in respect to noble guests
Whom he so truly honours; but I hope —
(*Flourish of trumpets.*) Ha! who is this? Some
guest in princely state.

Enter Servant.

Serv. The king is at the gate.

Leo. The king! a great surprise! unlooked-for
honour!

I'll to the gate. (*To the music.*) Strike up a royal
welcome!

[*Execute LEONORA, CARLOS, and others, while
the music plays a grand martial air; then*

Re-enter LEONORA, &c., conducting the King, attended, who receives the homage, and continues speaking in dumb-show to many of the company, till the music ceases.

King (*to LEONORA*). Fair hostess, I am come in
homely trim

For such a gay assembly.

Leo. Your poor servants
Are greatly honour'd by this condescension;
A glad surprise, so far beyond our hopes.

King. Ay, and beyond mine own, fair dame;
but finding

From wrecks of mountain torrents, or neglect,
The straight road to Zamora was impassable,
I took the wider compass, and proceeding
Through these domains by favour of the night,
Your castle from its woods look'd temptingly,
And beckon'd me afar to turn aside.
The light from every lattice gaily stream'd,
Lamps star'd each dusky corridor, and torches
Did from the courts beneath cast up the glare
Of glowing flame upon the buttress'd walls
And battlements, whilst the high towers aloft
Show'd their jagg'd pinnacles in icy coldness,
Clothed with the moon's pale beam.

— It pleased my fancy;
And here I am, a hasty visitor,
Who must Zamora reach by early day;
Where many a lofty lord, and learned clerk,

And all the rogues and robbers of the district
Await my coming.

Car. All of them, my liege?

King. I spoke at random, like a graceless lay-
man:

More than the church's portion were presumption,
A tithe of them will do. — Here is Henriquez.

Enter HENRIQUEZ, richly dressed.

Hen. My humble homage to your highness:
welcome

To my poor house, so honour'd by your presence.

King. I thank thee, brave Henriquez, but I fear
'Tis an untimely visit; thou't unwell.

Hen. Nought but a passing ailment; do not
name it.

King. In faith your face is wan, and strangely
changed,

And would become a sober beadsman's frock
More than a festive mantle. How is't with you?
Retire again to rest.

Hen. My face speaks falsely, I am much re-
cover'd.

Here is the cup of welcome; will your grace
Be pleased to honour me.

[*Taking a cup from a servant, and presenting
it on one knee to the King.*

King. All good be on your head, and this fair
dame's!

[*Bowing to HENRIQUEZ and LEONORA, and
then drinking.*

Fair ladies and brave lords, well be ye all!

[*Bowing to the company, and drinking again.*

Hen. (*to the servant, who is pouring out a cup for
him*). Up; fill it to the brim.

Health to the king, and a long happy reign!

[*Drinks.*

To all my honour'd guests health and good wel-
come!

[*Drinks again.*

King. A goodly company: here are, methinks,
High blood enough, plumed hats and coronets,
To furnish out a court.

Leo. They honour this poor feast which I have
fashion'd.

To grace my lord's return.

King. You have done well; and I should grace
it too,

Who was the greatest gainer by his absence,
When he with brave companions like himself
Against the Moors did for the state good service,
As Alcantara, by their valour won,
And now a noble hold for Christian knights,
Can nobly testify.

I speak not of the Navas de Tolosa,
Where he upon that memorable day
Broke through the Moslem chain of armed guards,
Changing their strength to slaughter and dismay:
We are too apt to speak of recent services.
Former or recent, would I could repay them!

Hen. Your bounty has already done it nobly.

King. Fy, fy! a trifle; what would scarce main-tain

A rustic lord, who dozes life away [perch,
In his porch'd hall, where hawks wink on the
And hounds lie sleeping round him. Take this
ring :

My royal father wore it many a day ;
And whatso'er thou shalt request of me,
Returning to my hand this pledge again,
It shall be granted, were it half the realm.

Hen. (receiving it on his knee). I thus receive it
with all humble duty.

[Rising with forced animation.

But let us now be gay : the time wears on.
By early dawn I must attend your highness,
To reach Zamora by th' appointed hour.

Leo. I am rejoiced to see you so recovered.

[To HENRIQUEZ.

Hen. I thank you, lady ; let your guests receive
Your present courtesies.—Where are the minstrels?
Let them strike up a dance : we are too still.

Leo. Doubt not we shall be gay ; but we expect
Some merry masquers here to join our revels ;
They should have come ere now.

Hen. Wait ye for such ? Are they not come
already ?

Leo. How so, my lord ?

Hen. The world is full of them :
Who knows the honest unclothed worth of those
That by your side may stand, drink from your cup,
Or in your bosom lie ? We are all masquers.

King. Your wine has cheer'd you to a gibing
humour ;

You are severe, my lord, on this poor world.

Hen. If I have said amiss, e'en let it pass :
A foolish rev'ller may at random speak :

Who hears his idle words ?—Music strike up.

[Music ; the King retires with HENRIQUEZ to
the bottom of the stage, and the guests prepare
to dance, when BLAS with a face of horror
enters the hall, and beckons CARLOS aside.

Car. What dost thou want ?

Blas. A fearful thing has happen'd ;
And to my lord, or Donna Leonora,
It may not hastily be told.

Car. What is't ?

Blas. A murder'd body near the castle lies,
But newly slain ; and they who found it swear
(For well they know his form and countenance),
It is Don Juan's body.

Leo. (who has stolen near them to listen). Don
Juan's body, saidst thou ? Is he dead ?

Blas. Yes, madam, they have found him in the
wood

Lifeless and—

Leo. Oh, I guess thy horrid look !
And he is murder'd ? Dreadful, barbarous deed !

[Exclaiming aloud.

[All quit their places for the dance, and crowd
round LEONORA, who is supported by MENCIA,
appearing also affected, whilst HENRIQUEZ, at
a distance, observes them intently.

Leo. (recovering). O Carlos ! tell my lord the
horrid tale.

I must retire. [Exit with MENCIA and other ladies.

King (coming forward with HENRIQUEZ). Some
strange commotion here !

Hen. (to CARLOS). What has befallen ? [heart ;

Car. What will most keenly rend your noble
Yet to a soldier I should tell it plainly :

Don Juan, from some secret villain's stroke,
Has met his fate this night, and near your walls.

Hen. Away ! Howl not so wild a dirge to me :

Far distant from these walls, full many a league,
Don Juan surely is. Ye are deceived.

Blas (shaking his head). No, no ! O no !

Car. I fear he tells us true.

Hen. He wrote to me, not many days ago,
A letter, dated from his northern seat,

Which made no mention of his visit here :

If what you say be true, it is most strange.

I'll be assured if it, indeed, be so. [Going hastily.

Car. (preventing him). Retire, and I will see it
ascertain'd :

You shall not look upon so sad a sight.

King (to HENRIQUEZ). Retire, my lord : it were
not fit you went.

Your noble guests beseech you to retire.

Hen. I will obey your grace. I thank ye all.

[Exit HENRIQUEZ and CARLOS severally.

King (to the guests). Were it not well that we
should all retire ?

Our banquet to a funeral wake is turn'd,

And cannot cheer us now. [Exit.

SCENE III.

An inner court of the castle, lighted by a lamp over the
gateway, the stage otherwise dark.

Enter DIEGO and two servants, with dark lanterns,
speaking loud and confusedly as they enter.

1st serv. I could be sworn to it. Go tell my
lord :

Why hold we here such idle altercation ?

Diego. He must not be disturbed.

1st serv. How not disturbed ?

Enter CARLOS above, looking down from an open
corridor.

Car. Ho ! who are ye who talk so cagerly ?

What is the matter ?

1st serv. The murderer is found : come down,
Don Carlos !

For we would fain pursue him through the wood,
But thus unarm'd we dare not.

[Exit CARLOS above.

2d serv. Ay, he is coming: he will be our warrant,
And tell us what to do.

Re-enter CARLOS below.

Car. Well, friends, what did you say? the murderer?

1st serv. Yes; I can swear 'tis so: I would have followed him,
But, lacking arms, I durst not.

2d serv. So would I.

1st serv. Give us some stout companions and good weapons,
And, scatt'ring different ways, we'll scour the wood,
And seize him shortly.

Car. In the wood ye found him?

2d serv. Yes; as we went, out-stripping our companions,

To bear Don Juan's body to the castle.

Car. How guess you 'tis the murderer?

1st serv. A youthful cavalier for several days
Has been secreted in the wood. I've seen him;
And the dark form that cross'd my light e'en now
I could be sworn is he.

Diego. It is not likely that the murderer
Should be so near the slain. He would, methinks,
Run from the spot forthwith.

Car. True, ne'ertheless
A mind distracted in a wood so tangled
Might run and make no way. (*To servants.*) Go ye forth:

I will myself assist your search. But, first,
We'll fetch our weapons. Ha! what noise is that?
[*Noise without.*

'Tis voices at the gate.

1st serv. It is the body.
(*Voice calling from the outer court.*) Ho, there!
Who watch within? Lend us your aid,

We know not where to bear it.

Omnes. It is the body.

[*Exeunt, running eagerly through the gateway.*

Enter MENCIA below, who has appeared before listening in the corridor.

Men. He will be found and seiz'd: they'll have no mercy.
The dreadful doom! O heaven, have pity on him!

Enter INEZ.

Inez. What is the matter, madam? Whither go you?

Men. I cannot tell.

Inez. Go in, I do beseech you,
And stay in your apartment. I, mean time,
Will be upon the watch, and bring you word
When they return. Think you that there has been,

For I have listen'd too, a cavalier
Secreted in the wood?

Men. No; heed me not;
I know not what I say.

Inez. Yet stay not here, lest you should raise suspicion;
Return to your apartment; be entreated.

[*Exeunt, INEZ leading off MENCIA.*

SCENE IV.

Enter LEONORA and CARLOS by opposite sides.

Car. Madam, I have obey'd your summons; say
Whate'er my humble service may perform.
How fare you after this most dismal shock?

Leo. As one who hath a friend and husband both

In one dire tempest lost. And, noble Carlos,
Grief triumphs over pride, when even to thee,
Though knowing well thy friendly worth, I own it.
He was—I mean Henriquez—Oh! he was
To me most strangely alter'd ere this stroke.

Car. You are deceived; expecting to retain
The undiminish'd empire of his heart
Beyond the usual term of bridegroom weakness.
It could not be.

Leo. No; I am not deceived.
Sickness did yesterday for many hours
Confine him to his chamber; yet in vain
Did I entreat admittance—I, who used
To soothe his saddest hours, if any sad
Could pass when I was near him.—

And now again he is shut up alone,
And has refused to see me. Worthy Carlos,
Do me a kindness: go thou to his door,
And beg admittance; then in my behalf,
Since by another's influence I must move him,
Crave audience even for a few short moments.

Car. Nay, charming Leonora, urge him not:
He will admit thee when he is disposed
For soothing sympathy; to press it sooner
Were useless—were unwise.

Leo. Yet go to him; he will, perhaps, to thee,
So long his fellow-soldier and his friend,
Unburthen his sad heart.

Car. You are in this deceived. His fellow-soldier

I long have been. In the same fields we've fought;
Slept in one tent, or on the rugged heath,
Wrapt in our soldier's cloaks, have, side by side,
Stretch'd out our weary length like savage beasts
In the same cheerless lair; and many a time,
When the dim twilight of our evening camp
Has by my foolish minstrelsy been cheer'd,
He has bent o'er me, pleased with the old strains
That pleased him when a boy; therefore I may,
As common phrase permits, be call'd his friend.
But there existed one, and only one,

To whom his mind, with all its nice reserve
Above the sympathies of common men,
He freely could unfold ; and having lost him,
Can I intrude upon his private thoughts
Like one who would supply a vacant place ?
His heart, I know it well, would from such boldness
Revolt, even with disgust.

Leo. Yet Juan's death did seem to move him less
Than such dear friendship might have warranted.

Car. It was his custom to restrain his looks
When strongly moved, or shun all observation.

Leo. And I am now become that humble thing, —
A wife shut out from equal confidence !

Car. Have patience, madam, take it not so deeply.

Leo. I would have patience, —

Car. Hush ! we're interrupted.

Enter BLAS.

Blas (to *LEONORA*). Don Juan's secretary is arrived,

Who brings with him — so has he bid me say —
Papers of great importance, which he begs
May, and without delay, to Don Henriquez,
In presence of due witnesses, be read.

Leo. It is a happy thing ; this call will rouse him ;
Be thou the bearer of this message, Carlos ;
He cannot think thee an intruder now.

Car. I will obey you.

Leo. And be sure immediately
To give me notice how he has received it.

Car. I will not fail. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE V.

A spacious apartment.

Enter BALTHAZAR, followed by BLAS, carrying a case with papers, which he lays on a table.

Bal. (after examining it). Is Don Henriquez ready, gentle youth ?

Blas. He'll soon be here ; the lady is at hand,
With others, who will witness what you read.

Bal. I'm glad she comes to soothe his gloomy grief,

For I have that to read will move him greatly.

Blas. I doubt it not : Don Juan loved him well,
As it was thought.

Bal. Sayst thou, as it was thought !
I've often seen them spend whole days together,
Neglecting all the sports of hall or field,
In some sequester'd corner, side by side,
Pacing, though young, with the slow steps of age,
Each like the other's shadow ; while, by turns,
Such power of words flow'd from them, and their eyes

With pleasure or with gentle anger flush'd,
As the keen wilful sporting of their minds [game.
Through some wild chace of thought pursued the
I mark'd them oft : it was a pleasing sight.

Blas. Were they, indeed, such dear and loving friends ?

Bal. Yes, gentle youth, they were. It seem'd,
in truth,
As though each kept his thoughts i' th' other's breast,

Lock'd up e'en from himself, having when met,
And only then, free use of his own treasure.

Blas. So closely knit ?

Bal. Yes ; I have seen Henriquez
By Juan's sick-bed sit, night after night,
Like tenderest nurse watching her infant charge ;
And then I've seen the tears course down his cheeks, —

His youthful face all shrunk and pale with grief.
Such dear and manly friendship knew I never.

Enter LEONORA and CARLOS, followed by DIEGO, who then retires with BLAS to the bottom of the stage.

Leo. (after a pause). I think I hear him coming.

Car. I think so too ; yet grief is slow of foot,
And those are rapid strides like one in haste.

Enter HENRIQUEZ, who returns slight and sullen acknowledgments to their civilities, and going directly to a seat prepared for him, sits down without speaking.

Bal. (to *HENRIQUEZ, after a pause*). My lord,
here is a will, with other papers,

Which your deceased friend, my noble master,
Committed to my keeping six days since,
When he departed from his native home.
His ancient fav'r ite hound how'd piteously
As from the gate we prick'd our steeds, and yet
We took no heed of it, nor thought, alas !
That he would ne'er return. — Please you, my lord,
That it should first be read ?

Hen. Proceed ; I'll listen.

Bal. From the great love, above all men besides,
Which living he did bear you —

Hen. Nay, proceed ;
There needs no prologue to it.

Bal. (reading). " The last will of me, Juan de Torva, written and signed by mine own hand, as these characters testify, is this. I bequeath to my beloved, my early, my only friend, Don Henriquez d'Altavera, the whole of my lands, my castles, my dependencies, my treasures, to be possessed by him and his heirs for ever ; and for as much as I have more confidence in the wisdom and generous propriety of his judgment than my own, I leave those whose names (also by mine own hand) are herein written, to be provided for, as he, thinking and acting for me when I shall no longer be able to think and act for myself, shall deem right. These, with the last love and blessing of my heart I bequeath to him ; desiring that my poor earthly remains may be laid in the same spot where he himself shall be in-

terred May God have mercy on the soul of a humble sinner! Done with mine own signature.

"JUAN DE TORVA."

Here follow names of many old dependants, And witnesses who saw him sign this deed; Shall I repeat them?

Hen. (motions him to forbear, and after covering his face with his hands for a moment or two).

You also spoke, I think, of other papers:

The date of this is, as I guess, remote.

Bal. Nay, it is recent—only two months since.

Hen. So late as that!—You mention'd other deeds.

Bal. Yes, good my lord; entrusted to my keeping, Here is besides a marriage contract made Between himself and the fair Mencia.

Hen. (starting from his chair with violent gesture).

What didst thou say? The sister of my wife?

Say it again: I know not what thou saidst.

Bal. It is, my lord, a marriage contract made Between himself and Donna Mencia, The sister of your wife; to whom by stealth, The lady being somewhat disinclined,

He has of late made frequent visits; hoping Last night, with her consent, to have surprised you, When as a masquer he should join the guests, By asking from your love a brother's blessing.

[HENRIQUEZ falls back into his chair, uttering a deep groan.

Leo. (rushing to him in great alarm). Alas! so strong an agony is here,

The hand of death is on him.

Car. 'Tis but the pitch and crisis of his grief.

Be not alarm'd; he will recover quickly.

[DIEGO, coming forward, speaks aside to LEONORA.

Diego. Bid all withdraw, and be with him alone When he recovers.

Leo. (aside). How when he recovers?

Alone with him! I know not what thou meanst.

Diego (speaking to her aloud). My lord has from his youth been thus affected,

When press'd by grief; I've seen him so before.

And when the fit goes off, I've known him also

Utter wild ravings. Solitude and stillness

Are necessary. Pardon me this boldness.

Leo. Thou'st seen him thus before?

Diego. It is a natural infirmity;

Let all retire and leave him.

Leo. (motions all to retire but CARLOS). Don CARLOS will remain.

[To DIEGO.

Diego. None but yourself, I do beseech you, madam;

And I will watch by you till he recover.

[*Exeunt all but DIEGO, LEONORA, and HENRIQUEZ, who, while she hangs over him, groans as before.*

Leo. That groan again! My dear—my dear Henriquez!

Alas! that look! thine agony is great: That motion too! (*He rises.*) Why dost thou stare around?

We are alone; surely thou wilt not leave me. Where wouldst thou be?

Hen. I' the blackest gulf of hell; The deepest den of misery and pain;

Woe bound to woe—the cursed with the cursed!

Leo. What horrible words, if they have any meaning!

If they have none, most piteous!—

Henriquez; O, my lord!—My noble husband!

I thought not thou wouldst e'er have look'd on me

As thou hast done, with such an eye of sternness.

Alas! and hadst thou nothing dear on earth

But him whom thou hast lost?

Hen. I had, I had! Thy love was true and virtuous.

And so it is: thy hand upon my breast.

[*Pressing her hand, which she has laid upon his breast.*

I feel it—O how dear!

[*Is about to kiss it, but casts it from him.*

It must not be!

Would thou wert false! Would grinding contumely

Had bow'd me to the earth—worn from my mind

The very sense and nature of a man!

Faithful to me! Go, loose thee from my side;

Thy faithfulness is agony ineffable,

It makes me more accursed. Cling not to me:

To taste the slightest feeling of thy love [not!]

Were base—were monstrous now.—Follow me

The ecstasy of misery spurns all pity. [*Exit.*

Diego. And do not follow him: O do not, madam!

This fearful fit will soon exhaust its strength,

And leave his reason free.

Leo. God grant it may! It is a fearful fit.

But thou thyself lookst strangely, and thy visage

Seems haggard with a passing consciousness—

Thou dost not think——

Diego. No, no! what should I think?

Retire to your apartment: I meantime

Will watch my lord, that none may cross his way

Till he be safely lodged within his chamber. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

A narrow hall or passage.

Enter CARLOS and BALTHAZAR.

Car. (calling to somebody behind him as he enters).

Go, bid those spearmen from the armourer

Receive their pageant suits, and let the warder

Hang o'er the battlements his sable flag!

Bal. And will not Don Henriquez, then, in person

Attend the funeral rites?

Car. His ancient steward

Has signified to me his lord's desire

That I should fill his place in every thing
Respecting this sad ceremony.

Bal. Have you not seen himself?

Car. No; grief so stern, so cover'd and profound,
I never knew: he has refused to see me.

Bal. They say his ghostly father hath been sum-
mond'd:

He'll try to soften his untoward grief.

Car. I hope he will; but pass we on, I pray.

Bal. The murd'rer has, I hear, escaped their
search.

Car. He did escape, if it was any thing,
Those frighten'd peasants saw.

Bal. In truth it is a black, mysterious deed;
And, as it strikes my mind——

Car. Some other time:
Pass on, I pray, our business must proceed.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The grand court of the castle.

Enter a pompous funeral procession by an arched way at the right side of the bottom of the stage, and crossing it in a diagonal line, passes out by the left side of the front; which joins the massed richness of a perspective to the distinctness of a side view.

SCENE II.

A small private apartment.

Enter LEONORA, walking thoughtfully across the stage; then enter DIEGO, upon which she turns, and goes up to him, without speaking.

Diego (after pausing for her to speak first).

They told me, madam, you desired to see me.

Leo. Yes, good Diego, I would speak with thee;
Yet what I have to say comes of no sense,—
Mere curiosity,—a woman's humour.

Looking from my apartment not long since,
Methought I saw thee in the inner court,
Earnest in conversation with Balthazar.

I mark'd you for a while, and his strange gestures
Seem'd those of anger rather than of grief.

Diego. He was, in truth, somewhat intemperate.

Leo. What has disturb'd him?

Diego. He is a man by nature cross and captious,
And hardly to be satisfied.

Leo. How so?

Has aught been wanting in the funeral honours
Paid to his master?

Diego. No; it is not that.

He rather thinks we have been more intent
On idle pageantry, than truly zealous

In finding out the murd'rer of his lord;
'Twas this did move him to unseemly warmth,
And words which I may not repeat.

Leo. (eagerly). What words?

Does he suspect—No; what should he suspect?
[*Pausing and gazing on DIEGO, who is silent.*
Thy face looks pale and haggard. Did he name
him?

Diego. Name whom?

Leo. No, no one. This bewilder'd brain
Will run on things too wildly fanciful.

I'll speak to him myself; he shall be satisfied.
Search shall be made without delay. Go to him,
And tell him I would see him privately.

Diego. He is not here.

Leo. What! not within the walls?

Diego. Mounted upon his master's swiftest steed,
He left the castle short while since; ere this
He must be near Zamora.

Leo. Why such haste?

Diego. I know not; 'tis, perhaps, to gain ad-
mission,

Before the opening of his royal court,
To the king's private ear.

Leo. (alarmed). Most strange! some thought—
some dark imagination

Has worked him to this frenzy.—Tell me truly
Where his suspicions rest: for he has spoken
Words which thou wouldst conceal. Spoke he in
hints?

O tell me all!—He did not name Henriquez?

Diego. No; by the noble house of Altavera,
Had he so done that word had been his last.

Diego Furnez, aged as he is,
Had ne'er stood by with rapier by his side
To hear his master's honour rudely stain'd
With horrid imputation.

Leo. Hush! speak low.

I meant not that! a thing too wild and frightful
Even for a hasty thought.—But does he know

A lurking stranger in the wood was found,
With scared and hasty fear, confessing guilt?

[*MENCIA, entering behind them, and listening to the last words, rushes forward in great alarm.*

Men. Confessing guilt! O trust not his con-
fession!

Believe not what he says! a frenzied dream!

For mercy's sake, my sister! O, for mercy!

Leo. Mencía; what sudden madness seizes thee?

Mercy! for whom dost thou implore my mercy?

Men. Cruel thou art to ask! My first, my
dearest:

O had no other ever look'd upon me,

This misery had not been.

Leo. It is Antonio, then, for whom thou fearest?

Is he the stranger who escaped their search?

Men. Has he escaped? Then heaven be praised
he has!

Leo. And thou didst know that he was lurking here?

Men. Catch not so eagerly my foolish words; I think of him when any youth is mention'd.

Diego. Lady, we only said, "a lurking stranger:" It is yourself who marks him as a youth.

Men. I know not what I say;—I'm most unhappy: I will retire.

Leo. Yes; thou hadst best retire; And be appeas'd; Antonio is not found, Though now we know on whom to fix the charge.

[*Exit* MENCIA.]

(*Gladly* to *DIEGO*.) Now it is clear: it is a blest relief!

My good Diego, faithful, kind, old friend; Even for the love which thou dost bear thy lord, I call thee friend;—it is a blest relief.

(*Taking his hand*.) It comes upon my heart,—a loaded heart,

That was with horror press'd, and brings these tears.

Diego. God bless you, lady! Had I sooner known

The steady truth and kindness of your nature, It had been well, for I have been perverse; But henceforth I will curb all wayward thoughts, And honour you as Don Henriquez' wife, And worthy so to be.

Leo. Cease, friend; all thy perverseness is forgotten.

Enter CARLOS.

In a good time thou com'st, my noble friend.

Car. How's this? Strange joy has lighten'd up your eyes,

Unsuited to these hours of sable sadness.

Leo. We have discover'd Juan's murderer.

Car. I'm glad to hear it: have you certain proof?

Leo. Antonio, Mencia's lover; a wild youth, Whose most presumptuous love, not long ago, She had for Juan's nobler suit rejected, Is the mysterious stranger, here, by night, Found lurking in the wood, whose hasty flight So well betrayed his guilt.

Car. I will, and instantly, Despatch a swift pursuit, to trace his flight. I've seen the youth, and can describe his mien, And slender, graceful form. O most unlike One who could do a fell and bloody deed!

Leo. A gentle form the fellest heart may shroud.

Diego. I have known such to anger and to blood More prone than sterner men.

Car. You seem offended with me, but I meant not

To question what you say. The time is precious: I'll send, without delay, on every track, Those who, I trust, will shortly seize upon him,

Guilty or innocent. I came to say Those maids and holy men, as you appointed, Are in the chapel met, and wait your presence, To sing a nightly requiem for the dead, Who, in the vault beneath, his first still night Of the grave's rest doth pass. But we'll postpone these rites till we have done What must not be delayed.

Leo. Ay; let us lose no time.

[*Exeunt*.]

SCENE III.

The burying vault of the castle, with monuments of the dead; and near the front of the stage, a newly covered grave, seen by the light of a lamp placed on a neighbouring tomb, the stage being otherwise dark. A solemn requiem for the dead is heard at a distance, sounding from above. As it draws to a close, HENRIQUEZ appears at the further end of the vault with a light in his hand, which he holds out from him, as if in search of some object, and, seeing the grave, casts the light from his hand, and rushes towards it.

Hen. (*after gazing some time on the grave*.) And here thou liest with all thy noble parts, Thy lofty, liberal soul, and goodly form, And heart of love so thorough and so true! This is thy rest, the need and recompense Thy generous worth hath from thy friend received! Thy friend! O savage heart and cruel hand! Fell, hateful, faithless, cowardly, and base! Of every baleful thing, by heaven cast off, Most cursed and miserable!— O that ere this the dust had cover'd me Like a crush'd snake, whose sting is yet unseath'd! Would in the bloody trench some sated Moor Had lanced this hold of life— this latent seat Of cruelty! or rather that some dart, Shot erring in our days of boyish sport, Had pierced its core! Then by my early grave He had shed over me a brother's tears; He had sate there and wept and mourn'd for me, When from all human hearts but his alone All thoughts of me had been extinguished. Juan! My Juan, dear, dear friend! Juan de Torva! Thy name is on my lips, as it was wont; Thine image in my heart like stirring life; Thy form upon my fancy like that form Which bless'd my happy days. How he would look,

When with his outspread arms, as he return'd After some absence!— Oh, it tortures me! Let any image cross my mind but this! No, no! not this!— Sable, sepulchral gloom! Embody to my sight some terrible thing, And I will brave it. (*Pausing and looking round*.) It doth! it doth! there's form and motion in it. Advance, thou awful shade, what'er thou art!

Those threat'ning gestures say thou art not Juan.
 [Rubbing his eyes.
 It was but fancy.—No; the soul to Him
 Who is the Soul of souls ascended hath,
 Dust to its dust return'd. There is nought here
 But silent rest that can be rous'd no more.
 Beneath this mould, some few spans deep he lies.
 So near me, though conceal'd!—Curs'd as I am,
 The cords of love e'en through this earth have
 power,
 Like a strong charm, to draw me to him still.
 [Casting himself upon the grave.
 Burst, guilty heart! rend every nerve of life,
 And be resolved to senseless clay like this,
 So to enlap his dearer clay for ever.

Enter CARLOS.

Car. (looking round him). He is not here : nought
 see I through the gloom
 Save the cold marble of those tombs which, touch'd
 With the wan light of yon sepulchral lamp,
 Show their scroll'd ends to the uncertain sight,
 Like shrouded bodies rising from the earth.
 [Going towards the grave.
 Ha! something stirring on the new raised earth!
 It is Henriquez, wrapped in frantic sorrow.

[Advancing to him.

Henriquez! hearst thou not, noble Henriquez?
 Nay, nay! rise from the earth: such frantic grief
 Doth not become a man, and least of all
 A man whose firm endurance of misfortune
 Has hitherto so graced his noble worth.
 Giv'st thou no answer but these heavy groans?
 Thou hast not from the tomb recall the dead,
 But rouse thy spirit to revenge his death.

Hen. (raising his head). What saidst thou?

Car. Quit this dismal bed of death,

And rouse thee to revenge thy murder'd friend.

Hen. He is revenged; heav'n deals with guilt
 so monstrous:

The hand of man is nothing.

Car. Ay, but the hand of man shall add its mite.

[Taking hold of his hand to raise him.

Up from the earth! I've found the murderer.

Hen. (springing up fiercely, and seizing him by
 the throat). Layst thou thy hand on me?
 What is or is not,

The God of heaven doth know, and He alone.
 Darest thou with mortal breath bestow that name,
 To the dishonour of a noble house,
 On one of ancient princely lineage born?

Car. Let go thy frenzied grasp! Should brave
 Castilians

Thus grapple hand to hand, like angry boys?
 Fit time and place shall justify my words,
 If they indeed offend.—Our watch hath seiz'd
 In hiding near the castle, most suspiciously,
 A youth who hath to Mencia's love pretended,
 Whose hand, we cannot doubt, hath done the deed;

But if he be of such high lineage born,
 'Tis more than he hath claim'd or we will credit.
 Why drop your arms thus listless by your side;
 Your eyes upon the ground? Will you not go
 And see the prisoner, and hear him question'd?
 Hen. Ay, ay, this is required: I'll go with thee;
 I comprehend thee now.

Car. And yet thou mov'st not:
 Does any sudden pain arrest thy steps?

Hen. I am benumb'd and faint.—I'll follow thee.
 [Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A prison in the castle. ANTONIO discovered discon-
 solate near the front of the stage. A high door at
 the bottom, with stairs from it, leading down into
 the prison.

Ant. (after shifting his posture several times, and
 sighing heavily, raises his eyes on hearing the
 door open gently). Another visit! do they vainly
 think,

By oft-repeated questions, to betray
 A spent, enfeebled mind into confession?
 It is a woman! it is Mencia's self!

Enter MENCIA, descending the steps into the prison.

And comest thou to visit me, to bless
 My dismal prison-house with what were bliss
 E'en in the lowest state of human misery?
 Sweet Mencia! thou hast pity on me then.
 Pity embedded lies where love hath been,
 And love again doth from that pity spring,
 As the dropp'd seed of some fair faded flower
 Shoots its sheath'd bud from the cleft mould, first
 peeping

In timid beauty, after April showers,
 Then swelling, bursting, spreading its soft leaves
 To the free air, more fragrant than before.

Yes, I am happy, gentle Mencia,
 In spite of fate, if thou still carest for me. [dread

Men. This is no time for words like these. I
 E'en but to look upon thee, wretched man!
 Take this disguise; it will ensure escape.
 There is a faithful friend who waits without,
 And by the postern will direct thy flight.
 Speak not, but throw these weeds about thee quickly;
 The time is precious.

[Holding out garments which she bears over her
 arm.

Ant. Thou dreadst to look upon me, yet thou
 comest

To save my life—to save a murderer's life?

Men. I said not so in pity of thy state;
 That bloody deed I know hath been the act

Of frenzied passion : in some foreign land
Live and repent : Heaven grant thee grace for this !
Let not man's hand, the brand of public shame,
Be on thy wretched head !

Ant. The hand of man, the brand of public shame,
Falls on the guilty head, by heaven's appointment.
Thou riskest the salvation of thy soul
In aiding my escape ; and for my life,
If of thy love bereft, I care not whether
The headsman's axe, or the slow hand of nature,
Shall rid me of it. Nay ; the first were best.

Men. O no ! upon my knees I do conjure thee.

[*Attempting to kneel, but prevented by him.*]

If I offend in this, heav'n will forgive me :
For, oh ! if thou art lost, I am most wretched.
My misery or peace hangs on thy life ;
Therefore, upon my bended knees, I beg.

[*Sinking from his hold to the ground.*]

'Tis for myself I plead ; fly instantly.

Ant. (*raising her*). Ah dear, dear Mencia ! And
car'st thou thus,

For a foul criminal, — a man of blood ?
What, then, had been thy care — may I not say —
What, then, had been thy love — had he been innocent ?

Men. Alas, alas ! hadst thou been innocent,
I had defied the world, with all its lures,
Again to sever us. Yet, as thou art —

Ant. Misfortune, thanks ! Thou hast done more
for me

Than the devoted care of many years.

Comc. then, defy the world to sever us,
My generous Mencia ; I am innocent.

Men. Ha ! dost thou say it ? Saidst thou innocent ?

And sayst thou truly so ? Hast thou not done it ?
Is it no mockery of joy ? O no !
That look, that smile ! Yes, thou art innocent ;
And, heaven be praised, thou art !

Ant. I am, indeed, of Juan's death most innocent.
And though some circumstances do at present
Accuse me strongly, yet, I trust in heaven,
That on my trial so it will appear.

Men. Nay ; do not trust. O no ! for Don Henriquez,

Made savage by despair, will have a victim,
And catch with eagerness at every proof,
How slight soe'er it be. Fly ; quickly fly,
And I will follow thee and share thy fortune.
Or be it good or ill.

Ant. O blessed words ! my dear, my gen'rous love !
My heart throbs at the thought, but cannot thank
thee.

And thou wilt follow me and share my fortune,
Or good or ill !

Ah ! what of good can with a skulking outlaw

In his far wand'rings, or his secret haunts,

E'er be ? O no ! thou shalt not follow me. [love,
Men. Good may be found for faithful, virtuous

In every spot ; and for the wand'ring outlaw,
The very sweetest nooks o' the earth are his.
And be his passing home the goatherd's shed,
The woodman's branchy hut, or fisher's cove,
Whose pebbly threshold by the rippling tide
Is softly washed, he may contented live,
Ay, thankfully ; fed like the fowls of heaven
With daily food sent by a Father's hand.

Ant. (*pressing both her hands to his heart, and then
kissing them*). Thanks, gentle, virtuous
Mencia ; but, alas !

Far different is the hapless outlaw's home
From what thy gentle fancy fashio'neeth.
With lawless men he must protection find.
Some murky cavern where the light of day
Hath never peer'd — where the pitch'd brand, in-
stead,

Sheds its red glare on the wild revelry
Of fierce banditti ; or the pirate's bark,
Where stalks the sabred ruffian o'er the deck,
Watching his distant prey — some home-bound
ship,

With all its stores and freight of precious souls,
Who ne'er shall greet their native shores again,
Must be his guilty home.

Men. Alas, alas !

Ant. Thou shalt not follow me, nor will I fly.
Sever'd from thee I will not live, sweet love,
Nor shalt thou be the mate of one disgraced,
And by the good disown'd. Here I'll remain,
And heav'n will work for me a fair deliv'rance.

Men. No, no ! the present means for thy escape
Are sent to thee by heav'n. Be not so stubborn !
With or without me fly, even as thou wilt,
But do not linger here.

[*Looking to the door on hearing it move.*]

The door — O misery ! we are surprised.

It is Henriquez ; Heaven have pity on us !

*Enter HENRIQUEZ, while MENCIA shrinks behind
ANTONIO.*

Hen. (*advancing*). Ha ! not alone ! Who is it ?
Wretched Mencia !

Men. (*rushing forward*). Oh he is innocent !
Have pity on us !

Turn not away from me, noble Henriquez.

[*Catching hold of him eagerly.*]
Heaven knows that he is innocent.

Hen. Then, pray thee, be at peace ; heav'n will
protect him. [bold.

Men. Frown not ; my wretchedness has made me
Hen. Away, away ! I do not frown on thee.

Thou art the baleful cause of all this misery,
And yet I blame thee not. Away, and leave us !

Ant. Retire, dear Mencia ; to thy chamber go ;
It is not fit that thou shouldst tarry here.

[*She retires unwillingly ; HENRIQUEZ waving his
hand to quicken her retreat, and waiting in
gloomy silence till she is gone.*]

Hen. Unhappy youth ; thou hast to thine accusers
Thine innocence ascerted with the earnest
And simple manliness of truth ; yet truth,
Supported only by the word of him
Who is accused, will nought avail. How is it ?
If there be any circumstance that may
Support or prove thy words, I do entreat thee
To tell me freely, and I will, with speed,
Use every means that may unfold it fully
To aid thy exculpation. (*Pauses.*) Is there none ?
Bethink thee well : how slight soe'er it be,
It may to others lead of more import.

Ant. Thanks, generous man !

Hen. Nay, nay ! What is thine answer ?

Ant. Alas ! four days within that fatal wood
I have been hid ; unseen of every one
But Mencia, and those hinds who did pursue me.
What circumstance can then avail me ? No ;
Heaven, in its justice, will unfold the truth ;
In this I put my trust ; proofs I have none.

Hen. Take the deliv'rance, then, which heaven
has sent thee.

Fly, save thy life. (*Offering a purse.*) This will procure the means,

When thou hast clear'd the precincts of the forest.
All now is still, and favours thy escape.

Ant. My lord, like one stunn'd with astonishment,
I thank your gen'rous care. But, Don Henriquez,
Though born of blood less noble than your own,
An outlaw's fate, from friends and country banish'd,
My honest fame blurr'd with imputed guilt,
Is not deliv'rance such as I accept,
Such as a true Castilian can accept.
You offer it in pity of my youth,
Therefore I thank you ; but I'll here abide
Such vindication as becomes mine honour.

Hen. But should it fail thee, canst thou better
brook

A malefactor's death, the public gaze,
The scaffold's open shame, the executioner,
All the degrading ministry of death ;
Even that which so attaineth noble blood
That ages wear not out th' abhorred blot,
Disgracing all thy line ? Ay, think of this :
It makes me shudder as I utter it,
Who have in battle faced all dreadful things.

Ant. In truth, it makes your strengthen'd features
wear

A ghastly hue of horror. How is this,
That such strong sympathy should move you so ?
You think me guiltless in the very front
Of proof that should condemn me : then, belike,
Some shrewd suspicion of the actual hand
That did th' accused deed lurks in your mind.

Hen. Ha ! Cast an accusation on mine honour !

Ant. No, Don Henriquez ; with a friendly wish
To do me service cam'st thou here, and sacred
Is all that thou in privacy hast done
Or utter'd. Yea ; though thou shouldst now confess

That thou thyself wert Juan's murderer
(Start not, these are but words of argument) ;
Yea, e'en supposing this, and that my rescuer
From the uplifted axe depended on it,
Yet would I not betray thee.

Hen. (*turning away haughtily.*) Thou art incorrigible : take thy will.

[*Returning and laying down a key.*

I leave thee this ; thou wilt consider of it.
Say, is there aught that thou wouldst have me do ?

Ant. Send me a priest. Though only such transgressions

As youthful folly prompts rest on my mind,
Yet would my soul, shriv'd by some holy man,
His ghostly counsel take, and be at peace.

Hen. And be at peace ! Ay, ghostly counsel may
To such as thou give peace. O could it also —
I know an aged friar, wise and prudent :
Thou shalt be satisfied. [*Exit.*

Ant. (*after following him with his eye as he ascends
the stair at the bottom of the stage.*) But that
it were so horrid and unnatural,

A thing at strife with all consistent thoughts,
I could believe—No ; 'tis impossible.

[*Retires to the bottom of the stage, and the scene
closes.*

SCENE II.

An antechamber.

Enter CARLOS and Friar by opposite sides.

Car. Good morning, father ! you are early here.
Whom come you to confess ?

Friar. I have already been with the poor prisoner.

Car. And thou hast heard, no doubt, the horrid
truth

Which he denies to every one besides ?

Friar. I've heard all he confesses.

Car. Ay ; what strange tales, what secret horrid
things,

In thy long course of ghostly ministry, [*hand.*
Have in thine ear been pour'd ! By this good
But that I did prefer the jointed mail
And weapon's stroke to haircloth and the scourge,
The roar of battle to the chaunting choir,
I had become a friar, to learn, like thee,
All those dark mysteries of human nature,
To which thy mind is conscious.

Friar. Gentle son !

Pardon my words ; thou talkest in ignorance.
A tale of guilt, wrung from the sinner's soul,
Strikes not the fancy like a winter's tale
Of moonlight witchery, or murder done
I' th' secret chamber. No ; a counter sympathy
Doth quell the fancy then. Thou speakst in igno-
rance.

Car. True, father, this may be. With your per-
mission

I will attend you to the gate.

Friar. Not now.
I'm summon'd : Don Henriquez waits for me.
Car. At the confessional ?
Friar. So I believe ; I meet him in the chapel.
Car. I am right glad of this. We marvell'd much
He did not sooner think of ghostly comfort.
Friar. I have been summon'd by him once before ;
But when I came, capricious in his sorrow,
He would not see me.

Car. Speak comfort to him, and enjoin some penance

For the indulgence of such frantic grief ;
So wayward, so excessive. May God bless thee !

[*Exit friar.*]
Here comes our keen and fiery secretary.

Enter BALTHAZAR.

Return'd so soon ! And hath the royal ear
Inclin'd to thy petition ?

Bal. Ay ; every cot and castle in the realm
At my command must open gate and hold,
Chamber and bower ; e'en the sepulchral vault,
Whose sable scutcheon'd door hath not for years
Upon its hinges jarr'd, must be unlock'd,
And show its secrets to the searching light.
But as I learn you have secured the murderer,
I am content ; here ends my brief commission.
I pray you lead me to the prison-house :
I burn to see the wretch.

Car. Come, follow me
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A chapel. HENRIQUEZ discovered on his knees by the confessional, the Friar bending over him, and muttering words in a low voice.

Friar (aloud). Rise, son, in humble but assured faith !

Repentance, and these penances endured,
Will gain from heavenly grace full absolution
Of this most guilty deed — of all thy sins.
Rise, and be comforted !

[*Raising him, and leading him forward.*]
Be comforted !

The worst of sinners league not with despair,
But by their own untoward disbelief,
The greatest sin of all. Thou smit'st thy breast,
And shak'st thy drooping head : thou must not doubt.

All sin is finite, mercy infinite ;
Why shouldst thou doubt that God will pardon thee ?

Hen. I doubt it not. God's mercy pardons all
Who truly do repent ; and O how truly,
How deeply, how intensely I repent !

But in my breast there is a goading sense,
An inward agony, a power repelling
In dire abhorrence every better thought.
The bliss of heaven for me ! incongruous hope !
My soul, my fancy, yea my very will
Is link'd to misery ; and happiness
Comes to my thoughts like gleams of painful day
To owls and bats, and things obscene and hateful,
Fitted by nature for their dismal dens.
O that I were like such ! in the reft rock
Of some dank mine coil'd up, dull and unconscious

Of the loud hammer's sound, whose coming stroke
Should crush me from existence !

Friar. Alas, alas, my son, have better thoughts.

Hen. Let them arise in better hearts, for mine
A nest of stinged scorpions hath become,
And only fit for such. Each recollection,
Each waking fancy, like a barbed fang,
Pierces its core with thrilling agony,
Which yields to a succeeding, sharper sting,
And that again to others keener still.
So kind, so dear, such manly, true affection !
Friendship so pure ! such noble confidence !
Love that surmounted all things ! When, in passion,

I did an outrage on his fiery blood,
What would have hurl'd on any other head
The instant stroke of death — he only waited —

Friar. Give o'er, my son ; thou art too vehement.

Hen. He waited till my senseless rage was spent,
Then smil'd — O such a sweet, upbraiding smile !
Open'd his arms, and clasp'd me to his heart.
That smile, those open'd arms, I see them now, —
I see them constantly ; where'er I turn,
They front me like a vision of delight
Changed to a gorgon terror.

Yet no restraining love did plead for him :
As though he had some common rev'ller been,
All base suggestions were received against him,
Were cherish'd, brooded on by dint of thought,
Work'd to a semblance of consistent truth,
Which, but for this, hateful ingratitude,
All other crimes surpassing, ne'er had found
Credence so wild. Iron heart and ruffian hand !
Ye took your cursed will, and slew the noblest,
The bravest, and the best, like a vile traitor !

[*Beating his forehead and striding away.*]

Friar. My son, this is wild ecstasy of passion,
Which leads not to that humble true repentance
Our holy church enjoins.

Hen. (returning). Or had I met him as an open foe,

With accusation of defiance fairly
Preceding vengeance ; but unheard, i' th' dark !
Tremble, ye venerable roofs, ye towers
Of my brave fathers, men without reproach ;
Fall on my cursed head, and grind to dust

What bears the honour'd semblance of their son,
Although unmeet to bear the human form.

Friar. Nay, nay! I pray forbear; this violent grief

For thy soul's weal is most unprofitable.
Betake thyself betimes to prayer and penance.
The sufferings of the body will relieve
The sufferings of the mind.

Hen. The sufferings of the body! They are powerless.

[*Showing his hand.*]

See here, short while, in agony of thought,
Pacing the armoury where hangs the mail
Which Juan wore, when in Tolosa's field
We fought the turban'd Moslems side by side;
It was his gift, which I did beg of him,
In the proud joy I felt at his high deeds.
How swell'd my heart! A braver knight in arms
Fought not that day. Bold heart and potent hand,
And lofty mien and eyes that flash'd with valour!
Where run my words? I have forgot their drift.

Friar. Something which happen'd in the armoury.

Hen. Ay, in the armoury, as I have said,
I struck my hand, in vehemence of action,
On a spik'd shield, nor knew till afterwards,
When the wild fit was past, and oozing blood
Loaded my clammy touch, that in my flesh
The broken iron was sheath'd.

No; what can corporeal pain or penance do?
That which inflicts the mental wound, which rends
The hold of pride, wrenching the bent of nature;
'Tis that alone hath power. Yet from the effort
Nature starts back; my mind, stunn'd at the thought,

Loses the use of thought.

Friar. I do not understand you, good my lord.

Hen. It matters not; you will, perhaps, hereafter.

Friar. You are at present feeble and exhausted,
And lack repose; retire awhile, my son.

Hark! on the walls without, do you not hear
The warder's call to note the rising morn?

Hen. The morn! And what have I to do with morn?

The redd'ning sky, the smoking camp, the stir
Of tented sleepers rousing to the call,
The snorting steed, in harness newly dight,
Did please my fancy once. Ay; and the sweetness
Of my still native woods, when, through the mist,
They show'd at early dawn their stately oaks,
Whose dark'ning forms did gradually appear
Like slow approaching friends, known doubtfully.
These pleased me once in better days; but now
My very soul within me is abhorrent
Of every pleasant thing; and that which cheers
The stirring soldier or the waking hind,
That which the traveller blesses, and the child
Greets with a shout of joy, as from the door
Of his pent cot he issues to the air,
Does but increase my misery. —

I loathe the light of heaven: let the night,
The hideous unblest'd night, close o'er me now,
And close for ever!

Friar. Cease, cease! and cherish not such dark despair.

Retire to your apartment, and in prayer
Beseech Almighty Goodness to have pity
On a perturbed soul.

Hen. Pray thou for me; I will pray when I can.

Friar. Hark! steps along the corridor; they come

To say an early mass for the repose
Of the interr'd: they must not find you here.

Hen. And to the dead they give repose! What mass,

[*living*]

What prayers, what chaunted hymns can to the
Give respite from this agony of soul?

Alas, alas! there is no cure for this. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A small court before the door of the prison, which is open. BLAS and other domestics discovered waiting near it.

1st dom. (to BLAS). Goes Don Henriquez with the prisoner?

Blas. He does; his noble courser at the gate,
Black Sultan, saddled stands, champing the bit,
And casting from his mouth the flaky foam.
Stand back; they're coming now.

Enter ANTONIO, CARLOS, Friar, BALTHAZAR, and DIEGO, from the prison.

Friar (to ANTONIO). Be not cast down, my son,
but trust in heaven!

Ant. And so I do; that is my stay, good father;
And yet, methinks, these fetters might be spared.
By Don Henriquez' orders am I thus
Like a vile felon chain'd?

Car. 'Tis by his orders; 'tis a stated form.
I fear they gall you; are they clench'd too tightly?

Bal. Who doth a felon's deeds must e'en submit
To bear a felon's manacles.

Ant. (to BALTHAZAR). Yes; man of pens, and records, and old lore,

Such is thy narrow and ungen'rous nature.

[*Turning to CARLOS.*]

This rough but noble soldier, bred in camps
And midst the broil of battle, is more gentle.
Henriquez seem'd inclined to pity me,

To think me innocent; then, wherefore these?

Car. Come, we lose time, we must begin our journey

To reach the town by close of day, Henriquez
Being intent to gain a royal audience

Before the sitting of to-morrow's court.

[*Exeunt all but DIEGO, to whom enters LEONORA, with something in her hand.*]

Leo. My good Diego, hie thee to the gate ;
And ere thy master mount, give him this scarf,
These gloves too, and his signet, which, in haste,
He left behind. [*Giving them to him.*]
He has forbidden me to follow him,
And he must be obeyed.

Diego. He shall receive them.

Leo. How look'd Antonio when they led him
forth ?

Greatly dejected ?

Diego. No ; he bears it stontly.

Leo. Asserting still that he is innocent ?

Diego. Ay, ay ; but every villain does the same.
Does not my lord believe that he is guilty ?

Leo. I cannot doubt it. When he left the chapel
A long time in his chamber he remain'd ;
When he came forth again, I watch'd his eye,
And it was calm, though gloomy. Then forthwith
He gave his orders that a band of spearmen
Should be in readiness to guard the prisoner
Bound to Zamora ; and were he in doubt,
He were not now so calm, being before
So greatly agitated. Hie thee quickly.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*The court at Zamora, a grand hall of audience.
Nobles, prelates, officers, &c. discovered in waiting ;
a flourish of trumpets. Enter the King and his
train, who walks slowly, as he receives their homage,
to a chair of state near the front of the stage.*

1st noble (presenting a petition). May't please
your highness, look on this petition,
Humbly presented to your royal notice
By one of noble blood.

King. And noble conduct, too, I hope, Don Pedro.
What is its plea ? [*After reading the paper slightly.*]
That he beneath a lady's window hath
A most audacious suitor slain, who there
Did charm her ear with love-sick ditties.—Slew him !
A harsh device to win the lady's favour ;
Had she not ears to be again enthralld ?
Another song had been a fitter weapon
Of opposition than a sword, methinks.

[*Giving the paper to a secretary.*]

Note down that I will look on this again.

2d noble (giving a paper). Deign, royal sir, to look
upon this paper.

King. Freely, Don Blas ; from such a noble hand
It needs must be an honourable suit.

[*Reading the paper.*]

Don Julian, of the noble house of Guzman,
Hath, by the cadet of a meaner house,

Been elbow'd from his place, who most nefariously
Refused to yield to him the dexter side.

[*Reading on more slightly.*]

Honour repair'd—that he be forced—a blow !

[*Shaking his head.*]

We are too learned in this ancient kingdom.

Nay, reverend prelate, no offence to you ;

The clergy stand acquitted of this charge.

Prelate. I know not how to comprehend your
highness.

King. We should be spared full many a deadly
broil,

Did we not know our right hand from our left.

We are in this, good sooth ! too nicely learn'd,

Which doth but scantily, in my opinion,

Supply the want of every other lore.

2d noble (aside to 1st). Never may I again i' th'
royal presence

Wear hat and plume, if this is not derision.

1st noble (aside). 'Tis Don Henriquez we may
thank for this.

He spoke not to us thus when the arm'd Moor

Was nearer to his doors.

King (to prelate). And now, my lord, let me
receive your paper.

Prelate. Most humbly to your highness I pre-
sent it,

From pious men, whose prayers are offer'd up

For your prosperity. [*Gives the paper.*]

King (reading it slightly). "That the free kinds of
Tornes and their wives

Refuse their wonted offerings to the convent,

And therefore humbly—the adjoining lands—

A royal compensation."—So it ruus,

And it must cost me many a fruitful field,

Because those villagers love fatted pullets,

As well as sober, self-denying monks !

This also at our leisure we'll consider.

[*Gives the paper to the secretary, and sitting
down, receives other petitions, when a confused
noise is heard.*]

What noise is that without ?

Enter an Officer.

Offi. May't please you, Don Henriquez waits
without.

King. Henriquez, my brave general ? How is
this ?

Offi. He comes attended by a goodly train,

Guarding a prisoner, and humbly begs

To be admitted to the royal presence,

Before your court shall sit.

King. Most willingly : say, I am ready now

To give him audience. [*Exit officer.*]

I marvel much

How it should be. In this unwonted form

To bring his prisoner !—But here he comes.

Enter HENRIQUEZ, followed by CARLOS and ANTONIO, going up to the King, who rises to meet him.

King. Thou too, my valiant friend, a suitor here?

Hen. A humble supplicant.

King. Who needs not sue. Say freely what thou wouldst, and it is granted.

Hen. But what I beg, an earnest boon, must be confirm'd to me with all solemnity, Before I utter it.

King. A strange request! But that thy services have been to me Beyond all recompense, and that I know Thy country's welfare and thy sovereign's honour Are dear to thee, as thou full well hast proved, I should with some precaution give my word. But be it so; I say thy suit is granted.

Hen. Nay, swear it on this sword.

King. Where doth this tend? Doubtst thou my royal word? [presence,

Hen. When honour'd lately by your princely You gave to me this ring with words of favour; And said if I should e'er, by fortune press'd, Return the same to you, whatever grace I then might ask, should be conceded to me. [Giving the ring.

Receive your royal token: my request Is that you swear upon my sword to grant This boon which I shall beg.

[Holds out his sword to the King, who lays his hand on it.

King. This sword, this honour'd blade, I know it well,

Which thou in battle from the princely Moor So valiantly didst win: why should I shrink From any oath that shall be sworn on this? I swear, by the firm honour of a soldier, To grant thy boon, whatever it may be. Declare it then, Henriquez. [A pause.

Thou art pale And silent too: I wait upon thy words.

Hen. My breath forsook me. 'Tis a passing weakness:

I have power now. There is a criminal, Whose guilt before your highness in due form Shall shortly be attested; and my boon Is, that your highness will not pardon him. However strongly you may be inclined To royal clemency,—however strongly Entreated so to do.

King. This much amazes me. Ever till now, Thou'st been inclined to mercy, not to blood.

Hen. Yea; but this criminal, with selfish cruelty, With black ingratitude, with base disloyalty To all that sacred is in virtuous ties, Knitting man's heart to man—What shall I say? I have no room to breathe.

[Tearing open his doublet with violence.

He had a friend, Ingenuous, faithful, generous, and noble: E'en but to look on him had been full warrant Against th' accusing tongue of man or angel, To all the world beside,—and yet he slew him. A friend whose fostering love had been the stay, The guide, the solace of his wayward youth,— Love steady, tried, unwearied,—yet he slew him. A friend, who in his best devoted thoughts, His happiness on earth, his bliss in heaven, Intwined his image, and could nought devise Of separate good,—and yet he basely slew him; Rush'd on him like a ruffian in the dark. [nature, And thrust him forth from life, from light, from Unwitting, unprepared for th' awful change Death brings to all. This act so foul, so damned, This he hath done: therefore upon his head Let fall the law's unmitigated justice.

King. And wherefore doubtst thou that from such a man

I will withhold all grace? Were he my brother I would not pardon him. Produce your criminal.

[Those who have ANTONIO in custody lead him forward.

Hen. *(motioning with his hand to forbid them).* Undo his shackles; he is innocent.

King. What meaneth this? Produce your criminal. [feet.

Hen. *(kneeling).* My royal master, he is at your *[A cry of astonishment is heard through the hall; the King, staggering back from the spot, is supported by an attendant, while CARLOS and ANTONIO, now free from his fetters, run to HENRIQUEZ, who continues kneeling, and bend over him in deep concern.*

King *(recovering).* A fearful shock! Mine ears are ringing still.

Rise, Don Henriquez d'Altavera, rise! *(Turning away his head.)*

Raise him: O do not let me see him thus!

[Motions the crowd to withdraw, who go off, leaving the King, HENRIQUEZ, CARLOS, and ANTONIO only on the stage.

King *(fiercely).* Carlos, on thee my anger rests, who thus

Stoodst by and suffer'dst me to be deceived.

Car. Condemn me not, my liege; I was myself, Convinced this youth had done the deed, deceived. This on a soldier's honour I aver.

King. Alas, Henriquez! thou hast practised on me With cruel guile. I would right gladly forfeit

The fairest town thy sword e'er won for me, And be again at liberty to pardon

Whatever thou hast done: a deed, most surely, By thy high nature all too rudely charged.

Thou in the frenzy of some headlong passion

Hast acted as a madman, who still wrecks

His direst wrath on those he loves the most.

Hen. No, no! it was an act of brooding thought,

Of slow intent, of dark consideration.
Our early love, with all his fair endowments
And noble qualities, before my mind
Did clearly pass; pass and return again,
And strongly plead for him, and were rejected.

King. Go to! thou hast a wild imagination,
Which has o'erreach'd thy judgment.—Set me free.
The public weal requires thy service: oaths
Adverse to this do not, and should not, bind.

Hen. There are within your kingdom many chiefs
Who may do better service to the state,
Though not with better will than I have done;

[*Laying his sword at the King's feet.*]

Here do I part with ensigns, arms, and war;
Nor soldier's brand, nor baton of command,
This hand accursed shall ever grasp again.
Your highness by the honour of a prince
Stands bound to me in this, and you are bound.

King. Ay, if it needs must be, determined spirit!
Yet, think again; be it awhile deferr'd,
This dismal trial, for a month—a year.

Hen. Not for a day.

King. Thou art too boldly stubborn.
By what authority dost thou oppose it,
If 'tis my pleasure it should be deferr'd?

Hen. The law's authority emboldens me.
I am Don Juan's heir, and do by right
Demand the speedy trial of his murderer.
Nor think the law's delay would aught avail.
How many secret ways there may be found
To rid a wretch of life, who loathes to live,
My soul demands this sacrifice—pants for it,
As that which can alone restore to it
The grace of heav'n and the respect of men.

Car. Noble Henriquez, thy too stubborn virtue—

Hen. Nay, Carlos, hold thy peace. Be not my foe;

He were my greatest enemy who should
Impede this consummation. When 'tis past,
Then let the favour of my princely master,
Of loving camp-mates, and all virtuous men,
Return to me again. A noble treasure
That will redeem my memory from shame.

King (*embracing him*). Living or dead, brave man,
thou must be honour'd!

I will no more contend with thy desires.
Some preparation for this solemn ceremony
Thou wilt require; Don Carlos will conduct thee
Where thou mayst rest and find all needful aid.

[*Exit.*]

Hen. Come, friends, till I am summon'd to my trial:

The time is short, and we must husband it.

[*Going and stopping again.*]

I shun not now thy friendly aid, good Carlos;
My heart is lighten'd of its heavy load,
And I can take a good man by the hand,
And feel we are akin.

Car. To all that is most great and admirable
Thou art akin. I have no words to speak
The thoughts I have of thee, thou noble man!

Hen. (*to ANTONIO*). And thou too, gentle youth;
give me thy hand.

Thy noble confidence did point to me
The true and honour'd path. For, hadst thou fled,
I might have shrunk aside, and been on earth
A sullen secret thing of wretchedness,
Cursing the light of heaven. Gentle youth,
I've felt the kindly pressure of thy hand,
And all thy gen'rous sympathy: forgive me,
That I did hold thy mind so long in doubt.

Ant. O nothing did I doubt that thou didst know
My innocence, and would protect it; yet,
This noble, terrible act I ne'er divined.
Would I had fled my prison at thy bidding,
And lived a vagabond upon the earth,
Ere this had been! What was my name or worth?
But thou—

Hen. Cease, cease! repent it not, sweet youth;
For all the friends on earth would not have done
me
Such true and worthy service! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

A royal apartment. Enter LEONORA and Friar.

Friar. The king will from his council come ere long;

Then wait, I pray, and take a little respite
From this impatient fever of your mind.

Leo. Take respite! this impatience! O, good father!

Thou canst not know this agony, and speakst
Like one secured from human misery.
Heaven grant me patience! I have need of it;
But it must come from heaven.

Friar. See; now his highness enters.

Enter King attended; and LEONORA, running to him, casts herself at his feet, embracing his knees.

King. The lady Leonora! rise, dear lady. [hold,

Leo. No; to your knees I'll cling, nor quit my
Till from your royal pity I obtain
The mercy I implore.—My lord Henriquez—
Your valiant general—my dear, dear husband—
Say that he shall not die. This execution!
This malefactor's end! O save him! save him!

King (*raising her*). As far as I have power, your suit is granted.

Leo. Then he is saved—he lives? Is it not so?
King. Alas! I would it were. Your lord refuses
All royal mercy. I have sworn to him
Never to pardon Juan's murderer.
If thou canst move his stubborn spirit, kneel,
And at his feet implore him to release me
From this most fatal oath.

Leo. Move him ! Alas, alas ! this will not be ; I know him well : in what he deems the right, He is inflexible. But solemn oaths, E'en oaths upon the holy relics sworn, The holy church annuls : it will release you. Then say not you are bound.

King. From oaths upon the holy relics sworn The church can loose, as thou, no doubt, hast learnt From sacred books and this good father's lore ; But, solemnly, upon Henriquez' sword I've pledged a prince's word — a soldier's honour, From which nought can release me, but the will And free consent of him to whom 'tis pledged. Hie, therefore, to thy lord : kneel at his feet, And may heav'n give thee power to touch his heart.

Leo. Is all my hope in this ! Unhappy woman ! By heaven and man abandon'd — Dismal doom ! The woe of desperation !

[Frantically wringing her hands, and then turning in anger to the King.]

There's mockery in this. Thou art a king, And canst command what I would beg in vain ; Command him, as his royal liege and master, That he release thee from this fatal pledge. A king, and not obey'd ! deceitful shadow ! Doth not thy power o'er all things reign supreme ?

King. Not o'er men's wills. —

This is a power heaven to itself retains, And ne'er did delegate to mortal being.

Leo. (*pacing about as before.*) Despair, despair ! What see I but despair,

Shame, infamy, a malefactor's end ?

King. Wring not thy hands so wildly, wretched lady !

His life, indeed, we must despair to save ; But infamy is from his name remov'd, As heaven from hell. Yea, his proud house shall boast

Of this its noble malefactor, more Than all its trophic chiefs.

When at the bar he stood arraign'd, and pled, Proving his secret guilt, against himself, Ne'er rose his form so nobly on the mind, Even in his days of triumph. —

But when the fatal sentence was pronounced, He raised his head, and sent a look to heav'n Of pleased appeal and solemn thankfulness ; A look of pious hope so dignified, He seem'd like some fall'n seraph that again Had won his way to bliss. — A general murmur Of admiration from deep silence rose.

Old men did clasp their hands, and young men wept ;

And those who on his victories bestow'd A cold and niggard praise, now, with full hearts, Gave boundless tribute to his lofty virtue.

Leo. And he was honour'd thus ! high heaven be prais'd ! *[Bursting into tears.]*

It makes me weep that they did weep for him. Heaven's will be done !

I've been too stern and violent in my grief : God grant me more submission to His will, And I will learn to bear it. My Henriquez ! The brave with tears of admiration grace Thy hapless end, and rescue thee from shame.

King. Rescue ! far more than rescue : my proud house

The very implements of execution Will henceforth in their banners proudly weave.

Leo. I needs must weep ; but let my tears have vent,

And I shall be resign'd.

Enter CARLOS and ANTONIO.

King (*to them*). How is Henriquez ? came ye from his tower ?

Car. Most admirably well ; his soul is up : I left him shaking hands most cordially With his worst enemy, and he intends, Ere close the night's first watch, to spend an hour In social converse with some early friends, Who shared his first campaigns, and have desired To see his face once more. —

His soul seems open'd now, and raised above That close reserve, which was his greatest blemish.

King. Some noble minds do from misfortune rise, Yea, e'en from guilt, more noble than before ; As by the hardest blow the smitten ball Bounds highest from the earth. — Retire, fair Leonora : this good man (*pointing to friar*)

Will heavenly comfort to thy soul impart, And strengthen it to bear the coming trial.

[Friar supports her on one side, while ANTONIO offers his aid also, as she goes off.]

Leo. (*to ANT.*) Not thou ; the hidden cause of all this woe.

Friar. Nay, daughter, be not angry with this youth.

The will of heaven must be ; the means appointed Must also be : he is most innocent, Since ignorant of ill.

Leo. My grief is wayward still ; but I'll subdue it.

[Takes hold of ANTONIO, and exit with him and friar, while King, CARLOS, and attendants go out by another door.]

SCENE III.

Before the gate of the prison ; the stage dark, excepting a lamp hung over the gate ; sentinels discovered on watch.

Enter BALTHAZAR with a dark lantern.

1st sen. Stand ! who art thou ?

Bal. A friend, connected with the noble prisoner.

Sen. Stand there aloof; thou mayst not enter yet.

Enter Friar by the opposite side.

1st sen. Ho there!

Friar. A friend.

2d sen. A friend! What seekst thou here?

Friar. I am a priest, confessor to Henriquez.

1st sen. Thou shalt have entrance presently.

Friar. I thank thee. [*Going up close to BAL.*]

Thou art Balthazar?

Bal. And thy servant, father.

Friar. Thou'rt up betimes; it is still pitchy night.

Bal. Nay; look thou eastward; yon dull line of light,

Bounding the sable darkness of the earth

From the sky's fainter gloom: it is the dawn.

Friar. Ha! runs the time so fast! what noise is that?

Bal. The hum of distant voices, and the sound Of preparation for the awful morn.

As I now pass'd along, in every street

I heard the eager citizens astir,

While light from many a lattice gleam'd. And onward,

As I approach'd th' appointed place, I saw

Round the fenced spot, already gather'd, groups

Of men and women, young and old, whose faces

Did seem, from darkness, as from nothing sprung,

Touch'd with the torches' glaring light, which downward

Stream'd from the lofty scaffold, whereon forms

Of busy artists at their fatal work,

And ghastly headsmen moving to and fro,

Appear'd like blacken'd fiends. Dost thou not hear

The stroke of hammers, and that sounding plank?

There comes a strange and thrilling coldness o'er me.

[*A pause and noise without.*]

I little thought to feel such ruth for him,

The man who slew my good and noble master.

Friar. Why shouldst thou not? the feeling does thee honour;

And he doth for that rash and rueful deed

Make dear and great amends. The gate is open'd.

[*Exeunt into the prison.*]

SCENE IV.

A passage way in the prison. Enter Friar and Gaoler, speaking as they enter.

Gaoler. But it is past the hour; he must be waked.

Friar. Waked! dost thou think he sleeps?

Gaoler. Yes, father; he hath slept, I guess, since midnight.

Friar. How knowst thou this?

Gaoler. I've listen'd at his door

From time to time, and nought have heard within

But a deep silence, once or twice brok'n faintly By slow-heaved breathings, as of heavy sleep.

Friar. So sound asleep, and such a morn to wake to!

Gaoler. Nay, they who sleep before their day of Sleep often thus,—a deathlike, dreamless sleep.

[*Speaking as he goes off.*]

I well remember one, who, on the morn —

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

The prison chamber. HENRIQUEZ discovered asleep on a couch, near the front of the stage.

Enter Friar and Gaoler.

Friar. Still fast asleep: it grieves my soul to wake him.

No trace of trouble on his face! He lies

Like a tired hunter after toilsome chase.

Call to him, friend, I cannot.

Gaoler. Ho! Don Henriquez! ho, my lord! awake!

Awake, my lord! — He is in heavy sleep,

Like the dull rest of death, which hath no ear.

Friar. Oh that it were indeed the rest of death!

It is a woeful service to awake him.

How goes the time? Might he still sleep awhile?

Gaoler. 'Tis past the hour at which he charged me strictly

To call him up.

Friar. Then he must be obey'd.

Gaoler (touching him gently). Wake! Don Henriquez, wake! It is the hour.

He moves him now: the sound is in his ears;

The light annoys his eyes. Awake, my lord!

[*Touching him again.*]

Hen. (raising his head). What is it?

Gaoler. 'Tis the hour the morning breaks.

Hen. (starting from his couch). Bring me my armour: have ye roused the camp?

Bid every soldier dight him for the field:

I've slept too long.

Gaoler. It is the very hour

At which you did give orders to be waked.

Hen. Ha! Yes, I understand thee: it is morn,—

The fated morn that brings to me no noon.

Sleep from the tablet of my brain had razed

All present things, and in my waking fancy

Had led me back to what I was so lately.

I thank you. Dawns the light?

Friar and Gaoler (both at once). The morning breaks. [morn.]

Hen. Your voices sound like midnight, not like Welcome, good father; thou art come, in truth,

To wake me for the fight, and brace my strength,

Not with corporeal arms.

Friar. No, good my lord;

A nobler armour, for a nobler warfare:

And the Almighty King, whose valiant soldier
Thou wilt this day approve thyself to be,
Will gird thee for the field. Receive from him
His high commission, worthy of a man.

Hen. (looking upward, and then kneeling with his arms on his breast, and his head bowed to the ground). I do receive it, father, most devoutly. [Rising with solemnity.

Let me be forward in my work, good father.
I would retire, and give my thoughts to heaven
Ere earthly things shall press to mingle with them.
Come, then, and join thy fervent prayers with mine,
And teach my dying voice to sue for mercy.

[Exit with friar.

Gaoler (looking after HENRIQUEZ). The right true metal this; 'twill bear the furnace.

Ah! who would once have thought that from my custody

He should pass forth to such a death? Heaven doom'd it. [Noise and bustle without.

What noise is that without?—Ho! who would enter?

Voice (without). Open; it is the king.

[*Gaoler opens the door, and enter the King, CARLOS, ANTONIO, and BALTHAZAR.*

King (to *gaoler*). Where is thy noble charge?

Gaoler. With his confessor, in the private chapel.

King. How is he, *gaoler*? Has he through the night

Had any rest?

Gaoler. Yes, may it please your highness,

He hath slept soundly.

King. Sound sleep in such a state! Yet, wherefore marvel:

He has been used to look death in the face.

Car. Ay, in the field; but many brave him there,

Who on a scaffold feel their manhood quail.

King. Is it so, *gaoler*? Thou hast good experience.

Gaoler. Some years ago, two brothers suffer'd here,

For an offence of state; the one a soldier,
Stout, brave, and bold in war; the other bred
To quiet life at home; but on the scaffold
The man of peace did bear the loftier brow,
And beat the hardy vet'ran shamefully.

King. Strange creatures are we all! and who is known

Until his trial comes?—I think, good Carlos
Thou toldst me he conversed with cheerfulness
Till a late hour last night.

Car. Yes, good my liege,

Having first settled all his worldly cares,
Like one, who, from a heavy load released,
Unclops his vest to recreate himself,
He with two ancient camp-mates and your liege-
man

Convers'd with kindlier, more enliven'd freedom

Than he was wont: spoke of their old adventures,
Prais'd many a valiant heart, fall'n in the field,
And of the fate of others did inquire
With kindly interest, as though his soul
Upon the very parting verge of nature
Felt nature's sympathies more warmly. Truly
His spirit seem'd already to have doff'd
Its earthly coat, and gain'd a purer being.

King. Ay; he is passing to a higher state:
So teach our holy men, and I believe them.
Doth aught approaching to a final end
Of dark extinction rise to meet it thus?
It doth not;—no, it cannot.

But first he settled all his worldly cares.
And what are his bequests?

Car. Balthazar, thou canst tell.

Bal. He first of all provides a noble monument
To Juan's mem'ry near his native town,
Desiring he himself may be interr'd
In the same vault with him, and by his side.

For many friends, and all his ancient servants,
Forgetting none, he hath made kind provision.

His lady's dowry is enlarg'd, and Mencia
Receives a noble portion to bestow

Upon her early lover, this good youth,
Whom he hath named with words of special love.

King (to ANTONIO, who turns aside to weep).

Weep freely, gentle youth; whom he hath loved

Shall ever in his prince's favour hold
An honourable place.—Pray thee, proceed.

Bal. He hath, besides, for good and pious ends,
A large benevolence—

Car. Hush! he approaches.

Re-enter HENRIQUEZ and Friar.

King (advancing to meet him). My noble friend,
I felt a strong desire

Once more—a short intrusion.

Hen. Say not so.

Your grace is come to wish me a good morrow,
And cheer me on this outset of my way.

King. Alas! a dismal cheer, a woful morrow!

Hen. Nay, three successive days have dawn'd
upon me

Through such a gloom of hopeless misery,
That this, comparatively, seems indeed

A morn of cheer. Then so consider it.

And now, in parting, I would beg of you
To pardon whatso'er, in my long service,

I've done, in ignorance or stubborn will,
To prejudice the service of the state,

Or to offend your grace. Once at Cuenca
I rashly hazarded some brave men's lives;

And, for th' unmeaning triumph of a day,
Those brave men's lives were lost. My heart for
this

Has suffer'd many a pang; but pride till now
Restrain'd confession. Pardon me for this.

King. Thou needst from me no pardon; yet thou hast it,
And with it, too, my thanks,—my solemn thanks,
For all the noble service thou hast done me.
And is there no request thou hast to make?

Hen. Yes, if I might presume. Here is a list
[*Giving the King a paper.*
Of some brave officers, whose worthy services
Deserve promotion: let them, for my sake,
Find favour with your grace. This is my suit.

King. It shall be done. Oh that a suit of mine
Could, in return, move thine obdurate bosom!

Hen. What is't, my gracious master?
King. If I have been to thee a gracious master,
Be thou a gracious liegeman, and restore—
Restore to me that honour of my reign,
That pride, and fence, and bulwark of my land,—
Restore to me again my gallant general,
Henriquez d'Altavera.

Hen. Alphonso of Castile, I've serv'd thee
long,—

Yea, though I say it, I have served thee bravely.
Have I from fire, or flood, or havoc shrunk?
What battle have I lost, what town abandon'd,
That now I may not, like a noble Spaniard,
My earthly station quit, from insult spared?
I've owed you service as my rightful king;
I've owed you service as my gracious master:
But not for man on earth, nor saint in heaven,
Would I submit a loathed life to live,
After the horrid deed that I have done.

Friar (*laying his hand gently on HENRIQUEZ*). My
son, my son! where is the Christian meek-
ness,

Which, at the Throne of Grace, some moments
since,

Thou didst devoutly pray for?

Hen. Father, I am reproved: my mortal frailty
Was smother'd, not extinct. [*Turning to the King.*
I will not, standing on this awful verge,
To mortal greatness bend, else on my knees
I'd crave forgiveness of this new offence:

[*Laying his hand sorrowfully on his breast.*
An unrein'd mind, offending to the last!

[*The King rushes into his arms and embraces
him; then turns away, retiring to the bottom
of the stage, to conceal strong emotion.*

Hen. Carlos, thou wilt not leave me till the
end;

But thou'lt forgive me now the many wrongs
I've done thine honest worth, fastidiously
Bestowing confidence on one alone.

[*Taking his hand affectionately.*
(*Turning to ANTONIO.*) And thou, brave youth, I
know thy gen'rous soul.

Though I have held thee long in doubt, I trust
Thou partst with me in charity.

Ant. (*catching his hands, and kissing them fer-
vently*). In love,

In deepest admiration, in devotion
That for thy sake would make me welcome death,
Yea, suffer shame, or be an outlaw'd wretch,
Cast off from all my kind.

Hen. Come to my heart! think of me when I'm
gone;

And be my fate thy warning. For I see
Keen passions and affections in thy nature,
Akin to those I felt in early youth.
And when thou thinkst of me, consider this:

The law condemneth not a man unheard,
Be he the veriest wretch upon the earth:
But I condemn'd my dearest friend unheard.
Balthazar, thou dost know how very dear—
No, no! thou couldst not know how well I loved
him.

Farewell, good secretary, and be sure
Thou mind thy charge. See that it be erected
With strength and skill; a noble monument,
That will resist the silent strokes of time.

(*Looking round.*) Where is my ancient servant,
good Diego?

How is it that I do not see him here?

Bal. On learning that your sentence was pro-
nounced,

He took his bed; and whether violent grief
Or other means did speed his end, I know not:
He died last night.

Hen. Then I shall meet him shortly, where the
servant,

Freed from his master, fears his wrath no more.

My poor Diego! he did live with me
In too much awe: and yet he loved me well.
I was to blame in this.

Enter LEONORA and MENCIA.

Car. Thy Leonora comes,

Hen. Ah! would she had been spared this dismal
parting!

Car. She would not be restrain'd.

Hen. My Leonora, wherefore art thou come?

Yet thou art welcome to my heart once more.
Farewell in love,—in true, in most dear love,
My dearest wife!

Leo. Oh no! thy cruel wife,
The cause of all thy misery,—thy bane.

Hen. (*embracing her*). Hush, hush! thou wast
my torment and my bliss,

But O! far more my bliss! So be content.

I have had many days of prosperous life
Before this storm of misery broke upon me,
Thy love the flower and crown of all. Be com-
forted!

And Mencia, too, sweet maid, I understand
Thy mute farewell, which I accept. God bless
thee!

Antonio, take thy charge.

[*Putting MENCIA'S hand in his.*
Heaven bless thee, and farewell, my dearest wife!

Leo. Not yet, not yet! my swelling heart will burst.

It tries to utter what it cannot.— Oh!

[*A bell tolls, and she, giving a loud shriek, falls into the arms of MENCLA and ANTONIO.*]

Hen. Bear her away; I may not look again!

[*As she is borne off, the King advances to the front.*]

King. Farewell, thou noble man! Part we in charity?

Hen. In charity; and on your royal head

My dying blessing rest!

[*Exit King.*]

Here comes the marshal.

Enter Marshal and other officers.

(*To the marshal.*) Are all things ready, then?

[*The marshal bows.*]

(*To CARLOS and friar.*) My faithful friends,
Who still cling to my latest throb of life,
I claim of you a kind but painful service!

[*He begins to move, the friar walking by his side, and CARLOS following, while the bell tolls, and a large door in the centre of the back scene being thrown open, discovers a grand arched passage, lined with guards and other public officers, who, as he passes along, join the procession. The curtain drops.*]

END OF THE PLAYS ON THE PASSIONS.

MISCELLANEOUS PLAYS.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.*

In the language of the two Tragedies of this volume, a few slight alterations, I hope for the better, will be found from that of the first edition, so slight indeed, that I scarcely know whether or not they deserve to be mentioned. As for the Comedy, believing it has been generally disliked, I have been afraid to touch it, lest, going over it again, deprived of that animation so favourable to amendment which encouragement always gives, I should make it worse instead of better.

Several of my friends, since Rayner was published, and one of them, I must confess, for whose judgment I have the highest respect, before it was published, have objected to the description of the flooded river, Act V., page 417, as very improper in the circumstances under which it is introduced. I readily grant it may be apt to appear so at first sight; but I should think, that when those circumstances are more perfectly considered, this objection will be considerably weakened. When the Countess and Confessor are told the bridge is broken down, the distance which the messenger must then go, in the short time allowed for it, is so great that it seems impossible, and therefore overwhelms their thoughts. To have desired the messenger, notwithstanding, to mount his horse and set off immediately, would, as far as I am able to judge, *not* have been natural; for it is upon slight, not upon great, occasions that the mind recovers itself sufficiently from disappointment to give directions immediately as to what is next to be done. I have supposed the Countess and Confessor not as listening to the messenger's description, but as recovering, while he speaks, from the shock, and considering whether their object is still possible. The difficulty here seems to me to be this; whether is it most natural for the messenger himself, just returned from beholding an awful sight in nature, to have his mind most engrossed with that, or with the idea of riding to the town in time to save the prisoner, a thing which appears to him absolutely impossible? for it should be remembered, that till they call him

upon the stage, he has no idea of the nature of the errand for which he was kept in readiness; therefore, it could not beforehand have interested his mind. If the first of these suppositions is most natural, I should think I am in a good degree justified in introducing this passage; if the last, I am certainly wrong. It is a fault, however, easily rectified by drawing a pen across every line of the speech except the first two; and if the play should ever be acted, this must be done for another reason, viz. that no theatre could afford to put into such an insignificant character as that of a messenger an actor capable of reciting it.—Another objection may be made to this speech, that people in his situation do not make such speeches. People in his situation of life will not, it is true, to any length make speeches of sentiment and reflection; but the strong impression made upon them by a grand and awful object, will put them, for the time being, in possession of a power of language and strength of description which I am not vain enough to suppose I can equal. The language of description, having nothing to do with artificial phrases or abstract words, is more equally at the command of all ranks of men than any other, that of strong passion excepted.

It has also been objected, from many different quarters, that the incident of Ohio sawing across the main beam of the scaffold, &c. is a very bad one, and so absurd, that it would set an audience into a roar of laughter. That it is not a good one I very readily admit; but, in representation, the absurdity, or, I ought rather to say, the ludicrousness of it, so far from being more obvious, would be less so than in the closet. In reading a play, what is represented as passing upon the stage, and what is related as passing elsewhere, are both brought before the imagination with nearly equal strength; but, in representation, what is only related sinks into a degree of dimness and distance, by which it is almost comparatively annihilated. This incident, however, is most certainly not happily conceived, and as it is all comprised within the compass of a very few lines, might easily be changed into any other in which Ohio is still made the agent, by any person who should be willing to bring this play before an audience.

* One volume, entitled "Miscellaneous Plays," published 1805.

In Act I. of Constantine, page 451 I find that my meaning has been sometimes misunderstood. It never once entered into my idea to represent the emperor as yielding to his wife's fears, so far as to send his friends to face the danger threatened from the outrageous multitude without him. I have made him, whilst he appears to yield, put such conduct in the meanest and most contemptible light, trusting that her generous nature would revolt from it, as an easier way of making her submit to the necessity than giving a determined refusal. In a narrative, where all the secret thoughts of the heart can be as easily made known as those which a character is made to utter, there is little excuse either for leaving your meaning in a doubtful state, or bringing it out too laboriously; but, in a story carried on entirely, or almost entirely, in dialogue, it is very difficult to avoid both these faults into which I confess I am too apt to fall.

TO THE READER.

THOUGH I have already met with so much indulgence from the public for a work obscured with many faults, and might venture, without great mistrust, to bring before it the plays which I now offer, unaccompanied by any previous demand upon the attention of my reader, which is generally an unwelcome thing, I must nevertheless beg for a few minutes to trespass upon his patience.—It has been, and still is, my strongest desire to add a few pieces to the stock of what may be called our national or permanently acting plays, however unequal soever my abilities may be to the object of my ambition.* I have, therefore, in the "Series of Plays," though pursuing a particular plan, endeavoured fully to delineate the character of the chief person of each drama, independently of his being the subject of a particular passion; so that we might have an idea of what kind of a man he would have been had no circumstances ever arisen to bring that passion violently into action. I have endeavoured also distinctly to discriminate the inferior characters, because they, not being allowed to exhibit violent passion, lest they should too much interfere with the principal object, had more need of such distinct discrimination to prevent them from being altogether insignificant, and to prevent each play from becoming a mere picture of passion, which might be tedious and heavy to an audience accustomed to variety of character and incident. This I have done, how unskilfully soever I may have done it, with a hope, which I will not yet abandon, that

some of the dramas belonging to that work may hereafter be thought worthy of being admitted into that class of plays to which I am so desirous of adding something. However, I am sensible that were those plays more successful than I dare flatter myself to expect, they all require too much power of expression and delicacy of discrimination in the actor who represents the principal character—the whole depends too much on the exertion of one individual, and such a one too as can very rarely be found, ever to become plays that will commonly be brought upon the stage.† Convinced of this, as well as wishing sometimes to vary my employment, I have long since proposed to myself not to confine my pen entirely to one task, but to write from time to time, as inclination might lead me or circumstances suggest, an unconnected or (may I so call it?) a free, independent play, that might have a chance of pleasing upon a stage, circumstanced as stages generally are, with no particular advantages. I have wished to leave behind me in the world a few plays, some of which might have a chance of continuing to be acted even in our canvass theatres and barns; and of preserving to my name some remembrance with those who are lovers of that species of amusement which I have above every other enjoyed.

I am well aware, however, that having succeeded in one species of writing gives us no sure grounds to presume that we shall be equally fortunate in any other; no, not even in that which most nearly approaches to it. Not only the epic poet may write a bad tragedy, but the sonnet writer may find himself greatly at a loss in composing a few tender couplets for music. I have seldom seen any piece, not appearing to me to possess great merit (for such things I have seen), succeed upon the stage, without feeling inclined to say to myself, "don't despise this: very probably in attempting, even upon no higher grounds, such success as the present, and giving to it also the whole bent of your thoughts, you would find yourself miserably disappointed." I offer to the public, therefore, a work of a kind so nearly related to that in which I have already had some degree of success and encouragement, with almost the diffidence of an entirely inexperienced writer.

To publish a volume of miscellaneous plays, I am very sensible, is making a large demand upon the attention of my readers, and exposing the plays themselves likewise to the danger of being read in a way that will diminish their effect, and in every way prove a great disadvantage to them. People are in the habit of reading but one new play at a time, which by this means makes a full undivided impression upon the mind; and though we are not obliged kind; and though I admit they are not altogether well fitted for the stage, as it is commonly circumstanced, I still think plays upon that plan are capable of being made upon the stage more interesting than any other species of drama.

* See page 15. of the introduction to the "Series of Plays."
 † Let it not be supposed from the above that I have the slightest intention of discontinuing the "Series of Plays." So far from it, I hope that the work will go on the better for being occasionally broken in upon by pieces of a different

to read all the plays of a volume, one following another, so that they must crowd, and jostle, and tread upon one another's heels; yet who, with a new work in his hands, if he be at all pleased with it, will shut up the book after the first portion of it is over, and wait till he has properly digested what he has got before he proceed with the remainder? I am inclined to believe that each of the plays in the series has at first suffered considerably from being read in this manner; but in pieces connected with one another this mode of publication is in some degree necessary, at least there is in it more propriety. So much am I convinced of this that it was at one time my intention to publish these plays separately, and it is with some difficulty that I have been prevailed upon to give up this intention. May I then beg of my reader to pardon, in the first place, so great a demand upon his attention by offering at once a volume of plays to his perusal; in the next place, to have the goodness not to read it hastily, but to pause, some days at least, between each play, that they may have in this respect the same advantages which new plays generally have. Let him not smile: this last is a request which I earnestly make, and if it is not complied with, I shall almost be tempted to think myself hardly treated.*

I must also mention, that each of the plays contained in this volume has been, at one time or other, offered for representation to one or other of our winter theatres, and been rejected. This my reader will readily believe is not done in the spirit of vanity; and I beg of him also to believe, that neither is it at all done in that of complaint. I merely mention it, because otherwise it must have appeared absurd to introduce from the press what has been expressly written to come before the public in a different manner, without making any attempt to present it in its own peculiar mode. I must, in this case, have either appeared pusillanimously timid in shrinking from that open trial to which my contemporaries submit, or sullenly and ungraciously fastidious.

The chief thing to be regretted in this failure of my attempts is, that having no opportunity of seeing any of my pieces exhibited, many faults respecting stage effect and general impression will to me remain undiscovered, and those I may hereafter write be of course unimproved. Another disadvantage, perhaps, may present itself to the mind of my reader; viz. that not having the trial of their merits immediately in prospect, I may become careless or forgetful of those requisites in the drama that peculiarly refer to the stage. But if I know any thing

at all of my own character, this will not be the case. I shall persevere in my task, circumstanced as I am, with as anxious unremitting an attention to every thing that regards the theatre, as if I were there forthwith to receive the full reward of all my labours, or complete and ir retrievable condemnation. So strong is my attachment to the drama of my native country, at the head of which stands one whom every British heart thinks of with pride, that a distant and uncertain hope of having even but a very few of the pieces I offer to the public represented to it with approbation, when some partiality for them as plays that have been frequently read shall have put it into the power of future managers to bring them upon the stage with less risk of loss than would be at present incurred, is sufficient to animate me to every exertion that I am capable of making.

But I perceive a smile rising upon the cheek of my reader at the sanguine calculations of human vanity, and in his place I should most probably smile too. Let that smile, however, be tempered with respect, when it is considered how much mankind is indebted to this pleasing but deceitful principle in our nature. It is necessary that we should have some flattery to carry us on with what is arduous and uncertain, and who will give it to us in a manner so kindly and applicable to our necessities as even we our own selves? How poor and stationary must the affairs of men have remained, had every one, at the beginning of a new undertaking, considered the probability of its success with the cool, temperate mind of his reasonable, unconcerned neighbour?

It is now time to say something of the particular plays here offered to the Public.

In the first I have attempted, in the character of Rayner, to exhibit a young man of an easy, amiable temper, with delicacy of sentiment and a well principled mind, tempted, in the extremity of distress, to join with unworthy men in the proposed commission of a detestable deed; and afterwards, under one of the severest trials that human fortitude can be called upon to endure, bearing himself up, not with the proud and lofty firmness of a hero, but with the struggles of a man, who, conscious of the weakness of nature within him, feels diffident of himself to the last, and modestly aims at no more than what, being a soldier and the son of a brave father, he considers as respectable and becoming. One who aspires not to admiration but shrinks from contempt; and who being naturally brave in the field, and of a light buoyant disposition, bears up throughout with an animation and cheerfulness by no means inconsistent

* It may be urged, indeed, that unconnected poems bound up together, and almost every other species of composition, must suffer for being read in hasty succession in the same way. And so in some degree they do. But in reading descriptions of nature, successions of thoughts, and narratives of every kind, the ideas they represent to the mind are as troops drawn out before it in loose marshalled array, whose most animated movements it surveys still as a spectator;

whilst in reading a drama, where every character speaks immediately in his own person, we by sympathy rush, as it were, ourselves into the battle, and fight under every man's coat of mail by turns. This is an exercise of the mind so close and vigorous, that we retire from it exhausted; and if curiosity should urge us on without sufficient rest to the next engagement that calls for us, we enter the field bewildered, and spiritless, and weak.

with a considerable degree of the dread of death, when called upon to encounter it with deliberation and certainty. To him I have opposed the character of a young man, in whom, though with some good affections, there is a foundation of natural depravity, greatly strengthened by the bad education he has received from an absurdly indulgent mother, brought by his crimes to an untimely end, and meeting it with a very different spirit.

Of the characters of the two principal women in this piece, opposed to two women of a very different description, I shall say nothing. The second and inferior persons of the drama I have endeavoured to delineate with sufficient discrimination to make us feel acquainted with them, though much force or originality is a praise which I readily grant they are not entitled to.

I am afraid the varied conduct of the whole, sometimes gay and even ludicrous, sometimes tender or distressing, but scarcely at any time solemn or dignified, will be displeasing to those who are accustomed to admire tragedy in its more exalted form. I flatter myself, however, that as I have not, for the sake of variety, introduced any underplot nor patched scenes unconnected with the main business, but have endeavoured to make every thing arise naturally from the circumstances of the story, I shall not on this score be very much censured.*

This play was written many years ago, when I was not very old, and still younger from my ignorance of every thing regarding literature than from my years. This, however, I do not mention as any apology for its defects. A work that cannot be read with approbation unless the mind is continually referring to the particular circumstances under which it was written, ought not to be brought before the public, but (when those circumstances are very extraordinary) as a literary curiosity. Reading over this work, after it had been laid by for such a length of time that it was to me almost like the work of a stranger, I thought there was sufficient matter in it, with some alterations, to make an interesting play, not unsuited to the common circumstances of even our country theatres; and indeed I have altered it so considerably that full one half of it may be said to be newly written. In the original it was uniformly written in blank verse; and in many of the scenes, particularly those approaching to comic, my reader will readily believe it was sufficiently rugged and hobbling. I have, therefore, taken the liberty of writing in plain prose all those parts where I thought blank verse would be cumbersome and stilted. The only scenes in the play that remain exactly or nearly as they stood in the

original, are that between Rayner and the old man of the wood, in which I have scarcely altered a single word, and that, Act IV. Scene 3., between Zaterloo and his mother.

A play, with the scene laid in Germany, and opening with a noisy meeting of midnight robbers over their wine, will, I believe, suggest to my readers certain sources from which he will suppose my ideas must have certainly been taken. Will he give me perfect credit when I assure him, at the time this play was written, I had not only never read any German plays, but was even ignorant that such things as German plays of any reputation existed? I hope—I am almost bold enough to say, I know that he will. And that I may not abuse his faith by smuggling any thing under its protection not strictly entitled to it, I must inform him that the short scene between Rayner and his servant Herman, which I thought in some degree necessary to show the character and temper of the master, and to interest us in his favour before the great action of the piece begins, was entirely introduced in my latter alterations, and is therefore liable to whatever charge of imitation it may seem to deserve, though I have not been sensible, in writing it, of having any particular class of authors in my mind.

Of the Comedy that follows it I shall say but little. To those who are chiefly accustomed, in works of this kind, to admire quick turns of thought, pointed expression, witty repartee, and the ludicrous display of the transient passing follies and fashions of the world, this play will have but few attractions. The representation of a few characters, not, I believe, "over-stepping the modesty of nature," who are connected together in a very simple plot, carried on throughout with cheerfulness, unmixed with any pretensions to great refinement of sentiment, or delicate strokes of tenderness, is all this piece has to boast of: and with no higher pretensions, the greater proportion of my readers will not, I flatter myself, find fault with me for having made it a kind of division or stepping-stone between the two Tragedies; where, if they do not enjoy a brilliant sunshine, they may at least have a little flickering of the sunbeams to play upon them as they pass from one sombre gloom to another. It has lain by me for many years, and has received a very few inconsiderable alterations.

The last play of this volume was written in the hope of being brought out upon our largest theatre, enriched as it then was by two actors whose noble appearance and strong powers of expression seemed to me peculiarly suited to its two principal cha-

* That part of the scene, Act III., in the court of the prison, where the songs of the confined chief of banditti and a slight sketch of his character are introduced, though very appropriate to the place, stands loose from the business of the play, and may therefore be considered as superfluous and contradicting what I have said above. But as it is short, and is a

fancy come into my head from hearing stories in my childhood of Rob Roy, our Robin Hood of Scotland, I cannot find in my heart to blot it out, though, either on the stage or in the closet, any body is welcome to do it for me by passing it over entirely.

acters. The subject of it is taken from Gibbon's account of the siege of Constantinople by the Turks. It was a subject that pressed itself upon me at a time when I had no thoughts of writing at all, and (if I may use the expression) *would* be written upon. The character there displayed of Constantine Paleologus, the last of the Cæsars, a modest, affectionate, domestic man; nursed in a luxurious court in habits of indulgence and indolence; without ambition, even without hope, rousing himself up on the approach of unavoidable ruin; and deserted by every Christian prince in Europe, deserted by his own worthless and enervated subjects, supported alone by a generous band, chiefly of strangers, devoting themselves to him from generous attachment; — to see him thus circumstanced, nobly fronting the storm, and perishing as became the last of a long line of kings, the last of the Romans; — this was a view of man — of noble and dignified exertion which it was impossible for me to resist, though well aware that no play I am capable of writing can ever be equal to what such a subject deserves. So much was I pleased with those generous ties — may I be permitted to make use of a Scripture phrase, and say, those “cords of a man?” binding together the noble Paleologus and his brave imperial band, that, had I followed my own inclination, delineating those would have been the principal object of the piece. But convinced that something more was requisite to interest a common audience, and give sufficient variety to the scenes, I introduced the character of Valeria, and brought forward the domestic qualities of Constantine as well as those of the unfortunate prince and beloved leader.

Mahomet and Justiniani are the only characters in the piece, Constantine excepted, that are not imaginary. The first will be found, I hope, to correspond with the character given of him by the historian. To alter, for the idle convenience of poetry, conspicuous, or indeed any characters that have been known in the world, appears to me highly blamable; though, in filling up an outline given us by history, we cannot well avoid heightening or diminishing the general effect. Justiniani, if I will remember (for I have not the history by me at present to refer to), was a noble Genoese, who, after a life distinguished for military honour, disgraced himself by being the first to turn his back when the Turks attacked the breach on the day of the last general assault, and was the immediate cause of the city being taken. He is said afterwards on this account to have died of a broken heart. I have endeavoured to represent him as a proud man with a high sense of honour, rather than natively brave, and therefore particularly punctilious in every thing that concerns the reputation of a soldier. To him I

have ventured to oppose a military character of a very different description, in the commander of the Genoese vessels which so gallantly forced their way into the port of Constantinople during the siege; and if I have dwelt too much on the rough generous gallantry of a brave seaman, and given too many allusions throughout the whole to the dangers and vicissitudes of a seafaring life, my country, which has owed so much to brave men of this class, will stand forth in my defence, and say, that a Briton upon this subject writes proudly, and therefore is tempted to write profusely. In the other imaginary characters, particularly that of Othuis, I have endeavoured to accord with the circumstances of the times; for it is to be remembered, that slothful and corrupted as the inhabitants of Constantinople then were, amongst them were still to be found the chief remains of ancient literature and refinement.*

Perhaps in the conduct of this Tragedy I have sometimes weakened the interest of it by attending too much to magnificence and show. But it was intended for a large theatre, where a play is rather looked at than listened to, and where, indeed, by a great proportion of the audience, it cannot be heard; and though I might now very easily remove that show, yet to place in its stead what it has most probably kept back, would be almost impossible. For that which has probably been prevented by it, should have been woven and incorporated into the original texture of the piece, and cannot afterwards be inserted here and there in streaks and patches. It has also, I am inclined to believe, received some injury from my having had, when I sketched my two chief characters, the actors who I intended should represent them, too much in my thoughts. This is a fault, and I am sensible it is so; but those who have seen and admired the great powers of those actors in the highest line of tragedy, will easily admit that I have not sinned without a strong temptation. I hope also that this, standing alone, as a single offence of the kind, amongst a considerable number of plays which, if I live long enough, my present task will probably increase to, may be forgiven.

I am sensible there is not that strength and compactness of plot; that close connection of events producing one another in this play, which is a great perfection in every dramatic work, and which I am sorry to say is a perfection that is not to be found in any work of mine that I have hitherto published. However, I flatter myself I have in this instance a good excuse to make. It appears to me that, in taking the subject of a poem or play from real story, we are not warranted, even by the prerogatives of bardship, to assign imaginary causes to great

sergent, who saved himself by a similar stratagem from the torments prepared for him by the American Indians.

* The character of Othoric, or rather the circumstance of his death, I have taken from an account I have read somewhere, I believe in one of Dr. Moore's Novels, of a Highland

public events. We may accompany those events with imaginary characters and circumstances of no great importance, that alter them no more in the mind of the reader, than the garniture with which a painter decorates the barrenness of some well-known rock or mountain, that serves for a landmark to the inhabitants of the surrounding country. He may clothe its rugged sides with brushwood, and hang a few storm-stunted oaks on its bare peaks; he may throw a thin covering of mist on some untoward line of its acclivity, and bring into stronger light the bold storied towerings of its pillared cliffs; he may even stretch the rainbow of heaven over its gigantic head, but its large and general form must remain unaltered. To have made a romantic passion for Valeria the cause of Mahomet's besieging the city, would, I believe, have pleased the generality of

readers, and have made this play appear to them more like what a play ought to be; but I must then have done what I consider as wrong.

It would be impertinent to proceed farther in pointing out the merit, if it has any, or demerit of this Tragedy, of which I cannot pretend to be a very clear-sighted or impartial judge. I leave it, with its companions, to my reader, who will, I doubt not, peruse them with reasonable indulgence, and more than this it would be foolish even to desire. If I find that, upon the whole, these plays have given more pleasure to the public than the reverse, I shall not less cheerfully bring forward, at some future time, those which remain behind, because their faults shall have been fully exposed to the censure they deserve.

RAYNER:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

RAYNER.

COUNT ZATERLOO, *a worthless dissipated nobleman of ruined fortune, and chief of a band of lawless ruined men, like himself.*

BERNARD, } *gentlemen and followers of ZATERLOO.*

SEBASTIAN, } *gentlemen and followers of ZATERLOO.*

HARDIBRAND, *an old general.*

MARDONIO, *a monk.*

Old man of the wood.

OHIO, *a negro attached to the prison.*

HERMAN, *servant to RAYNER.*

RICHARD.

BERTRAM.

GOBUS.

Keeper of the prison, clown, executioners, turnkey, gaoler, messenger, landlord, confessor, crowd, &c.

WOMEN

ELIZABETH.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO, *mother to ZATERLOO.*

MIRA, *a courtesan.*

ALICE, *friend to MIRA.*

Scene, Germany, near the frontiers of Poland and Silesia.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A noise of voices and unruly merriment is heard, whilst the curtain draws up, and discovers COUNT ZATERLOO, BERNARD, SEBASTIAN, and others of their band, seated round a table with wine, &c.

Zat. Ha, ha, ha, ha! with all this noisy mirth, Should some grave stranger, on his way misled, Now push the door ajar, and look upon us Thus set, what class of men should we be deem'd? A set of light hearts, snug in fortune's lap, Who will not go to bed because we may? Or club of sharpers, flush'd with full success, New from the spoiling of some simple fool? Or troop of strolling players, at our ease, After the labours of our kingly sorrows, With throats new cool'd at as great charge of wine As our tough lungs have cost of lady's tears?

Ber. No, no, thou hast not hit upon it yet: He'd take thee for the heir of some old miser, Treating thy friends, as first fruits of thy kingdom, With flowing bumpers to the quiet rest Of thy good kinsman's soul.

Zat. Yes, Bernard, thou sayst well: and thy dark visage, Lank and unsuited to all mirth, would mark thee The undertaker, who amongst the guests Had come on matters of his sable trade,

Grinning a strange, uncemely, jaw-bone smile
O'er the near prospect of his future gains.

Seb. Methinks, at least, in this gay, jolly band,
He scarcely would discover needy men,
Who better days have seen.

Zat. Tut, man! thou art too grave; thou art
too grave—

Which of you sung that song with merry lay,
Some few nights since? Come, let us have it now.

SONG.

Ye who fain would happy be,
Give the hand, and join with me:
They who toil the weary day,
They who bend with locks of grey,
They who tread the beaten way,
Fools who work that we may play,
Fold their weary arms to sleep,
Come, let us our vigil keep.

Fellows, join, and never fear;
Ye who would be happy, hear.
With the sober and the meek,
Lighter flies the passing week?
In his dwelling warm and sleek,
Brighter smiles the rich man's cheek?
Wiser things may wise men say,
But we are wiser far than they.

Come, light spirits, light and free,
Wisest they who foolish be.
He who hammers at the pot,
He who brews for every sot,
He who made my hose and coat,
Is a better man I wot;
Yet were we form'd, events declare,
He to work and I to wear.

Mistress of the misty shroud,
O, lovely moon! come from thy cloud.
When thou o'erlookst the ocean's brine,
Ourselves we view in floods of wine.
Our constancy resembles thine;
Like thee in borrow'd robes we shine;
Then let us, in thy kindred light,
Still wake, the rulers of the night.

Zat. It is a song of Halbert's, is it not?

He was a social jolly-hearted mate,
And had a knack of making ready rhymes.

Ber. I knew him well: what has become of him?

Zat. (*pretending not to hear*). Fill up your glass,
and let the flask go round.

Ber. What has become of Halbert, dost thou
know?

Zat. (*still pretending not to hear*). This wine is
richly flavou'r'd, is it not?

Ber. It is.—But Halbert; know ye aught of
him?

Zat. The devil take thy question, asking spirit!
For when thou getst a notion by the skirt,

Thou, like an English bull-dog, keepst thy hold,
And wilt not let it go.—

He shot himself in prison some months since:
Now, there's thine answer for thee; art thou satisfi'd?

[*A deep and long pause; then ZATERLOO starts up as if he recollected something.*]

He will be with us ere I've pay'd his way.

Seb. Hast thou some new associate to propose?

Zat. Know ye the younger branch of Valvo's
house?

Whose valiant father left him but his sword
And his proud spirit, through this changeful world
To shape his way, with heart as truly temper'd
To all the softest witch'ries of refinement
As e'er own'd cherish'd heir of wide domains,
In palace nurs'd.

Seb. I've seen him when a youth.

But he since then has of a foreign state
The soldier been; and had not now return'd,
But in the hope, 'tis said, of being heir
To his great uncle's vast and rich possessions,
Of which that villain Hubert has depriv'd him
With treach'rous wiles. Poor heart! he has my pity.
'Tis said a ling'ring fever seiz'd upon him
From disappointment; and I marvel not;
The stroke was most severe.

Zat. And felt more keenly,

For that he left behind him, in the country
To which he now belongs, a gentle maid
And his betroth'd, with whom he thought to share
His promis'd wealth.
But these things rest.—Thus driven as we are
To this uncertain, daring course of life,
The stronger and the more respectable
Our band, the greater chance of prospering.
Our number is too small; and, by my soul,
To see a mean, plebeian, vulgar knave,
Admitted of our fellowship, still rubs
Against my nature. Such a man as Rayner
Is precious, and, once gain'd, is sure and steadfast.
But few days since I met him, dark and thoughtful,
With melancholy and unwonted gait
Slow saunt'ring through lone, unfrequented paths,
Like one whose soul from man's observing eye
Shrinks gall'd, as shrinks the member newly torn
From every slightest touch. Seeing him thus,
I mark'd him for my man.

Ber. Didst thou accost him?

Zat. Yes; when to my greeting,
"Thou seest I am unhappy, go thy ways,"

He fretful said, and turn'd. I still persisted,
With soothing words which thrill'd against his heart,
(For in our youthful days we once were playmates,)
Like the sweet tones of some forgotten song,
Till, like a pent-up flood swoln to the height,
He pour'd his griefs into my breast with tears,
Such as the manliest men in their cross'd lives
Are sometimes forced to shed.

Seb. And spoke he of his love ?

Zat. Nay, there indeed
He was reserv'd ; but that part of his story,
Which I from sure authority have learnt,
I still through broken words could shrewdly read,
Although he named it not. [life ?

Ber. Hast thou explain'd to him our course of

Zat. No, that had been too much ; but canst
thou doubt,

Suff'ring such wrongs as Hubert's artful baseness
Has put upon him, he will scruple long,
Thus circumstanced, to join his arm with ours
In murd'ring the rich villain ?

Ber. [looking at SEBASTIAN, who shrinks back].

I pray thee call it shooting ! that plain word
Still makes Sebastian, like a squeamish dame,
Shrink and look lily-faced. To shoot a man
As one in battle shoots a fronted foe ;
As from the tavern's broil, in measured field,
One shoots a friend, is nought : — but that word
murder—

It hath a horrid sound ; pray thee, good captain,
Remember 'tis a band of gentlemen
Thou dost command, and let such gentle phrase
Fall from thy tongue as gentle ears may suit.

[*Omnes laughing loud* at SEBASTIAN.

Zat. Hush ! Rayner is at hand, I hear his steps.

Enter RAYNER.

I give you welcome, Rayner, with my heart :
These are my friends, of whom I well might boast,
But that it seems like boasting of myself.

Here, take your place, and join our fellowship.

There is but little need of ceremony

With those whom like misfortunes bring together.

Ray. I take my seat, honour'd in such a place ;
And so far to misfortune am indebted,

Which has procur'd it for me. [Sits down.

Ber. [drinking to RAYNER]. This do I fill to
future fellowship :

To that which makes, at fortune's lowest ebb,
A few brave men united, mock the world
And all its plodding rules ; enabling them
Boldly to seize their portion of life's feast,
Which griping avarice or unjust oppression
Would from them snatch, whilst with insulting
scorn

It scoffs at poverty and patient want.

Ray. Thou truly sayst ; at least I have observ'd
That those who bear misfortunes over meekly
Do but persuade mankind that they and want
Are all too fitly match'd to be disjoin'd,
And so to it they leave them.

Ber. 'Tis ever so :
E'en good men then neglect them ; but the base,
They, who by mean and undermining arts
To o'ergrown wealth attain, like the ass's heel
'Gainst the sick lion's low and lanken breast,
Spurn at them.

Zat. Yes, good Bernard, thou speakst truly.
For I myself, who, as thou knowst right well,
Am not too meekly to misfortune bent,
Have somewhat of the worthless ass's kick
Against my bosom felt. — 'Lone and unarm'd —
Had but one brave companion by my side
My anger shared, full dearly had the knave —
But let it pass — he had a brave man's curse,
And that will rest upon him.

Ber. But, pray thee, count, tell us the circum-
stance :

Thou speakst in mystery.

Zat. A few days since, returning near my home,
Upon a narrow path raised from a road
With mud choked up, behind me trampling came,
A band of liv'ried rascals at his heels,
In all his awkward state, a puff'd-up worldling,
And rode me off my way ; whilst looking back,
He turn'd his head with a malicious grin
At the poor spatter'd wretch, who in the mud
Stood showering curses on him.

Ray. Ay, 'tis the cursed insolence of wealth
That makes the poor man poor. Thou wast un-
arm'd ?

Zat. I was ; or by this hand, poor as I am,
I should have spent a brace of bullets on him
With much good-will.

Ray. Knowst thou the villain's name ?

Zat. Faith, I'm almost ashamed to tell it thee.
Thou knowst him well : he is a rich man now ;
His name is Hubert.

Ray. There lives no blacker villain on the earth
Than he who bears it. — But thou knowst it all.
When from a distant country, where with honour
I earn'd a soldier's pittance, the fair promises
Of a near kinsman tempted me, and I,
Though by my nature most incautious,
And little skill'd to gain by flattering arts
An old man's love, high in his favour stood ;
That villain Hubert roused his jealous nature
With artful tales of slights and heir-like wishes,
And covert mock'ry of his feeble age,
Till, in the bitterness of changed love,
All his vast wealth he did bequeath to him,
And left me here, e'en in this stranger's land
(For years of absence make it so to me),
A disappointed, friendless, unknown man,
Poor and depress'd, such as you see me now.

Ber. Double, detested, cruel-hearted villain !

Zat. [starting up with affected vehemence]. By
heaven he dies, as I do wear this arm !

[*They all start up.*

Defended by a host of liv'ried knaves,

I'd seek him out alone. [hand

Ber. Thou shalt not go alone ; here, heart and
We will all join thee in so good a cause.

1st gent. My arm is at thy will.

2d gent. Take my aid too ;
We never can be bold in better cause.

3d gent. (on receiving a sign from ZATERLOO).

Then, sirs, you must be speedy with your vengeance,

For I am well inform'd that on to-morrow,
With all his treasure, for a distant province
He will begin his journey towards eve. [hands;

Zat. Ha! then good fortune leads him to our
How goes he guarded?

3d gent. With a slender train.

Zat. Then thanks to fortune's fav'ring smiles,
which thus,

Whilst we but seek revenge for a friend's wrongs,
So kindly throws into our heedless way
The easy cure of our necessities.

Yes, let us seize the greedy, glutt'd villain!
Let us disgorge him of his ill-got gains!

He long enough has riot'd in ease,
Whilst better men have felt the gripe of want.

Ber. Yes, let it be so, let the villain die!

Zat. What sayst thou, Rayner? thou alone art
silent.

Ray. The wrongs are mine, and if with indignation

They fill your breasts, in strong desire of vengeance
Ye well may guess I am not far behind:

But there's a law above all human bonds,
Which damps the eager beating of my heart,
And says, "do thou no murder."

Zat. Well, clear thy knitted brows, nor look thus
strangely.

We both are form'd, my friend, to know like feelings,
Like wants and wishes, and from better days

Both are reduced to fortune's lowest ebb:

And I as well as thou, standing thus singly,
Can feed my fancy up with strong conceits

Of what in letter'd lore is virtue term'd,
And bear its darkest frowns. There was a time,

When sharing ev'ry wish and ev'ry view
With one of weaker frame and softer soul;

Yet forced by the dark frowns of adverse fortune
To live a willing outlaw from her presence,

Because I could not bear to come before her
A poor despised man, rest of that comeliness

And honest grace which independence gives,
To bid her throw aside her flowing robes

And decent ornaments of maiden pride,
Unveil the sweetness of her shelter'd beauty

To beating mid-day heats and chilling winds,
And be a wand'ring vagrant by my side;—

There was a time, my friend, when, thus beset,
At view of any means to better fortune,

A stronger pow'r had ris'n within my breast
And mock'd at law. But, standing thus alone,

I can as well as thou forego the gain
Which this occasion offers.—Let it pass!

There is within us, be it superstition,
Th'uncann'd opinions from our childhood cherish'd,

Or natural instinct, still a strong aversion
To ev'ry act of blood. Let us yield to it:

We will not strain our nature from its bent:
We'll do no violent deed.

Ray. (catching hold of ZATERLOO with great agitation). O thou hast moved me! thou hast
conjured thought!

Wast thou—wast thou indeed thus circumstanced?
And thy deserted love; what was her fate?

Zat. She felt not long the cruel separation:
One lovely bush of the pale virgin thorn,

Bent o'er a little heap of lowly turf,
Is all the sad memorial of her worth;

All that remains to mark where she is laid.
Ray. Oh! Oh! and was it thus!

Zat. But let us now shake off these dismal
thoughts,

This hour was meant for social fellowship:
Resume your seats, my friends, and, gentle Rayner,
Clear up thy cloudy brows and take thy place.

Ray. I fain would be excused.

Zat. (gently forcing him to sit down). Nay, no excuse:

Thou must perforce a social hour or two
Spend with us. To ye all, my noble friends,
I fill this cup. [Drinks.

—— Bernard, how goes thy suit?

Hast thou yet to thy greedy lawyer's pocket
Convey'd thy hindmost ducat? Ha, ha, ha!

Had he, with arms in hand, ta'en from thee boldly
Half of the sum, thou wouldest have called him
robber.

Ha, ha, ha! [Laughing heartily.

Ber. Yes, thou mayst laugh:
We nice distinctions make.—I had an uncle,
Who once upon a time——

Zat. I hope, good Bernard,
Thy story will be shorter than thy suit.

[RAYNER, who has been sitting in gloomy thoughtfulness, without attending to any thing around him, whilst ZATERLOO has been keeping an eye of observation on him, now rises up in great agitation to go away.

Zat. What is the matter, Rayner?

Ray. I am disturb'd—I know not how I am—
Let me take leave, I pray you.

Zat. Thou shalt not quit us thus. What is the
matter?

Ray. Question me not: my thoughts are all confused:

There is a strong temptation fasten'd on me.
I am not well.

Zat. (aside to BERNARD). Ay, now it works upon
him:

This will do——

[Aloud, and preventing RAYNER from going.

If thou'rt unwell, art thou not with thy friends?

Ray. If ye indeed are friends, not spirits en-
leagu'd

To force me to my ruin, let me go—
Let me go to my home.

Zat. What, dost thou call a bare unfurnish'd chamber,

With gripping landlord clam'ring in thine ears
For what he knows thou canst not give, thy home?

Ray. (*sighing deeply*). I have no other.

Zat. Stay thou here with us :
In the next chamber thou shalt rest awhile.

Lead him, my kind Sebastian, by the hand :

There is a sort of woman's kindness

About thy nature, which befits thee best

To be a sick man's friend. I'll follow you.

[*Exit* RAYNER, *leaning on* SEBASTIAN; *turning about to his friends triumphantly as they go off.*

I have secured my man. [*A voice heard without.*

But hark ! a voice without ! It is my mother's.

Secure the latticed door. Plague on her kindness

To haunt me here ! I have forgot my promise.

(*To* BERNARD.) Make fast the latticed door and answer for me.

Ber. (*after fastening a door of lattice work through which the countess is seen*). Who's there ? what want ye ?

Countess (*without*). I want my son : I pray you is he here ?

Ber. He is not here.

Countess (*without*). Nay, say not so, I think he is with you.

O tell him I have sate these three long hours,

Counting the weary beatings of the clock,

Which slowly portion'd out the promised time

That brought him not to bless me with his sight.

If he is well, why does he thus forget ?

And if he is not, as I fear he is not,

Tell me the worst, and let me be with him

To smooth his couch and raise his sickly head.

Zat. (*aside to* BERNARD). Tell her it is unseemly for a mother

To run about like a new foolish wife.

Ber. If you complain thus movingly, fair widow,

We shall believe you seek a second husband

In lieu of your good son ; and by my truth

It were a better errand.

Countess. O base of thought, as most unblest of speech !

My son is not with you : it cannot be ;

I did him wrong to seek him in such company.

Ber. (*speaking loud after her as she retires from the door*). Not far from hence, there is a nightly meeting

Of worthy, sober, well-disposed folks,

Who once a week do offer up their prayers

And chant most saintly hymns till morning dawn,

It is more likely you will find him there.

[*Omnes laughing.*

Zat. She's gone.

Ber. Yes, yes ; come from thy hiding place.

Zat. Now what a most unreasonable woman !
Thinks she, thus ripen'd these manly years,

That I must run whene'er my finger aches

To lean my silly head upon her lap ?

'Tis well I have no wife.

Ber. Ay, so it is.

There is no pleasing those high legal dames

With endless claims upon a man's regard :

Heaven save us from them all !

Zat. Well, this I drink to precious liberty :

He is a fool indeed who parts with that.

[*A loud voice and bustling heard without.*

What's this comes next to plague us ?

Ber.

'Tis Mira's voice.

Zat. Hast thou not sent to say, that urgent bus'ness

Detains me from her banquet ?

Ber. I have ; I sent to her a written message.

Zat. Keep fast the door, and I will stand conceal'd.

[*Conceals himself, and MIRA appears through the latticed door.*

Mira (*without*). Where is Count Zaterloo ? Let me pass on.

Ber. Affairs of greatest consequence detain him.

My beauteous Mira ; and I needs must say

That now you may not pass. —

He's much concern'd : early upon the morrow

He will be with you.

Mira. Upon the morrow ! prate not thus to me !

He shall to-night go with me where I list,

Or never see my face again. To-morrow !

Open the door, I say ! this weakly barrier

Shall not oppose my way.

[*Beating violently against the door.*

Zat. (*aside to* BERNARD). Faith, I believe we must e'en let her in :

She may do some rash thing, if we persist.

[*BERNARD unbolts the door ; ZATERLOO comes from his concealment ; and enter MIRA, superbly dressed, and in a violent passion.*

Mira. Is this the way you keep your promises ?

Is this your faith ? is this your gallantry ?

Zat. Mira, my gentle love, I pray thee hear me !

I sent to tell thee business of great moment.

Mira. Yes, yes ! I have received your scurvy message,

And well I know that ev'ry paltry matter

Is cause sufficient for neglecting me.

Zat. Thou knowst to be from thee is painful to me.

Mira. So it should seem, by taking so much care

To comfort you the while. [*Pointing to the wine, &c.*

You do your bus'ness jovially, methinks.

Zat. Thou art too warm : accuse me as thou wilt

Of aught but want of love.

Mira. O, thou deceitful man ! I know thee well :

Thou talkest of love and thou wouldst break my heart.

Zat. Indeed I am to blame, my gentle love ;
Yet be not thus : in token of forgiveness
This friendly cup receive, and smile upon me.

[Offering her a cup, which she dashes to the ground.]

Mira. Off with thy hateful gifts ! nought from
thy hands

Will I receive ; I scorn thy offering.
E'en the rich robe thou hast so often promised,
Ay and so oft forgot, so I must eall it,
I would now scorn, since thou dost slight my love.

Zat. Indeed, my Mira, thou shalt have that robe
Before two days be past : I swear to thee.
Then do not look so frowningly, my love ;
I know thou hast a soft relenting nature ;
Smile my forgiveness.

Mira. O thou provoking man ! thou knowst full
well

It is thyself and not thy gifts I prize :
Thou knowst too well how my fond doating heart
Is moved with the soft witch'ry of thy tongue ;
Yet thou wilt vex me thus, and break my heart.
Oh ! 'tis too much ! [Pretending to burst into tears.]

Zat. I cannot see thee weep : what wouldst thou
have ?

Mira. I will have nought, unless you go with
me.

Zat. I cannot now, for I have urgent bus'ness.

Mira. Then stay, and never see my face again.
O that some friendly hand would end my days,
Since I have lived to see me thus despised.

Zat. (aside to BERNARD). Bernard, I think I
must e'en go with her.

See thou to Rayner : I will soon return.
(Aloud.) Then let us go, my love, thou dost compel
me.

Thy hand, sweet Mira.

[Exeunt ZATERLOO and MIRA.]

Ber. Well, gentle friends, it is blest liberty
Our noble chief enjoys. I must to Rayner.
Stay if you will, and keep you merry here.

Ommes. No, we are tir'd, we will retire to rest.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

RAYNER's lodgings.

Enter RAYNER alone.

Ray. Be still, ye idle thoughts that toss me thus,
Changing like restless waves, but ever dark ;
Or one of you above his fellows rise,
And bear a steady rule. Adversity !
Thou'st come upon me like an ambush'd foe
In armed strength. If I had mark'd thy course,
I might have girt myself for thine approach,
While distant still, and met thee like a man.
But when new-fetter'd in a lover's bonds,
And dazzl'd too with hope's deceitful brightness,

Cam'st thou like a thiek cloud of desert sand,
And in dark night o'erwhelm'd me : deepest night,
Through which no waking vision ever gleams,
Save thy grim visage only, loathly want,
In all thy varied forms of misery.

My night, my day dreams, ah ! how are ye echanged,
Since in the new-betroth'd, the lover's fancy,
Ye wove your sheeny maze of mingled thoughts,
Like sparkling dew-webs in the early sun !

[After a pause.]

Elizabeth ! methinks e'en now I see her.
As in the horrors of my last night's dream,
When, after following her through flood and fire,
She turn'd to me, and her weak arms stretch'd forth.
But ah ! how echanged, how pale, and spent, and
keen !

As if already blighting poverty,
That portion which her love must share with me,
Had marr'd—cease, cease, base thought, it shall
not be !

Enter HERMAN with a knapsack on his back, as if
prepared for a journey.

What, my good Herman, art thou so soon ready ?

Her. Yes, my dear master, but if you think it too
soon, I will not go to-day. Nay if it were not that
you force me to go, I should as soon have thought
of deserting my friend (pardon my boldness, sir) in
a wild wood amongst savages, as leaving you here
in this strange place in the state you are in at present.
Pardon my boldness, sir.

Ray. Thou hast no boldness to pardon, Herman :
thou art well entitled to eall thyself my friend ;
there is not one amongst those who have borne that
name, who would have done more for me than thou
hast done.

Her. Ah, sir !

Ray. (assuming a look of cheerfulness). Fy, do
not look so sadly upon me, man ; thanks to thy
good nursing and the good broth thou hast made me,
I am getting strong again : and as for the state of my
coffers, for which thou so much concernest thyself,
do not let that disturb thee. My tide of means is,
to be sure, pretty well ebb'd just now ; but some
wind or other will spring up to set it a flowing
again. In the mean time thou knowest I would
travel alone : perhaps I may ramble about a little
while mysteriously, like the wandering Jew or some
of those lonely philosophers which thy old stories
tell thee about, and there is no knowing what I
may find out to do me good. The philosopher's
stone, thou knowest, may as well fall into my hands
as those of any other wanderer : so pray thee, man,
don't look so ruefully upon me.

Her. Ah, my dear master ! there is something
here that hangs heavy on my heart, and says, if I
leave you now, some evil will befall you : I beseech
you let me stay with you, I shall find something to
do in this town, and I can—

Ray. No, no, no! Speak of this no more—we have argued this point already. And what is this which thou puttest down so sily upon the table?

[*Taking up a little packet which HERMAN has put secretly upon the table.*

Ha! the jewels I have given thee in room of thy wags! out upon it! thou wilt make me angry with thee now, and it grieves me to be angry with thee. Put it up, put it up: I command thee to do it; and thou knowest I have not often used this stern word.

Her. O no, sir! You have not indeed used it; and I shall never meet with another master like you.

Ray. Thou wilt meet, I hope, my dear Herman, with a far better master than I have been to thee, though not with one for whom thou wilt do so much kindly service as thou hast done for me; and for this cause, perhaps, thou wilt not love him so much. God prosper thee for it, wherever thou goest!—Take this embrace and blessing for all thou hast done for me. Farewell! farewell! thou must be gone now; indeed thou must. God bless thee, my good Herman.

[*Pushing HERMAN gently off the stage, who wipes his eyes and seems unwilling to go.*

[*Exit HERMAN.*

Ray. (*alone*). Now, am I left alone: there's no one near me

That e'er hath loved or cared for me. Methinks I now can better look i' th' surly face Mine alter'd state, and bear to be in want. I am alone, and I am glad of it.

Alas! changed heart of mine! what is that state Which gives to thee such thoughts?—Elizabeth—Again, again! This strong idea still! I am distracted when I think of this: Therefore I must not, if I would be honest.

Those men—or are they men or are they devils? With whom I met last night; they've fasten'd on me [me still.

Fell thoughts, which, though I spurn them, haunt Would I had never met them! Here comes my landlord with his surly face Of debts and claims, and ev'ry irksome thing.

Enter Landlord with a letter.

Good morrow, landlord.

Land. I thank you, sir; I am glad to hear you call me landlord; for I began to be afraid you had mistaken me for your host.

Ray. I understand you well enough, and indeed I have proved your patience, or rather your impatience, much longer than I wished. You have a letter in your hand.

Land. (*giving it*). There, sir; if it bring you the news of any good luck, I shall be glad of it.

Ray. (*agitated*). From Elizabeth. Good morning, —good morning to you.

Land. Read it, sir, and see if it bring you any good news; it is time now to look for some change in your favour.

Ray. I cannot open it whilst thou art here. Have the goodness at least not to stand so near me.

Land. So I must not occupy a place in my own house, forsooth, for fear of offending the good folks who do me the honour to live in it.

[*Retires to the bottom of the stage, muttering to himself.*

Ray. (*after opening the letter with great emotion and reading it*). O what is this?—

Abandon'd by the friend with whom she liv'd,
And coming here to join me with all speed!
O God! O God!

[*Sinks down upon a chair in violent agitation.*

Land. (*running up to him*). What is the matter now?

Ray. Begone, begone! I cannot answer thee.

Enter COUNT ZATERLOO.

Zat. Ha, Rayner! how is't with thee? thou lookst wildly.

(*To landlord*.) Speak to me, friend: he heeds not what I say:

Has any new misfortune happen'd to him?

Land. I fear there has, sir.

Zat. Rouse thee up, brave Rayner, A friend is come to thee.

Ray. (*starting up*). Ha, is it thou? Com'st thou upon me now, my tempter? now, E'en in my very moment of distraction? Thou knowst thy time: some fiend has whisper'd to thee.

Ay, ay! say what thou wilt.

Zat. Thou'rt surely mad; I came not, on my word,

To say aught to thee which an honest ear Might not receive; nor will I even speak, Since it so moves thee—

Ray. (*interrupting him eagerly*). Ah, but thou must!

Thou must speak that, which, in its darkest hour, Push'd to extremity, 'midst ringing dizziness The ear of desperation doth receive, And I must listen to it.

Zat. What, sayst thou so? 'Tis well (*aside*), but be more prudent,

We are o'erheard.

[*Looking suspiciously to landlord, who has retired a few paces behind.*

Come with me to my lodgings; There wait my friends; all things shall be concerted: Come with me, instantly; the time is precious.

Ray. (*in a tone of despair, clasping his hands vehemently*). Ay, ay! I'll go with thee.

[*Exeunt COUNT ZATERLOO and RAYNER: Manet landlord.*

Landlord (coming forward). What's this I've overheard? Is this devil now going to tempt the poor distressed young man to do some foul deed in his necessity? — I have tempted him too, with my hard-hearted murmuring about the few wretched pounds that he owes me. I'll run after him and say, I don't care whether he pay me or not. (*Running to the door and then stopping short.*) No, no! softly, softly! I dare say it is only some sharpening business they have got on hand, such as needy gentlemen are sometimes forced to follow: I have got my conscience newly cleared off at confession last week, and I am to make an offering next holy-day to the shrine of our patron St. Bernard; this is no time, good sooth, to lose such a sum upon scruples.

[*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A wood: dark night, with a pale gleam of distant lightning seen once or twice on the edge of the horizon. Advancing by the bottom of the stage, a few moving lights, as if from lanterns, are seen, and at the same time several signal calls and loud whistles are heard, with the distant answer returned to them from another part of the wood. Enter COUNT ZATERLOO, RAYNER, SEBASTIAN, and others of the band, armed, and a few of them bearing in their hands dark lanterns. It is particularly requested, if this play should ever be acted, that no light may be permitted upon the stage but that which proceeds from the lanterns only.

Zat. (to SEB.). They must be near: didst thou not hear their call?

Seb. Methought I did; but who in this wild wood May credit give to either eye or ear?
How oft we've been deceiv'd with our own voices,
From rocky precipice or hollow cave,
'Midst the confused sound of rustling leaves,
And creaking boughs, and cries of nightly birds,
Returning seeming answer!

Zat. Rayner, where standest thou?

Ray. Here, on thy left.

Zat. Surely these wild scenes have depriv'd thy tongue

Of speech. Let's hear thy voice's sound, good man,
To say thou art alive. Thou'rt marvellous silent:
Didst thou not also hear them?

Ray. I know not truly if I did. Around me,
All seems like the dark mingled mimicry
Of feverish sleep; in which the half-doubting mind,
Wildor'd, and weary, with a deep-drawn breath,
Says to itself, "Shall I not wake?"

Zat. Fy man!

Wilt thou not keep thy soldier's spirit up?

To-morrow's sun will be thy waking time,
And thou wilt wake a rich man and a free.

Ray. My waking time! — no, no! I must sleep on,

And have no waking. [brink?]

Zat. Ha! does thy mind misgive thee on the
Ray. What passes in my mind, to thee is nothing,
If my hand do the work that's fasten'd on me.
Let's pass to it as quickly as thou wilt,
And do not speak to me. —

Enter BERNARD and others, armed, &c.

Zat. Well met, my friends! well met! for we despair'd

Of ever seeing you.

Seb. Yet we have heard your voices many times,
Now calling us on this side, now on that,
As though you had from place to place still skipp'd,
Like Will o'the Wisp, to lose us on our way.

Ber. We've fared alike: so have we thought of you.

Zat. Have you discover'd aught of those we seek?
Ber. No; all is still, as far as we have traversed:
No gleaming torch gives notice from afar,
Nor trampling hoofs sound on the distant road.

Zat. Then must we take again our sev'ral routes,
That haply we may learn, ere he approach,
What strength we have to face, and how he travels:
And that we may not wander thus again,
This aged oak shall be our meeting place;
Where having join'd, we'll by a shorter compass
Attack them near the centre of the wood.

Seb. The night grows wondrous dark: deep-swelling gusts
And sultry stillness take the rule by turns;
Whilst o'er our heads the black and heavy clouds
Roll slowly on. This surely bodes a storm.

Zat. I hope the devil will raise no tempest now,
To save this child of his, and from his journey
Make him turn back, crossing our fortunes.

Ber. Fear not!
For, be the tempest of the devil's raising,
It will do thee no harm. To his good favour
Thou hast (wrong not thy merit) claims too strong.

Zat. Then come on, friends, and I shall be your warrant!

Growl sky and earth and air, ne'er trouble ye;
They are secure who have a friend at court.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A different part of the wood, wild and savage: the scene still darkened, and a storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied with hail.

Enter RAYNER.

Ray. I know not where these men have shelter'd them.

I've miss'd their signal: this loud stunning din

Devours all other sounds. Where shall I go ?
 Athwart this arch of deep embodied darkness,
 Swift shiv'ring lightnings glare, from end to end
 Mantling the welkin o'er in vivid flames ;
 Or from aloft, like sheeted cataracts
 Of liquid fire, seem pour'd. E'en o'er my head
 The soft and misty-textured clouds seem changed
 To piles of harden'd rocks, which from their base,
 Like the up-breaking of a ruin'd world,
 Are hurl'd with force tremendous. Patt'ring hail
 Beats on my shrinking form with spiteful force :
 Where shall I shelter me ? Ha ! through the trees
 Peers, near at hand, a small but settled light :
 I will make quickly towards it ; perhaps
 There may be some lone dwelling in the wood.

[Exit.

SCENE III.

The inside of a cave: an old man discovered sitting by a small table made of coarse planks, with a lamp burning dimly upon it: the thunder heard still very loud.

Old man. Doth angry heav'n still roll its loudest
 peal [roar
 O'er th' unblest head ? Ay, through its deaf'ning
 I hear the blood-avenging Spirit's voice,
 And, as each furious turmoil spends its strength,
 Still sounds upon the far-receding storm
 Their distant growl.
 'Tis hell that sends its fire and devils up
 To lord it in the air. The very wind,
 Rising in fitful eddies, horribly sounds,
 Like bursts of damned howlings from beneath.
 Is this a storm of nature's elements ?
 O, no, no, no ! the blood-avenging spirits
 Ride on the madding clouds : there is no place,
 Not in the wildest den, wherein may rest
 The unblest head. [Knocking heard without.

— Ha ! knocking at my door !
 [Pauses and listens, much alarmed: knocking heard still louder.

Say, who art thou that knockst so furiously ?
 Thinkst thou the clouds are sparing of their din,
 That thou must thunder too ? Say who thou art,
 And what thou wouldst at such an hour as this,
 In such a place ?

Ray. (without). I am a lone and tempest-beaten
 traveller,

Who humbly begs a shelter from the night.

Old man. Then art thou come where guest yet
 never enter'd.

Ray. (without). I do not ask admittance as a
 guest.

Wouldst thou not save a creature from destruction,
 E'en a dumb animal ? unbar the door,
 And let me lay my body under shelter.

[Old man makes no answer; the storm heard
 very loud.

Ray. (without). If thou'rt a man in nature as in
 voice,
 Thou canst not sit at peace beneath thy roof,
 And shut a stranger out to the rude night.
 I would, so circumstanced, have shelter'd thee.

Old man. He tries to move me with a soothing
 voice. [Aside.

(Aloud.) Thou art a knave ; I will not let thee in.

Ray. (without). Belike I am, yet do not fear my
 wiles :

All men are honest in a night like this. [art :

Old man. Then I will let thee in : whoe'er thou
 Thou hast some sense, shouldst thou lack better
 things.

[He unbars a small door, and RAYNER enters,
 much ruffled and exhausted by the storm, and
 without his hat.

Ray. I'm much beholden to thee.

Old man. No, thou art not.

Ray. The violence of the night must plead my
 pardon,

For breaking thus unask'd upon your rest.
 But wand'ring from my way, I know not how,
 And losing my companions of the road,
 Deep in the 'tangled wood the storm o'ertook me ;
 When spying through the trees this glimm'ring lamp,
 And judging it, as now it doth appear,
 The midnight taper of some holy man,
 Such as do oft in dreary wilds like this
 Hold their abode, I ventured onwards.

Old man (offering him bread and dried fruits).

Perhaps thou'rt hungry.

Ray. I thank you gratefully.

Old man. There is no need.

Fall to, if thou hast any mind to it.

Ray. I thank you truly, but I am not hungry.

Old man. Perhaps thou'rt dainty : I've nought
 else to give thee.

Ray. I should despise myself, if any food

Could bear such value in my estimation,

As that it should to me a straw's worth seem,

To feed on homeliest, or on richest fare.

Old man. So much the better. [They sit down.

Ray. If I may guess from all I see around me,
 The luxuries and follies of the world
 Have long been banish'd here.

[Old man looks sternly at RAYNER, who looks
 fixedly upon him again, and both remain for
 some time silent.

Old man. Why lookst thou so ?

What is there in my face that thou wouldst scan ?
 I'm old and live alone : what wouldst thou know ?

Ray. I crave your pardon, and repress all wishes
 That may disturb you.

Old man. The night wears on, let us both go to
 rest.

Ray. I thank you, for in truth I'm very tired.

Old man (pointing to his couch). There is thy
 place.

Ray. Nay, I am young; the ground shall be my couch.

I will not take your bed.

[*Old man then gives RAYNER a cloak, which he wraps about him, laying himself down in a corner of the cave. The storm now heard at a distance. After walking up and down for some time, the old man goes close up to RAYNER, who appears asleep, and looks earnestly upon him; RAYNER, opening his eyes, seems surprised.*

Old man. Be not afraid, I will not cut thy throat.

Ray. (*starting half up from the ground*). Nay, heaven such deed forefend! I fear thee not.

I can defend myself. [*Grasping his sword.*]

Old man. Be not offended; but methought thy looks

Did seem as though thou wert afraid of me.

Rest thou in peace—rest thou in peace, young man:

I would not do thee harm for many worlds.

[*RAYNER goes to rest again, still keeping his drawn sword in his hand. The old man goes to rest likewise, but shortly after starts from his couch in great agitation.*

Old man. It is mine hour of horror: 'tis upon me!

I hear th' approaching sound of feet unearthly:

I feel the pent-up vapour's chilly breath

Burst from the yawning vault:—It is at hand.

[*Turning towards the door as if he saw some one enter.*]

Ha! com'st thou still in white and sheeted weeds,

With hand thus pointing to thy bloody side?

Thy grave is deep enough in hallow'd ground!

Why com'st thou ever on my midnight rest?

What dost thou want? If thou hast power, as seeming,

Stretch forth thine arm and take my life; then free

From fleshly fears, in nature as thyself,

I'll follow thee to hell, and there abide

The searing flames: but here, upon this earth,

Is placed between the living and the dead

An awful mystery of separation,

Which makes their meeting frightful and unhallow'd.

[*In the vehemence of his agitation he throws out his arm, and strikes it against RAYNER, who, alarmed at his ravings, has left his resting-place, and stolen softly behind him.*]

Ha! what art thou?

[*Starting, and turning round to RAYNER.*]

Ray. Nay, thou with bristling locks, loose knocking joints

And fixed eyeballs starting in their sockets,

Who speakest thus wildly to the vacant space,

Say rather, what art thou?

Old man.

I am a murderer.

[*RAYNER starts back from him, and drops his sword.*]

Ah! wherefore dost thou stare so strangely on me?

There's no blood on me now! 'tis long since past.

Hast thou thyself no crime, that thus from me

Thou dost in horror shrink?

Ray. Most miserable man!

Old man. Thou truly sayst, for I am miserable.

Ray. And what am I? [*After a disturbed pause.*]

The storm did rage and bellow through the air,

And the red lightning shiver'd:

No traveller would venture on his way

In such a night.—O, blessed, blessed storm!

For yet it hath not been, and shall be never.

Most Great and Merciful! saved from this gulf,

May I to thee look up?—No: in the dust—

[*As he bows himself to the earth, and is about to kneel, the report of fire-arms is heard without, and he starts up again.*]

'Tis done!—O, it is done!—the horrible act!

[*Exit, beating his forehead violently.*]

Old man. What may this be? Some band of nightly robbers

Is near my cave, committing violent deeds.

Thy light, weak flame, shall not again betray me,

And lure unwelcome visitors.

[*Puts out the lamp; and, after a dark pause, enter COUNT ZATERLOO, supporting himself on first gentleman, who bears a dark lantern, which he sets down on the ground, and fastens the door of the cave carefully behind them.*]

Zat. I am wounded grievously: who would have thought

Of such a powerful guard of armed men

Attending on his journey. He is slain:

Didst thou not see him fall?

1st gen. Yes; we have kill'd our bird, but lost the eggs.

Fortune has play'd us false, yet we've escaped:

Here we may rest; this cave is tenanted

With some lone being whom we may control,

And take possession— [*Discovering old man.*]

Something living here!

What art thou?

Old man. I am a thing no better than yourselves.

1st gen. The better then for thee that thou art so.

Zat. Conduct me onward: I perceive an opening

Which leads, I guess, to some more close recess:

Lay me down there, for I am very faint.

1st gen. I will obey thee,—Come thou too, old man;

Not from my sight one moment must thou budge.

Come on; for, mark me well, shouldst thou betray us,

Though fetter'd down with chains in grated dungeons,

Our arms were long enough to reach to thee.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

Another part of the wood. At a distance, on the background, are discovered two men watching a dead body by the light of a torch stuck between the boughs of a tree; the stage otherwise perfectly dark.

Enter GOBUS on the front of the stage

Gobus. I fear they will all escape from us amongst these tangled paths and vile perplexing thickets. A man cannot get on half a dozen paces here but some cursed clawing thing catches hold of him, and when he turns round to collar his enemy, with a good hearty curse in his mouth, it is nothing but a thorn-bush or a briar after all. A plague upon't! I'll run no more after them if they should never be taken. — Who's there?

Enter a Companion.

Com. What, are you here, Gobus? I thought you had been in search of the robbers.

Gobus. So I was; but what does it signify? they have all got the start of us now, and we can scarcely expect they will have the civility to wait till we come up with them.

Com. Ay, ay, Gobus, that is a lazy man's argument. Why, there was one of them seen by Bertram not five minutes since, with his head uncovered, stalking strangely amongst the trees like a madman, and he vows he will follow the scent through every path of the wood but he will have him, either alive or dead.

Gobus. But if he be a young stout robber, he may knock Bertram on the head in the mean time, and relieve him from the obligation of keeping his vow.

Com. Never fear that: his bugle-horn is by his side, and as soon as he comes up with him he will give his companions notice, and they will run to his assistance.

Gobus. Well, well, let them manage it the best way they can, and let us join our friends yonder, who keep watch by the body; there is good store of dried sticks in that corner, we may make a fire, and warm ourselves till they return.

[Horn heard without.

Com. Ha! there is the signal, and close at hand too. He has caught his man and wants assistance; let us run to him, or the villain will escape.

[Exeunt companion and GOBUS, who follows rather unwillingly, whilst the men who were watching the body run eagerly to the front of the stage.

1st man. It sounded to the right hand of us; let us strike into this path.

[Horn sounds again.

2d man. Ay, there it sounds again; it is to this hand of us, but it is so dark there is no finding our way

1st man. We have been so long by the torch-

light that the darkness is darker to us: run back and fetch the light with thee.

[Several other attendants from different parts of the wood run across the stage, calling to one another with great eagerness, whilst the 2d man, running back again to the bottom of the stage, snatches the torch from the tree, and comes forward with it.

Enter BERTRAM, GOBUS, and others, with RAYNER as their prisoner.

Gobus (speaking as they enter). Here is light! here is light, friends! bring him near it, I pray you, that we may see what kind of a fish we have caught in our net. Ay, just as I said now, as hanged a looking villain as ever scowled through the grates of a dungeon. See what a wild murderous look he has with his eyes! this is the very man that did the deed, I warrant ye. Let us pull the cords faster round his arms though: if he get one of his mischievous hands loose again, there is no knowing which of our brains he may knock out first.

1st man. It will never be thine, I am sure, thou'rt always safe when the knocking out of brains is going on.

Gobus. As I'm a sinner he'll get one of his hands loose if we do not take care of him. *(Attempting to tighten the cords round RAYNER'S arms.)*

Ber. (putting him away with indignation). For shame, man, he is bound tight enough; I will not suffer thee to lay a finger upon him: and as for the hanged face thou talkst of, alack a-day! it goes to my heart to see him, such a goodly-looking gentleman, for such I'll be sworn he is.

Gobus. Ay, no doubt! it is ever thus with thee. Thou didst never in thy life see a thief go to the gallows without crying out, "alack a-day! what a fine looking fellow it is!" Ay, and if he could but make shift to howl out half a verse of a psalm along with his father confessor, thou wert sure to notch him down upon thy holiday tables as one of the new made saints. Ay, there be no such great saints now-a-days as those who pass, with the help of a Dominican, through the hangman's hands to the other world; he beats your pope and your cardinals all to nothing in smuggling a sinner cleverly in by the back door to heaven.

Ber. So much the better for thee; it is the only chance thou hast of ever getting there. — Stand off, I say *(pushing GOBUS away)*, and do not stare thus upon the prisoner! art thou not ashamed to stare in an unhappy man's face after this fashion? we don't know what hard fate may have brought him into these circumstances. *(To the attendants.)* Move on: we are losing time here.

Gobus. What, will you not pinion him more closely?

Ber. No, beast! I would rather flay the skin off

that fool's back of thine than gall a hair's breadth of his body. (*In a softened voice to RAYNER.*) Speak, sir, if the rope hurts your arms; we will not use you cruelly.

Ray. What didst thou say to me? was there kindness in thy voice?

Ber. Yes, sir, there was kindness in it. Do the ropes hurt your arms? if they do we will loosen them a little.

Ray. I wist not that my arms were bound: but if thou hast any kindness in thee, give me a drink of water when thou canst get it, for my mouth is very parched.

Ber. Yes, sir, that you shall not want, though I should pay gold for it.—Move on, comrades: the night is far advanced, and we must guard the prisoner and the dead body of our master back to the city before the morning break. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A spacious court with a magnificent building in front; a great concourse of people are discovered as if waiting in expectation of some sight.

1st crowd. The court is marvellously long of breaking up; I'm tired of waiting; and yet I don't like to lose the sight, after having stayed so long for it.

2d crowd. I fear it will go hard with the young man.

3d crowd. I fear it will, poor gentleman!

Woman crowd. Ah! poor young man! it is an awful end.

2d crowd. Ay, I remember well the last criminal that was condemned here; a strong-built man he was, though somewhat up in years. O, how pale he looked as they led him out from court! I think I stood upon this very spot as he passed by me; and the fixed strong look of his features too—it was a piteous sight!

3d crowd. Ah, man! but that was nothing to the execution. I paid half a dollar for a place near the scaffold; and it would have made any body's heart drop blood to have seen him when he lifted up the handkerchief from his eyes, and took his last look of the day-light, and all the living creatures about him.

2d crowd. Ay, man, that a human creature should be thus thrust out of the world by human creatures like himself; it is a piteous thing?

Enter a man from the court.

Omnes (eagerly). What news? what news of the prisoner?

Man. He has just finished his defence, in which he has acquitted himself so nobly, setting off his words too with such a manly grace, that it is thought by every body he will be set free.

2d crowd. Indeed! I should not have expected this now; spoke so nobly, sayst thou?

1st crowd. Yes, yes, noble blood makes noble speaking.

Woman crowd. Well, and is it not best so? poor young man! I'm sure I'm glad of it.

1st crowd. And aint I so too, milk-faced doll! though I hate to be kept so long staring for nothing. I wonder what brought me here in a murrain to it!

2d woman. La! then we sha'n't see him pass by with the chains upon his legs.

1st crowd. No, no! nor nothing at all. Come, let me pass, I have been too long here. (*Pressing through the crowd to get out.*)

Woman crowd. O, you tread upon my toes!

1st crowd. Devil take you and your toes both! can't you keep them out of people's way then?

Woman crowd. Plague take it! what had we all to do to come here like so many fools!

Enter a second man from the court.

2d crowd. Here comes another man from the court. (*Calling to the man.*) Ho, friend! is he acquitted yet?

2d man. No, nor like to be; the judge is just about to pronounce sentence upon him, but something came so cold over my heart, I could not stay to hear it.

[*Several of the mob climb eagerly up upon the walls of the building, and look in at the windows.*]

Crowd (below). What do you see there, sirs?

Crowd (above). The judge is just risen from his seat, and the black signal is lifted up.

Omnes. Hush! hush! and let us listen!

[*A deep pause.*]

Crowd (above). Sentence is passed now.

Crowd (below). God have mercy on him!

3d crowd. I would not wear my head upon his shoulders for all the prince's coffers.

1st crowd. Alas! poor man! he is but a youth.

2d crowd. Yet he must be cut off in the flower of his days.

1st crowd. It is an awful thing!

Woman crowd. Ah! but a youth, and a goodly-looking youth too, I warrant ye.

2d woman. Alack a-day! many a one falls into crimes, but all do not pay the forfeit.

3d crowd. Ha! who comes this way so fair and so gentle in her mien; thus toss'd and 'tangled amidst the pressing crowd, like a stalk of wild flower in a bed of nettles? Come, clear the way there, and let the lady pass.

Enter ELIZABETH, attended by RICHARD, the crowd making way for her.

Eliz. I'm much obliged to you.

Richard. We thank you, good sirs! My mistress and I are both strangers in this town, and the nearest way to your best inn, as we are told, is through this court; but the crowd is so great I think we had better turn back again.

Eliz. What is the meaning of this eager multitude,

So gather'd round the entry to this palace?

3d crowd. It is no palace, madam, but a public court: there is a gentleman of noble birth who is just now condemned to death for murder, and we are waiting to see him led forth from his trial; you had better stop a little while and see the sight too.

Eliz. O, no! I'm come here in an evil hour!—A gentleman of noble birth—Alas! but that the crime is murder, 'twere most piteous.

Omnes (eagerly). There he comes! see, see! there he comes!

Enter RAYNER, fettered and guarded, from the court, followed by BERTRAM and others, and advances slowly towards the front of the stage, the crowd opening and making a lane for him on every side.

1st crowd. What a noble gait he has even in his shackles!

2d crowd. Oh! oh! that such a man should come to this!

Eliz. (after gazing eagerly at the distant prisoner).
Merciful heaven! the form has strong resemblance.

Rich. Sweet mistress, be not terrified with forms; 'Tis but a distant form. [God!

Eliz. Ha! then it strikes thee too!—Merciful

Rich. Patience, dear madam! now as he advances,

We shall be certified of the deception.

Rayner is not so tall as this young man, Nor of a make so slender; no, nor yet—

Eliz. Peace, peace! for he advances.

[*Watching the prisoner as he advances with a countenance of distracted eagerness, till he comes near her; then, uttering a loud shriek, falls down, and is supported by RICHARD and several of the crowd.*

Offi. (conducting RAYNER). What fainting maid is this obstructs the way?

Let not the crowd so closely press around her.

Open the way, and let the pris'ner pass.

Ray. (upon the crowd opening and discovering ELIZABETH). O, sight of misery! my Elizabeth!

The last and fellest stroke of angry heav'n

Falls on this cursed head. [stop not,

Offi. What may this mean? let us pass on: we Whate'er betide.

Ray. Nay, but you do: for here there is a power Stronger than law or judgment. Give me way: It is permitted me by ev'ry sense Of human sympathy, were I e'en bound With chains tenfold enlock'd.

[*Bending over ELIZABETH.*
Thou loveliest and thou dearest! O thou part Of my most inmost self! art thou thus stricken? Falls this stroke on thee?

[*Kneeling down and endeavouring to support her, but finding himself prevented by his chain.*
Is there not strength in the soul's agony To burst e'en bands of iron?

[*Trying furiously to burst his fetters, but cannot; then, with a subdued voice,*
Am I indeed a base condemned wretch, Cut off from ev'ry claim and tie of nature?

[*Turning to the officer.*
Thou who dost wear the law's authority, May it not be permitted for the love Of piteous charity?—Shall strangers' hands Whilst I am thus—O, do not let it be!

Offi. No, no! move on: it cannot be permitted.
Ray. (fiercely roused). What, sayst thou so?

[*Turning to the crowd.*
Ye who surround me, too, Each with the form and countenance of a man,

Say ye 'tis not permitted?

To you I do stretch forth these fetter'd hands, And call you men: O, let me not miscall you!

Voices from the crowd. Fie on't! unbind his hands, unbind his hands, And we will stand his sureties.

Ber. (stepping forward in a supplicating posture to the officer). Do but unbind his hands a little space,

And shoot me through the head if he escape.

My arm secured him; be my recompense This one request.

Offi. (to BERTRAM). Go to; thou art a brave man, but a weak one.

[*To the guard.*] Move on; we halt no longer.

Crowd. By all good saints we stand by the brave Bertram,

And he shall be unshackled. [Menacingly.

Offi. Soldiers, present your muskets to these madmen,

And let them speak; the pris'ner halts no longer; Move on.

[*A tumult between the crowd and the guard, and RAYNER is forced off the stage by the soldiers.*

1st crowd. Shame light on such hard-hearted cruelty!

2d crowd. If there had been but six of us with arms in our hands he durst not have put this affront upon us.

3d crowd. But who looks to the lady? She is amongst strangers it seems, and has only this poor old man to take care of her.

Omnes. We will take care of her then ; we will take care of her : ay, and she shall be waited upon like an empress.

2d crowd. Ay, so she shall, let the cost be what it will. I am only a poor cobbler, God knows, yet I will pawn the last awl in my stall but she shall be waited upon like an empress. See ! see ! she begins to revive again.

Eliz. (*opening her eyes with a heavy sigh.*) Is it all vanish'd ? 'twas a dreadful vision !

[*Looking on the crowd around her.*
O, no ! the crowd is here still—it is real ;
And he is led away—horrible ! horrible !

[*Faints again, and is carried off the stage by RICHARD and the crowd.*

SCENE II.

A square court, surrounded on all sides by the gloomy walls of a prison, the windows of which are narrow and grated, and the heads of one or two of the prisoners seen looking ruefully through the grates.

Enter HARDIBRAND, and looks round him for some time without speaking.

Har. Gloomy enough, gloomy enough, in faith ! Ah ! what a wondrous mass of dreary walls, Whose frowning sides are riv'n in narrow slips, As I have seen full oft some sea-worn cliff, Pierced with the murky holes of savage birds. Ah ! here the birds within are clipt o' wing, And cannot fly away.

Enter OHIO with a tankard in his hand, crossing the stage.

Holla, my friend ! I pray thee not so fast ; Inform me, if thou canst, where I may find The keeper of the prison.

Ohio. Know you what princee you speak to ? saucy knave ! [torn,
I'll have thee scorcht and flay'd, and piecc-meal If thou dost eall me friend.

Har. Good words at least ; I meant thee no offence.

I see thou hast a tankard in thy hand,
And will not question thy high dignity.
Softly ; here's money for thee. [*Giving him money.*

Ohio. Silver pieces !
He ! he ! he ! he ! hast thou got more of them !

Har. Nay, thou art greedy ; answer first my question ;

Tell me at which of all these gloomy doors
I needs must knock to find out the chief gaoler.
Thou lookst like some fetch-carry to the prisoners ;
Dost understand me ? [door.

Ohio. Ay, there's the place, go knock at yonder

Har. (*after knocking.*) This door is close nail'd up, and cannot open.

Ohio (*grinning maliciously, and pointing to another door*). No, thou art wrong ; it is the door hard by,

With those black portals.

[*HARDIBRAND knocks at the other door.*
Knock a little louder.

Har. (*after knocking some time.*) A plague upon't ! there is no one within.

Ohio (*still grinning maliciously*). No, thou art wrong again : it is not there :
It is that door upon the other side.

[*Pointing to the opposite wall.*

Har. What, dost thou jest with me, malicious varlet ?

I'll beat thee if thou tell me false again.

Ohio. Negroes be very stupid, master friend.

Enter the Keeper of the prison.

Keeper (*to OHIO*). Thou canker-worm ! thou black-envenom'd toad !

Art thou a-playing thy malicious tricks ?
Get from my sight, thou pitey viper, go !

[*Exit OHIO.*

Har. What black thing is it ? it appears, methinks,
Not worth thine anger.

Keeper. That man, may't please you, sir, was born a princee.

Har. I do not catch thy jest.

Keeper. I do not jest ; I speak in sober earnest ; He is an Afrie princee of royal line.

Har. What sayst thou ? that poor wretch who sneaketh yonder

Upon those two black shanks ?

[*Pointing off the stage.*

Keeper. Yes, even he :

When but a youth, stol'n from his noble parents,
He for a slave was sold, and many hardships
By sea and land hath pass'd.

Har. And now to be the base thing that he is !
Well, well, proceed.

Keeper. At last a surly master brought him here,
Who, thinking him unfit for further service,
As then a fest'ring wound wore hard upon him,
With but a scanty sum to bury him,
Left him with me. He ne'ertheless recover'd ;
And though full proud and sullen at the first,
Tamed by the love of wine which strongly tempts
him,

He by degrees forgot his princely pride,
And has been long establish'd in these walls
To carry liquor for the prisoners.

But such a cursed, spite-envenom'd toad !—

Har. Out on't ! thou'st told a tale that wrings
my heart.

Of royal line ; born to command, and dignified
By sufferings and dangers past, which make
The meanest man ennobled : yet behold him ;

[*Pointing off the stage.*

How by the wall he sidelong straddles on
With his base tankard!—O, the sneaking varlet!
It makes me weep to hear his piteous tale,
Yet my blood boils to run and cudgel him.
But let us on our way.

Keeper. You are a noble stranger, as I guess,
And wish to be conducted through the prison.
It is an ancient building of great strength,
And many strangers visit it.

Har. It is indeed a place of ancient note.
Have you at present many criminals
Within these walls?

Keeper. Our number is, thank God! respectable,
Though not what it has been in better days.

Har. In better days!—Well, do thou lead the
way.

[*As they are about to go off the stage, they are
stopped by a voice singing from one of the
highest windows.*

SONG.

Sweetly dawns the early day,
Rise, my love, and come away:
Leave thy grim and grated tower,
Bounding walls, and step-dame's lower;
Don thy weeds and come with me,
Light and happy are the free.

No fair mansion hails me lord,
Dainties smoke not on my board;
Yet full careless by my side
Shalt thou range the forest wide;
Though finer far the rich may be,
Light and happy are the free.

Har. Alas, poor soul! I would that thou wert
free!

What weary thrall is this that sings so sweetly?

Keeper. A restless, daring outlaw;
A fellow who hath awed the country round,
And levied contributions like a king,
To feast his jolly mates in wood and wild;
Yea, been the very arbiter of fortune,
And as his freakish humours bit, hath lifted
At one broad sweep the churl's saved store to
leave it

In the poor lab'rer's cot, whose hard-worn palm
Had never chuck'd a ducat 'gainst its fellow. [fin'd?

Har. 'Tis a brave heart! has he been long con-
But list! he sings again.

SONG.

Light on the hanging bough we'll swing,
Or range the thicket cool,
Or sit upon the bank and sing
Or bathe us in the pool.

Har. Poor pent up wretch! thy soul roves far
from home.

SONG.

Well, good-man time, or blunt or keen,
Move thee slow or take thy leisure,
Longest day will bring its e'en,
Weary lives but run a measure.

Har. 'Tis even so, brave heart, or blunt or keen,
Thy measure has its stint.

Enter BERTRAM from one of the doors of the prison.

I think thou hast the air of an old soldier:

[*To BERTRAM as he is hurrying past him.*
Such, without greeting, never pass me by.

Ha, Bertram! is it thou?

Ber. What, mine old general?

Har. Yes, and mine old soldier.

How dost thou, man? how has it fared with thee
Since thou hast left the service?

Ber. I thank your honour; much as others find
it;

I have no cause to grumble at my lot.

Har. 'Tis well, but what's the matter with thee
now?

Thine eyes are red with weeping, and thy face
Looks ruefully.

Ber. I've been to visit, here, a noble youth,
Who is condemn'd to die.

Har. A noble youth!

Ber. Yea, a soldier too.

Har. A soldier!

Ber. Ay, your honour, and the son
Of a most gallant soldier.

Har. But he is innocent?

Ber. He is condemn'd.

Har. Shame on it! were he twenty times con-
demn'd,

He's innocent as are these silver'd locks.

[*Laying his hand vehemently on his head.*
What is his name?

Ber. Rayner.

Har. Ha! son to my old comrade, Rayner!

Out on the fools! I would as soon believe
That this right hand of mine had pilfer'd gold

As Rayner's son had done a deed of shame.

Come, lead me back with thee, for I must see him.

Ber. Heav'n bless your honour! O, if by your
means

He might have grace!

Har. Come, let us go to him.

Ber. Not now, an' please you: he is now engaged
With one most dear to him. But an hour hence
I will conduct you to his cell.

Har. So be it!

Mean time, stay thou with me, and tell me more
Of this unhappy youth: I have a mind,

With the good keeper's leave, to view the prison.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MIRA and ALICE by opposite sides, both muffled up in cloaks and their faces concealed.

Mira (stopping ALICE). Nay, glide not past me thus with muffled face :

'Tis I, a visitor to these grim walls,
On the same errand with thyself. How goes it
With our enthralled colleague? doth he promise
Silence to keep in that which touches us
Of this transaction, for the which he's bound?

Alice. He is but half persuaded; go thyself
And use thy arts—hush, here's a stranger near us.

[*Enter a man who gives a letter mysteriously to MIRA, and upon her making a sign to him, retires to the bottom of the stage whilst she reads it.*

What readst thou there, I pray thee, that thy brows
Knit thus ungraciously at ev'ry line?

Mira. Knowst thou that I must doff my silken robes,

Despoil my hair of its fair ornaments,
And clothe me in a gown of palmer's grey,
With clouted shoon and pilgrim's staff in hand
To bear me o'er rude glens and dreary wastes
To share a stony couch and empty board,
All for the proving of my right true love
For one in great distress. Ha! ha! ha! ha!
So doth this letter modestly request :

I pray thee read it.

Alice (reading the letter). "A deadly wound
ranks in my side, and I have no skilful hand to
dress it, and no kind friend to comfort me. I am
laid upon the cold earth, and feel many wants I
never knew before. If thou hast any love for me,
and as thou hast often wished to prove that love,
come to me quickly: but conceal thyself in the
coarse weeds of a pilgrim; my life is a forfeit to the
law if any one should discover where I am. A
friend in disguise will give into thy hands this letter,
and conduct thee to thy miserable Zaterloo." (*Re-
turning the letter.*) And what sayst thou to this?

Mira. I have, in truth, upon my hands already
Troubles enough; this is, thou knowst, no time
To take upon me ruin'd men's distresses.

Alice. But 'tis thyself hast brought this ruin on
him :

'Twas thy extravagance.

Mira. Thou art a fool!
His life's a forfeit to the law: 'tis time,
Good time, in faith! I should have done with him.
Why dost thou bend these frowning looks on me?
How many in my place would for the recompense
Betray him to the officers of justice!
But I, thou knowst right well, detest all baseness,
Therefore I will not.

Alice. Hush, hush! thou speakst too loud:
Some one approaches.

Enter COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Countess (to MIRA). I pray you, madam, pardon
this intrusion;

Tracing your steps, I have made bold to follow you.
I am the mother of an only son,
Whom for these many days I have not seen:
I know right well nought is conceal'd from you
Of what concerns him; let me know, I pray you,
Where I may find my child.

Mira. Madam, you speak to one who in his
secrets

Has small concern.

Countess. Nay, now, I pray you, do not keep it
from me:

I come not with a parent's stern rebuke:

O tell me where he is, for love of grace:

But, if you will not, say if he is sick,

Or if he is distress'd with any want.

Tell, for love's sake! I have no child but him.

Mira (giving her the letter). There, madam; this
is all I know of him.

'Twas yonder stranger gave it to my hand;
[*Pointing to the man.*

We need not interrupt you with our presence;
And so good day. [*Exeunt MIRA and ALICE.*

Countess (after reading the letter). Alas, my son!
and art thou low and wounded?

Stretch'd on the cold ground of thy hiding place

In want and fear? Oh art thou come to this?

Thou who didst smile in thy fair op'ning morn,

As cherubs smile who point the way to heaven.

And wouldst thou have a stranger come to thee?

Alas! alas! where can thy aching head

So softly rest as on a parent's lap?

Yes, I will wrap me in the pilgrim's weeds,

Nor storm nor rugged wild shall bar my way.

And though declining years impair my strength,

These arms shall yet support thy feeble frame,

When fairer friends desert thee.

(*To the messenger, beckoning him to come forward.*)

Good friend, this is no place to question
thee!

Come with me to my home. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*The inside of the prison. RAYNER and ELIZABETH
are discovered sitting sorrowfully by one another in
earnest discourse.*

Ray. Thou sayest well, my sweet Elizabeth;
In this I have against thy love offended.
But in the brightness of fair days, in all
The careless gaiety of unruffled youth,
Smiling like others of thy sex, I loved thee;

Nor knew that thou wast also form'd to strive
 With the braced firmness of unyielding virtue
 In the dark storms of life—alike to flourish
 In sunshine or in shade.—Alas! alas!
 It was the thoughts of seeing thee—but cease!
 The die is cast; I'll speak of it no more:
 The gleam which shows to me thy wondrous ex-
 cellence
 Glares also on the dark and lowering path
 That must our way divide.

Eliz. O no! as are our hearts, one is our way,
 And cannot be divided. Strong affection
 Contents with all things, and o'ercometh all things.
 I will unto thee cling with strength so terrible,
 That human hands the hold will ne'er unlock.

Ray. Alas, my love! these are thy words of
 woe,

And have no meaning but to speak thy woe:
 Dark fate hangs o'er us, and we needs must part.
 The strong affection that o'ercometh all things,
 Shall fight for us indeed, and shall o'ercome:
 But in a better world the vantage lies
 Which it shall gain for us; here, from this earth
 We must take different roads and climb to it,
 As in some pitiless storm two 'nighted travellers
 Lose on a wild 'ring heath their 'tangled way,
 And meet again.

Eliz. Ay, but thy way, thy way, my gentle
 Rayner—
 It is a terrible one.

Oh flesh and blood shrinks from the horrid pass!
 Death comes to thee, not as he visiteth
 The sick man's bed, pillow'd with weeping friends:
 O no! nor yet as on the battle's field
 He meets the blood-warm'd soldier in his mail,
 Greeting him proudly.—Thou must bend thy neck,
 This neck round which mine arms now circled
 close

Do feel the loving warmth of youthful life:
 Thou must beneath the stroke—O horrid! horrid!

Ray. (*supporting her from sinking to the ground.*)
 My dear Elizabeth, my most beloved!
 Thou art affrighted with a horrid picture
 By thine own fancy traced; look not upon it:
 All is not dreadful in the actual proof
 Which on th' approach frowns darkly. Rouse thy
 spirit;

And be not unto me at this dark push
 My heaviest let; thou who shouldst be my stay.

[*She groans heavily.*]
 What means that heavy groan? I'll speak its
 meaning,

And say, that thou to nature's weakness hast
 The tribute paid, and now wilt rouse thyself
 To meet with noble firmness what performe
 Must be; and to a lorn and luckless man,
 Who holds in this wide world but thee alone,
 Prove a firm, gen'rous, and heart-buoyant mate,
 In the dark hour. Do I not speak it rightly?

Eliz. Thou dost, thou dost! if nature's weakness
 in me
 Would yield to the heart's will.

[*Falling on his neck in a burst of sorrow.*]

Enter FATHER MARDONIO.

Mar. My children, ye have been in woful con-
 ference
 Too long; chide not my zeal that hither brings
 me
 To break upon it. On you both be shed
 Heav'n's pitying mercy!

Ray. Amen, good father! thou dost call us
 children

With a most piteous and kindly voice:
 Here is a daughter who in this bad world
 Will yet remain to want a father's care;
 Thus let me form a tie which shall be sacred;

[*Putting ELIZABETH'S hand into MARDONIO'S.*]
 She has no parent.

Enter Keeper of the prison.

What brings thee here? We would be left in
 peace.

Keeper (*to RAYNER*). I am by a right noble
 stranger urged,

Who says he has in many a rough campaign
 Served with your valiant father in the wars,
 To let him have admittance to your presence.
 Bertram conducts him hither.

Ray. Served with mine honour'd father! and
 thus circumstanced,
 Now comes to see his son! Well, be it so:
 This is no time for pride to wince and rear,
 And turn its back upon the pat'r'ring hail,
 Bearing the thunder's shock. Let it e'en be:
 Admit him instantly.

[*Calling him back.*]
 Nay, ere thou goest,
 What is he call'd?

Keeper. The Gen'ral Hardibrand.
Ray. An honour'd name. [*Exit Keeper.*]

[*To ELIZABETH.*] Retire, my love:
 I cannot bear to have thy woes exposed
 Before a stranger's gaze.

[*She retires with MARDONIO to an obscure part
 of the prison at the bottom of the stage.*]

Enter HARDIBRAND and BERTRAM.

Har. (*to BERTRAM: stopping short as he enters,
 and gazing upon RAYNER, who is turned
 away from them, and looking after ELIZA-
 BETH.*) It is the son of Rayner: in his form
 And face, though thus half turn'd from us, I see
 His father. Still a soldier and a gentleman
 In ev'ry plight he seem'd. A clown or child
 Had sworn him such clad in a woollen rug.

[*Advancing to RAYNER.*]
 Young soldier, I did know your gallant father;
 Regard me not as an intruding stranger.

Ray. I thank you, courteous sir : in other days
Such greeting to my heart had been most welcome.
A gallant father and condemned son
May in the letter'd registers of kindred
Alliance have ; but in the mind's pure record,
They no relation bear : let your brave friend
Still be to you as one who had no son.

Har. No, boy ; that sentiment bespeaks thy
blood.

Heed not those fetter'd hands : look in my face,
Look in my face with the full confidence
Of a brave man ; for such I'll swear thou art.
Thinkst thou that I am come to visit thee
In whining pity as a guilty man ?
No, by the rood ! if I had thought thee such,
Being the son of him whose form thou wearst,
I should have cursed thee. Thou by mis'ry press'd,
Hast strongly tempted been, I know thy story :
Bertram has told it me : and spite of courts,
And black-robed judges, laws, and learn'd decisions,
I do believe it as I do my creed.
Shame on them ! Is all favour and respect
For brave and noble blood forgotten quite ?

Ray. Ah, do not fear ! they will remember that,
And nail some sable trappings to my coffin.

Har. I would that to their grave and pompous
chairs

Their asses' ears were nail'd ! Think they that men,
Brave men, for thou thyself — What corps, I pray
thee,

Didst thou belong to in thy prince's service ?

Ray. The first division of his fourth brigade
Was that in which I served.

Har. Thou hast companion been to no mean
men.

Those six brave officers of that division,
Upon the famed redoubt, in his last siege,
Who did in front o' th' en'my's fiercest fire
Their daring lodgement make, must needs of course
Be known to thee.

Ray. I knew them well ; five of them were my
friends.

Har. And not the sixth ?

Ray. He was, alas ! my greatest enemy ;
To him I owe these bonds.

Har. A curse light on his head, brave though he
be !

Ray. O curse him not, for woes enough already
Rest on his wretched head.

[*Bowing low, and putting his hand on his head.*]

Har. Ha ! thou thyself, — thou wast thyself the
sixth !

Thank heav'n for this ! Then let them if they will
Upon a thousand scaffolds take thy life,
And spike thy head a thousand feet aloft ;
Still will I say thy father had a son.

[*Rushing into his arms.*]
Come to my soldier's heart, thou noble bird
Of a brave nest ! — must thou indeed be pluck'd

And cast to kites ? By heav'n thou shalt not die !
Shall such a man, as thou art, from his post
Be shamed and push'd for one rash desperate act ?
It shall not be, my child ! it shall not be !

Ray. (*smiling*). In faith, good gen'ral, could your
zeal prevent it,

I am not yet so tired of this bad world,
But I could well submit me to the change.

Har. I'll with all speed unto the governor,
Nor be discouraged, though he loudly prate
That grace and pardon will but leave at liberty
The perpetrators of such lawless deeds
To do the like again, with such poor cant.

[*ELIZABETH, who has been behind backs, listening eagerly to their conversation, and stealing nearer to them by degrees in her eagerness to hear it, now rushes forward, and throws herself at HARDIBRAND'S feet.*]

Eliz. We ask not liberty ; we ask but life.
O grant us this, and keep us where they will,
Or as they will. We shall do no disquiet.
O let them grant us life, and we will bless them !

Ray. And wouldst thou have me live, Elizabeth,
Forlorn and sad, in loathly dungeon pent,
Kept from the very use of mine own limbs,
A poor, lost, caged thing ?

Eliz. Would not I live with thee ? would not I
cheer thee ?

Wouldst thou be lonely then ? wouldst thou be sad ?

I'd clear away the dark unwholesome air,

And make a little parlour of thy cell :

With cheerful labour eke our little means,

And go abroad at times to fetch thee in

The news and passing stories of the day.

I'd read thee books : I'd sit and sing to thee :

And every thing would to our willing minds

Some observation bring to cheer our hours.

Yea, e'en the varied voices of the wind

O' winter nights would be a play to us.

Nay, turn not from me thus, my gentle Rayner !

How many suffer the extremes of pain,

Ay, lop their limbs away, in lowest plight

Few years to spend upon a weary couch

With scarce a friend their sickly draughts to
mingle !

And dost thou grudge to spend thy life with me ?

Ray. I could live with thee in a pitchy mine ;

In the cleft crevice of a savage den,

Where coils the snake, and bats and owlets roost,

And cheerful light of day no entrance finds.

But wouldst thou have me live degraded also ;

Humbled and low ? No, liberty or nought

Must be our boon. [youth :

Har. And thou shalt have it too, my noble

Thou hast upon thy side a better advocate

Than these grey hairs of mine.

[*To ELIZABETH.*] Bless that fair face ! it was not
made for nothing.

We'll have our boon ; such as befits us too.

No, hang them if we stoop to halving it !
 [*Taking her eagerly by the hand.*
 Come with me quickly ; let us lose no time :
 Angel from heaven thou art, and with heav'n's
 power

Thou'lt plead and wilt prevail.

Ray. In truth thou wilt expose thyself, my love,
 And draw some new misfortune on thy head.

[*Endeavouring to draw her away from HARDI-
 BRAND.*

Eliz. (to HARDIBRAND). What new misfortune?
 can they kill thee twice ?

We're tardy : O move quickly ! lose no time !

Har. Yes, come, and Bertram here will guide
 our way :

His heart is in the cause.

Ber. Yes, heart and soul, my gen'ral. Would
 my zeal

Could now make some amends for what those
 hands

Against him have unwittingly committed.

O that the fellest pains had shrunk their nerves
 Ere I had seized upon him !

Ray. Cease, good Bertram !

Cease to upbraid thyself. Thou didst thy duty
 Like a brave man, and thou art in my mind :
 Not he who seized, but he whose gen'rous pity
 Did, in my fallen state, first show me kindness.

[*BERTRAM kisses his hand.*

Go go ! they wait for thee.

Ber. They shall not wait. Would that we were
 return'd,

Bearing good tidings !

Har. O fear it not, my heart says that we shall.

[*Exit ELIZABETH, HARDIBRAND, and BER-
 TRAM. Manent RAYNER and MARDONIO.*

Mar. Hope oft, my son, unbraces the girt mind,
 And to the conflict turns it loosely forth,
 Weak and divided. I'm disturb'd for thee.

Ray. I thank thee, father, but the crime of blood
 Your governor hath ne'er yet pardon'd ; therefore
 Be not disturb'd for me ; my hopes are small.

Mar. So much the better. Now to pious thoughts
 We will direct—Who comes to interrupt us ?

Enter the Turnkey.

Ray. It is the turnkey ; a poor man who, though
 His state in life favours not the kind growth
 Of soft affections, has shown kindness to me.

He wears upon his face the awkwardness
 And hesitating look of one who comes
 To ask some favour ; send him not away.

(*To turnkey.*) What dost thou want, good friend ?
 out with it, man !

We are not very stern.

Turnkey. Please you, it has to me long been a
 privilege

To show the curious peasantry and boors,
 Who from the country flock o' holy days,

Through his strait prison bars, the famous robber,
 That overhead is celi'd ; and now a company
 Waits here without to see him, but he's sullen
 And will not show himself. If it might please you
 But for a moment opposite your grate
 To stand, without great wrong to any one,
 You might pass for him, and do me great kindness.
 Or the good father there, if he be willing
 To doff his cowl and turn him to the light,
 He hath a good thick beard, and a stern eye,
 That would be better still.

Ray. (*laughing*). Ha ! ha ! ha ! what say ye to
 it, father ?

[*Laughing again more violently than at first.*

Mar. (*turning out the turnkey in a passion, and
 returning sternly to RAYNER*). What means
 this wild and most unnatural mirth ;
 This lightness of the soul, strange and unsuited
 To thy unhappy state ? it shocks me much.
 Approaching death brings nought to scare the good,
 Yet has it wherewithal to awe the boldest :
 And there are seasons when the lightest soul
 Is call'd on to look inward on itself
 In awful seriousness.

Ray. Thou dost me wrong ; indeed thou dost me
 wrong.

I laugh'd, but, faith ! I am not light of soul :
 And he who most misfortune's scourge hath felt
 Will tell thee laughter is the child of misery.
 Ere sin brought wretchedness into the world,
 The soberness of undisturbed bliss
 Held even empire o'er the minds of men,
 Like steady sunshine of a cloudless sky.
 But when it came, then came the roaring storm,
 Lowering and dark ; wild, changeful, and perturb'd ;
 Whilst through the rent clouds oftentimes shot the
 gleam

More bright and powerful for the gloom around.
 E'en 'midst the savage strife of warring passions,
 Distorted and fantastic, laughter came,
 Hasty and keen, like wild-fire in the night ;
 And wretches learnt to catch the fitful thought
 That swells with antic and uneasy mirth
 The hollow care-lined cheek. I pray thee pardon !
 I am not light of soul.

Death is to me an awful thing ; nay, father,
 I fear to die. And were it in my power,
 By suffering of the keenest racking pains,
 To keep upon me still these weeds of nature,
 I could such things endure, that thou wouldst
 marvel,

And cross thyself to see such coward-bravery.
 For oh ! it goes against the mind of man
 To be turn'd out from its warm, wonted home,
 Ere yet one rent admits the winter's chill.

Mar. Come to my breast, my son ! thou hast
 subdued me. [*Embracing him.*

And now we will lift up our thoughts to Him
 Who hath in mercy saved thy hands from blood.

Ray. Yes, in great mercy, for the which I'd bow
In truer thankfulness, my good Mardonio,
E'en with these fears of nature on my mind,
Than for the blessing of my spared life,
Were it now proffer'd me.

[*They retire into the obscurity of the dungeon, at the bottom of the stage, and the scene closes on them.*]

SCENE II.

A small apartment in a solitary cottage in the country.

Enter COUNT ZATERLOO, supported by an attendant, and followed by the *Countess* in the disguise of a pilgrim; both of them wearing masks. *She places a pillow for his head on a couch or sick-chair, and he is placed upon it, apparently with pain.*

Countess (to attendant). There, set him gently down; this will support him.

(To *Count ZATERLOO*.) How art thou now? I fear thou'rt very faint

After so long a journey.

(To attendant.) We have no farther need of thine assistance:

Thou wilt retire, but be upon the watch.

[*Exit attendant.*]

Zat. (unmasking). Now, charming *Mira*, lay disguise aside;

Speak thine own natural voice, and be thyself:

There is no eye to look upon us now;

No more excuse for this mysteriousness.

Let me now look upon thy face and bless it!

Thou hast done well by me: thou'rt wondrous gentle.

I knew thee fair and charming, but I knew not

Thou wast of such a soft and kindly nature.

[*The countess unmasks and looks at him sorrowfully.*]

Ha, mother! is it you?

Countess. Who should it be? where shouldst thou look for kindness?

When we are sick, where can we turn for succour;

When we are wretched, where can we complain;

And when the world looks cold and surly on us,

Where can we go to meet a warmer eye

With such sure confidence as to a mother?

The world may scowl, acquaintance may forsake,

Friends may neglect, and lovers know a change,

But when a mother doth forsake her child,

Men lift their hands and cry, "a prodigy!"

Zat. (taking hold of both her hands and hissing them.) O mother! I have been a thankless child!

I've given thee hoary hairs before thy time;

And added weight to thy declining years,

Who should have been their stay.

Countess. Be calm, my son, for I do not upbraid thee.

Zat. Wretch that I am! I was an only son,

And therefore bound by no divided tie

To be to thee thy hold and thy support.

I was a widow's son, and therefore bound

By every generous and manly tie

To be in filial duty most devoted.

O I have vilely done! I feel it now;

But if I live to be a man again,

I'll prove a better son to thee, dear mother.

Countess. I know thou wilt, my dearest *Zaterloo*;

And do not thus upbraid thyself too sharply;

I've been a foolish mother to thy youth,

But thou wilt pardon me.

Zat. Of this no more—How came you by my letter?

If you did intercept it on its way,

Mira is faithful still.

Countess. It was from *Mira's* hand that I received it.

She toss'd it at me with a jeering smile

When I with anxious tears inquired for thee.

Zat. (rising half from his seat in great passion).

O faithless, faithless woman! she it was,

Who made of me the cursed thing I am!

I've been a fool indeed and well requited.

Base, avaricious, and ungrateful—oh!

[*Putting his hand on his side, as if seized with sudden pain*]

Countess. Such agitation suits not with thy state: What ails thee now?

Zat. The pain, the pain! it has return'd again

With increased violence.

Countess. God send thee ease! why dost thou look so wildly,

And grasp my hand so hard? What is't disturbs thee?

Zat. My time on earth is short.

Countess. Nay, say not so: thou mayst recover still.

O why this seeming agony of mind?

'Tis not the pain that racks thee.

Zat. There's blood upon my head: I am accursed.

Countess. Good heaven forefend! thou wand'rest in thy speech.

Thy life I know is forfeit to the law

By some unlawful act, but oh no blood!

Zat. O for a short respite! but 'twill not be:

I feel my time is near.

Countess. Thou wand'rest much: there's something on thy mind,

Dark'ning thy fancy.

Zat. 'Twas I that did it—I that murder'd him: He who must suffer for it did it not.

Countess. What words are these? my blood runs cold to hear them.

Zat. (*alarmed*). Be still, be still! there's some one at the door:
All round me is exposed and insecure.

[COUNTESS ZATERLOO goes to the door and receives something from a servant, shutting the door immediately. [thing.]

Countess. It is a servant come to fetch me some—
Zat. Has he not heard it? he has heard it all!

[*In violent alarm and agitation.*

Countess. Be still, be still! it is impossible.
Thou'st waked the pain again; I see thee tremble.

Zat. (*writhing as if in great pain*). Ay, this will master me: 'twill have me now:

What can be done? O for a short reprieve!
Countess. Alas, my child! what wouldst thou have me do? [course,

Zat. I would have time turn'd backward in its
And what is past ne'er to have been: myself
A thing that no existence ever had.
Canst thou do this for me?

Countess. Alas! I cannot.

Zat. Then cursed be thy early mother's cares!
Would thou hadst lifted up my infant form
And dash'd it on the stones! I had not lived—
I had not lived to curse thee for thy pains.

Countess. And dost thou curse me then?

Zat. (*softened*). O no! I do not!

I did not curse thee, mother: was it so? [served—
Countess. No, no, thou didst not: yet I have de-
I was a mother selfish in my fondness;
And with indulgence, senseless and extreme,
Blasted the goodly promise of thy youth.

Zat. (*rising half up alarmed from his couch*).
Hark! there's a noise again! hast thou more servants

Coming with errands to thee?—We're discover'd!
Countess. Be not so soon alarm'd: it is impossible.

Zat. Is there an inner chamber? lead me there;
[*Pointing to a door.*

I cannot rest in this.

[*Stopping short eagerly as she is leading him out with great difficulty.*

—Thine absence haply
From thine own house, suspicion may create:
Return to it again, and through the day
Live there as thou art wont; by fall of eve
Thou'lt come to me again.—I'm very weak;
I must lean hard upon thee.

[*Exit, looking suspiciously behind him as if he heard a noise, and supported with great difficulty by his mother.*

SCENE III.

The COUNTESS ZATERLOO's house. *Enter Countess and a female attendant.*

Att. Ah! wherefore, madam, are you thus disturb'd,
Pacing from room to room with restless change,

And turning still a keen and anxious ear
To every noise? What can I do for you?

Countess. Cease, cease! thou canst do nothing,
my good girl:
I have a cause, but do not seek to know it.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. There is a stranger— [thou say?
Countess (*starting with alarm*). Ha! what dost

A stranger! what appearance does he wear?

Is there but one? Looks he suspiciously?

Serv. Be not alarmed, madam; 'tis a woman.

Countess (*feigning composure*). Thou art a fool to
think I am alarm'd:

Or man or woman, whose'er it be,
I am unwell, and must not be disturb'd.

Serv. It is a lady of distinguish'd mien,
Though much in grief, and she so earnestly
Pleads for admittance that I am compell'd—
Pardon me, madam; but to look upon her
Would move your heart to pity.

Countess. Let her enter. [*Exit servant.*

Who may this be? why do I tremble thus?

In grief!—the wretched surely will not come

In guileful seeming to betray the wretched.

(*To attendant*). Knowst thou who this may be?

Att. Indeed I do not.

Countess. Retire then to a distance: here she
comes:

But do not leave the chamber.

[*Attendant retires to the bottom of the stage, and enter ELIZABETH with her hair and dress disordered, like one distracted with grief.*

Eliz. Madam, I come a stranger to your presence,
By misery embolden'd, and urged on
By desperation. In your pity only
Lives all the hope of my most wretched state:
O kill it not! push me not to the brink
Of misery so deep and terrible!
Have pity! O have pity on my woe!
Thou art a woman, and a woman's heart
Will not be shut against a wretched woman.

Countess. What wouldst thou ask? thou dost
with too much grief

Conceal the point and object of thy suit.

Eliz. There is in prison bound, condemn'd to die,
And for a crime by other hands committed,
A noble youth, and my betrothed love:
Your son—O shrink not back, nor look so sternly!
Your son, as secret rumour hath inform'd me,
Mortally wounded and with little hope
Of life, can ample testimony give,
Being himself of those who did the deed,
That Rayner did it not:—O let him then,
In whate'er secret place he lies conceal'd,
In pity let him true confession make;
And we will bless him—Heav'n will pardon him!

Countess. Despair hath made thee mad! art thou
aware

What thou dost ask of me ? Go to our governors ;
They may have pity on thee ; but from me
It were an act against the sense of nature.

Eliz. Nay, say not so ! I have for mercy sued
At the proud feet of power, and been rejected :
What injury can reach a dying man ?
Can his few hours of breathing poise the scales
'Gainst the whole term of a man's reckon'd life
In youth's best strength ? [false tale :

Countess. Go, thou hast been deceived with a
And, were it true, hope ends not but with life ;
Heav'n only knows who is a dying man.

Eliz. For blessed charity close not your pity
Against all other feelings but your own !

[*Clasping the countess's knees and kissing her hand.*
Sweet lady ! gentle lady ! dearest lady !
O be not ruthless to a soul bow'd down
In extreme wretchedness !

Countess. Cease, cease ! unlock thy hold : em-
brace me not !

Has he for whom thou pleadst from out o' thyself
Received his being ? press'd with infant lips
Thy yearning bosom ? smiled upon thy knees,
And bless'd thine ear with his first voice of words ?
Away, away ! despair has made thee mad,
That thus thou hangst upon me.

Eliz. O he for whom I plead is to my soul
Its soul : is to my fancy its bound world,
In which it lives and moves ; all else beyond
Darkness, annihilation. O have pity !
For well thou sayst, despair has made me mad.

Countess. Let go, let go ! thou with a tigress
strivest,

Defending her bay'd whelp : I have no pity.
Heav'n will have pity on thee ! let me go ;
Unlock thy desprate hold !

[*Breaks from her and runs out, and ELIZABETH, quite overcome, sinks upon the ground, the attendant rushing forward from the bottom of the stage to support her.*

Enter FATHER MARDONIO.

Mar. (*raising her*). My daughter, heaven will
send in its good time
The aid that is appointed for thy state.
Contend no more, but to its righteous will
Submit thyself. Let me conduct thee hence.

[*Exeunt, MARDONIO and attendant supporting her. Re-enter the countess, looking fearfully round her as she enters.*

Countess. She is gone now : thank God that she is
gone !

There is a horrid conflict in my mind.
What shall I do ? I strongly am beset.
I will go quickly to some holy man,
And ghostly counsel ask.

[*Exit, crossing the stage with a quick, irresolute step, sometimes stopping to consider, and then hurrying on again.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A spacious outer room in the prison.

Enter an Under-Gaoler and a Clown.

Clown. I pray thee now, my good friend, here is a piece of money for thee—very good money too ; thou mayst look o' both sides of it an' thou wilt : it has been wrapped up in the foot of my old holiday stockings since last Michaelmas twelvemonth, and neither sun nor wind has blown upon it. Take it, man, thou art heartily welcome to it if thou canst put me into a good place near the scaffold ; or a place where I may see him upon the scaffold ; for I am five-and-thirty years old next Shrove Tuesday when the time comes round, and I have never yet seen in all my born days so much as a thief set i' the stocks.

Gaoler. Poor man ! thou hast lived in most deplorable ignorance indeed. But stand aside a little, here is the famous executioner of Olmutz a-coming, who has been sent for expressly to do the job ; for our own is but a titulary hangman ; he has all the honours of the office, but little experience in the duties of it.

Clown. O dickens, I'll creep into a corner then, and have a good look of him. A man that has cut off men's heads, save us all ! he must have a strange bloody look about him for certain.

Enter two Executioners, speaking as they enter.

1st ex. What ! no execution in this town for these ten years past ? Lord pity you all for a set of poor devils indeed ! Why, I have known a smaller town than this keep ye up a first executioner for the capital business, with a second man under him for your petty cart-tail and pillory work ; ay, and keep them handsomely employed too. No execution in such a town as this for these ten years past ! One might as well live amongst the savages.

2d ex. It is a pitiful thing to be sure, but don't despise us altogether, Mr. Master : we shall improve by-and-by ; and here is a fair beginning for it too, if heaven prosper us.

1st ex. Ay, thou wilt, perhaps, have the honour of hanging a thief or two before thou art the age of Methuselah ; but I warrant ye, the beheading of this young nobleman here by the famous executioner of Olmutz will be remembered amongst you for generations to come. It will be the grand date from which every thing will be reckoned ; ay, your very grandchildren will boast that their fathers were present at the sight.

2d ex. I make no doubt on't, my master, but you are a very capital man in your way : heaven forbid that I should envy the greatness of any one ; but I would have you to know that there have been

others in the world as good as yourself ere now. My own father cut off Baron Koslam's head upon this very scaffold that we now hear them hammering at.

1st ex. Some wandering hocus-pocus baron, I suppose, that sold nostrums for the toothache. I always put such fellows into the hands of my underling to operate upon; I never count the dealing with them as your prime work, though for certain we must call it your head work; ha! ha! ha! (*Holding out his axe in a vain-glorious manner.*) Seest thou this axe of mine? The best blood of the country has been upon its edge. To have had one's father or brother under its stroke, let me tell thee, is equal to a patent of nobility.

2d ex. Well, be it so. I envy no man, though thou art set over my head upon this occasion. I have whipped, branded, and pilloried in great meekness and humility for these seven years past; but the humble shall be exalted at last, and I shall have better work to do by-and-bye. Let us have no more contention about it.—Who's there? (*Observing gaoler and clown.*) Ay, gaoler, do thou go and kick up the black prince, he is snoring in some corner near us, and send him for some brandy.

[*Gaoler coming forward, with the clown creeping after him, half afraid.*]

Gaoler. The black prince is nowhere to be found; he has not been seen since the cells were locked.

2d ex. Go fetch us some liquor thyself then.

1st ex. But who is this sneaking behind thee, and afraid to show his face?

Gaoler. Only a poor countryman, a friend of mine, who wanted to look at you as you passed.

1st ex. Yes, yes, everybody has a curiosity to look at extraordinary persons. (*To clown.*) Come forward, man, and don't be afraid. Didst thou ever before see any thing better than a poor parish priest, or a scrubby lord of the village? didst thou, eh?

Clown (abashed). I don't know, please you: my brother did once stand within a team's length of the Prince of Carrara, when he passed through our village on his way to Franconia.

1st ex. So then thou art not the first of thy family that has seen a great man. But don't be afraid, my good fellow, I a'n't proud nor haughty as many of them be: thou shalt even shake hands with me an' thou wilt.

[*Holding out his hand to clown, who shrinks from him, and puts his hands behind his back.*]

Clown. No, I thank you; I ben't much of a hand-shaker: I have got a little sore on my thumb, may it please you: I thank you all the same as though I did.

1st ex. Ay, thou art too mannerly to call it the thing that we wot of. Well, thou art a good sort of fellow; don't be abashed: thou seest I am very condescending to thee. Come, then, thou shalt

drink a cup of liquor with me. Follow us into the next ward, my good friend.

Clown (shrinking from him again). O na, save your presence! I'll go with the gaoler here.

1st ex. (to 2d executioner). Ay, he is but a poor bashful clown, and don't know how to behave himself in good company.

[*Exeunt executioners.*]

Clown. Shake hands with him, Mary preserve us! it sets the very ends of my fingers a-dingling. Drink out of the same mug with him, too! (*sputtering with his lips*) poh! poh! poh! the taste of raw heads and carrion is on my lips at the thoughts of it. (*To gaoler.*) Come, let us go out of this place; I be long enough here. (*Stopping short as he goes off.*) What noise and hammering is this we hear?

Gaoler. It is the workmen putting up the scaffold.

Clown (starting). What, are we so near to it? mercy on us! let me get out of this place, for it puts me into a terrible quandary.

Gaoler. If this be the mettle thou art made of, thou hadst better take thy money again, and I'll give thy place for the sight to somebody that has got a stouter heart than thou hast.

Clown. Na, na, I won't do that neither; I have a huge desire to see how a man looks when he is going to have his head cut off, and I'll stay for the sight, though I should swoon for it. Poor man! poor man! what frightful things there be in this world, when one's mind sets a-thinking upon it!—Is he a tall man, now (*to gaoler*), or a short man? a pale-faced man, or—ay, pale enough, I warrant. Mercy on us! I shall think of him many a night after this, before I go to sleep. Poor man! poor man! what terrible things there be in this world, if a body does but think of them.

[*Exeunt clown and gaoler.*]

SCENE II.

A dungeon; RAYNER discovered sitting at a table by the light of a lamp, with a book in his hand; the clock from a neighbouring steeple strikes three, and he, roused by the sound, lays down the book.

Ray. This bell speaks with a deep and sullen voice:

The time comes on apace with silent speed.

Is it indeed so late?

[*Looking at his watch.*]

It is even so.

[*Pausing, and looking still at the watch.*]

How soon time flies away! yet, as I watch it, Methinks, by the slow progress of this hand, I should have lived an age since yesterday, And have an age to live. Still on it creeps, Each little moment at another's heels, Till hours, days, years, and ages are made up Of such small parts as these, and men look back, Worn and bewild'rd, wond'ring how it is.

Thou trav'lest like a ship in the wide ocean,
Which hath no bounding shore to mark its progress,
O Time! ere long I shall have done with thee.
When next thou leadest on thy nightly shades,
Though many a weary heart thy steps may count,
Thy midnight larum shall not waken me.
Then shall I be a thing, at thought of which
The roused soul swells boundless and sublime,
Or wheels in wildness of unfathom'd fears:
A thought; a consciousness; unbodied spirit.
Who but would shrink from this? It goes hard

with thee,
Social, connected man; it goes hard with thee
To be turned out into a state unknown,
From all thy kind, an individual being.
But wherefore shrink? came we not thus to earth?
And He who sent, prepared reception for us.
Ay, glorious are the things that are prepared,
As we believe!—yet, heaven pardon me!
I fain would skulk beneath my wonted cov'ring,
Mean as it is.
Ah, Time! when next thou fillst thy nightly term,
Where shall I be? Fy! fy upon thee still!
E'en where weak infancy, and tim'rous age,
And maiden fearfulness have gone before thee;
And where, as well as he of firmest soul,
The meanly-minded and the coward are.
Then trust thy nature, at th'approaching push,
The mind doth shape itself to its own wants,
And can bear all things.

[Rising from his seat, and walking several times
backward and forward.

I know not how it is, I'm wondrous heavy;
Fain would I rest awhile. This weary frame
Has but a little more to do for me,
And yet it asks for rest. I'll lay me down:
It may be possible that I shall sleep,
After these weary tossings of the mind;
I feel as though I should.

[Goes to sleep, covering himself with a cloak.

Enter OHIO, creeping out from a hiding-place at the
bottom of the stage, and going softly up to RAYNER,
looks for some time upon him with a malicious grin.

Ohio. Thou hast loved negroes' blood, I warrant
thee.

Dost sleep? ay, they will waken thee ere long,
And cut thy head off. They'll put thee to rest;
They'll close thine eyes for thee without thy leave;
They'll blot thy white skin for thee, lily-face.
Come, less harm will I do thee than thy fellows:
My sides are cold: a dead man needs no cloak.

[Beginning gently to pull off RAYNER's cloak,
who starts from his sleep, and looks at him in
amazement.

Ray. Ha! what hole of the earth hath cast thee
up?
What thing art thou? and what wouldst thou with
me?

Ohio. My sides are cold; a dead man needs no
cloak.

Ray. 'Tis true indeed, but do not strip the living.
Where dost thou run to now? where wast thou hid?

Ohio (after running to his hiding-place, and fetching
out a stick, which he presents to RAYNER).

Beat me thyself, but do not tell of me

Ray. I would not harm thee for a greater fault.
I'm sorry thou art cold; here is my cloak:
Thou hast said well; a dead man needs it not.
I know thee now; thou art the wretched negro
Who serves the prisoners; I have observ'd thee:
I'm sorry for thee; thou art bare enough,
And winter is at hand.

Ohio. Ha! art thou sorry that the negro's cold?
Where wast thou born who art so pitiful?
I will not take thy cloak, but I will love thee.
They shall not cut thy head off.

Ray. Go thy ways;
Go skulk within thy hiding-place again,
And, when the cell is open'd, save thyself.

Ohio. They sha'n't cut off thy head.

Ray. Now, pray thee go.

Ohio. I'll kiss thy feet; I'll spend my blood for
thee.

Ray. I do beseech thee go! there's some one
coming:
I hear them at the door. [Pushes him hastily off.

Enter HARDIBRAND, advancing slowly to RAYNER,
his eyes cast upon the ground.

Ray. Good morrow, general: where's thy friendly
hand?

Why dost thou turn thine eyes aside, and fear
To look me in the face? Is there upon it
Aught that betrays the workings of the mind
Too strongly mark'd? I will confess to thee
I've struggled hard, I've felt the fears of nature;
But yet I have the spirit of a man
That will uphold me: therefore, my brave friend,
Do me the grace to look upon me boldly;
I'll not disgrace thee.

Har. No, my valiant boy!

I know thou'lt not disgrace me, nor will I
Put shame on thee by wearing on this morn
A weeping face: I will be valiant too.
We will not, Rayner, though thou'rt thus—Oh! oh!
[Bursting into tears.

Ray. My gen'rous friend, my second father, why
Wilt thou oppress me thus?

Har. Bear with me, bear with me; I meant to
brave it,

And I will brave it. But to thee, my son,
In thy distress, encompass'd as thou art,
My heart so strongly has enlink'd itself,
That to part from thee, boy, is—

[Falling on his neck, and bursting again into
tears.

Enter MARDONIO.

Mar. (after looking at them for some time, and in a solemn imposing tone of voice). The strength of man sinks in the hour of trial ;

But there doth live a pow'r that to the battle
Girdeth the weak : heaven's vivifying grace,
And strength, and holy confidence be thine,
Who art in battle stricken !

[*Holding up his right hand to heaven, whilst RAYNER, approaching with reverence, bows himself beneath it very low.*

Ray. Thanks to thee, father ! these are words of power,

And I do feel their strength. Beneath that hand,
Which hath in mercy stricken me, I bow ;
Yea bow, the nobler and the bolder grown
For such humility.—(*Familiarly.*) How goes the time ?

Does day begin to dawn ?

Mar. Grey light peeps faintly o'er the eastern towers.

Ray. The time is then advanced ; we'll husband it.

Come close to me, my friends.

[*Taking HARDIBRAND and MARDONIO each by the hand, and pressing them close to his breast.*

Of worldly cares, upon my mind there rest
But only those which I have mention'd to you.
Yet, in this solemn hour, let me remind you :—
My poor Elizabeth—

Har. (eagerly). Thou'st said enough :

She is my child and heiress of my lands
To the last rood.—Ah ! what avails it now !

Ray. How shall a dying man find thanks for this,

Whose day is closed ? I will attempt no thanks.

The other wish that closely presses on me :—

Mardonio, upon thee must hang this boon :—

That miserably man of whom I've told you,

Now living in the hell of his remorse,

Cut off from human intercourse ; whose vision

Of midnight horrors saved this hand from blood :

I fain—

Har. (again eagerly interrupting him). Fear not !
fear not ! he shall be saved ;

And shall with human beings yet consort

In blessed charity, if ghostly care

From holiest men procured, or off'rings made

To ev'ry sacred shrine on christian ground

Can give him peace.

Ray. (smiling and pressing HARDIBRAND to his bosom.) With all the prompt and generous profusion

Of eager youth dost thou, mine aged friend,

Take every thing upon thee. Be it so.

And good Mardonio with his sober counsel

Will aid thy bounty. Here I join your hands :

My worldly cares are closed.

Enter ELIZABETH, followed by RICHARD and BERTRAM, who remain on the background whilst she comes slowly forward ; RAYNER turning round on hearing them enter.

Ah ! who is this ?

Alas ! alas ! it is Elizabeth.

[*Holding out his hand to her.*

Advance, my love ; thou'rt ever welcome here.

How does it fare with thee ?

Eliz. It is all mist and darkness with me now ;

I know not how it fares with me.

Ray.

Alas !

Thou gentle soul ! a dark cloud o'er thee hangs,

But through the gloom the sun again will break,

And, in the soberness of calm remembrance,

Thou wilt look back upon misfortunes past

Like tempests that are laid. Thou dost not heed me :

Thou dost not speak to me. Alas ! Alas !

What shall I say to thee ?

I've loved thee well, and would have loved thee long,

Had it so been—but thou shalt be beloved !

Heav'n will take charge of thee when I'm at rest :

The kindly and the good shall be thy kindred,

[*Putting her hand in HARDIBRAND'S.*

And ev'ry sorrowful and gentle heart

Shall knit itself to thee, and call thee sister.

[*ELIZABETH makes a motion with her hand as if she would speak, and he pauses, but she is silent.*

What meant, my love, that motion of thy hand ?

Mar. She fain would speak to thee, but has no voice.

Ray. I know it well, Elizabeth ; no voice

Needst thou to tell me how thou'st dearly loved me,

And dearly do I prize it ; 'tis my pride ;

E'en humbled as I am, it is my pride.

Heav'n's dearest blessings rest upon thy head !—

And now, since we must part, do in thy love,

Do for me this last grace ; bid me farewell,

And let my earthly sorrows now be closed.

Heav'n's blessing rest upon thee !

[*He kisses her, and she turns to go away, RAYNER looking after her as she goes, but presently returns again.*

Ray. Thou art return'd, my soul, what wouldst thou have ?

Eliz. (in a broken voice). A thought—a wish did press upon my heart,

But it is gone.

Ray. I thank thee for thy wish ;

It is a good one, though thou canst not speak it,

And it will do me good. But leave me ! leave me !

Thou wilt unfit me for a task of strength.

[*ELIZABETH again attempts to go away, but still returns.*

Ah, wherefore still ! wilt thou be cruel to me ?

Eliz. O, no! O, no! I know not what I do:
It is all mist and darkness with me now:
I look upon thee, but I see thee not.
Let me once more but feel thy hand in mine
And send me where ye will: my being then
Is at an end.

[*They embrace again, and she still continues to hang upon him.*]

Ray. (to BERTRAM and RICHARD). O, lead her hence, and have some mercy on me!
My father died i' the field a valiant death,
And shall his son upon the scaffold die
O'ercome and weak, reft of that decent firmness
Which e'en the base and vulgar there assume?
O lead her hence! in mercy lead her hence!

[BERTRAM and RICHARD tear her from him, and lead her away, whilst he turns his back, and hides his face with his hands.]

Eliz. (stopping short, and tossing up her arms distractedly as they are leading her out). Reprieve, reprieve! I hear a voice i' the air!
I hear it yet again!

Ray. (uncovering his face, and looking about eagerly, whilst HARDIBRAND rushes forward impetuously from the bottom of the stage, where he has been pacing backward and forward with hasty strides). Is't any thing?

Mar. Alas, no! all is silent: 'tis the fancy
Of fond distraction list'ning to itself.

Har. Nay, it was something: Bertram, thou didst hear it?

Ber. No, I heard nothing.

Har. What, nor thou, good Richard?

Rich. No, nothing.

Eliz. (holding up her arm distractedly as RICHARD and BERTRAM lead her off). And is it nothing? no redemption near!

[*Exeunt ELIZABETH, RICHARD, and BERTRAM, whilst RAYNER, uttering a deep groan, hides his face, and HARDIBRAND returns with hasty strides to the bottom of the stage.*]

Ray. (uncovering his face). Is she gone now?

Mar. She is.

Ray. Thank God for it! Now to our task:

[*Stepping forward with assumed firmness.*]

What of it now remains we shall o'er-master.

Pray thee how goes the time? But pardon me!

I have too oft inquired how goes the time:

It is my weakness.

Mar. The morning now advances.

Ray. So I reckon'd.

We too shall put ourselves in forwardness:

And so, good father, to your ghostly guidance

I do commend myself.

Enter Gaoler.

Gaoler. The officers of justice are arrived,
And wait the presence of the prisoner.

Ray. They come upon us sooner than we wist;

But 'tis so much the better.

(*To MARDONIO, aside.*) Shall we have time allow'd
us for retirement,

Before they lead me forth?

Mar.

'Tis ever so allow'd.

Ray. Come then, I feel me stronger than I was:
'Twill soon be past; the work goes on apace.

[*Taking hold of HARDIBRAND and MARDONIO as he goes out.*]

Your arm, I pray:—I know not how it is;

My head feels dizzy, but my limbs are firm.

Good Hardibrand, thinkst thou I shall disgrace
thee?

Har. No, by the mass! I'll give them this old
carcase

To hack for crow's meat if thou shrink one hair's
breadth

From the comportment of a gallant soldier,

And of a brave man's son.

Ray. (smiling with a gratified look). I thank thee.

Methinks I tread now, as I onward move,

With more elastic and dilating step,

As if a spirit of pride within me stirr'd

Buoying me up on the swoln billow's ridge.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

An outer garden-room or portico in the house where ZATERLOO is concealed. Enter Countess and a confessor, with two attendants bearing ZATERLOO on a small couch, which they set down on the middle of the stage; the attendants retire.

Countess. The air revives him: look, I pray thee,
father,

How the fresh air revives him: say not then

All hope is banish'd quite.—Thou shak'st thy
head;

But whilst I see upon his moving breast

One heave of breath, betok'ning life within,

I'll grasp at hope, and will not let it go.

(*Bending over the couch.*) My son, my son! hearst
thou my voice, my son?

Zat. Yes, mother: I have had a fearful struggle.

'Tis a strong enemy that grapples with me,

And I must yield to him.—O pious father!

Pray thou for mercy on me.

Countess.

Yes, my son,

This holy man shall pray for thee; the shrines

Of holiest saints be gifted for thee; masses

And sacred hymns be chanted for thy peace:—

And thou thyself, even 'midst thine agony,

Hast spoken precious words of heav'nly grace;

Therefore be comforted.

Zat. (shaking his head). There is no comfort
here: dark, veil'd, and terrible,

That which abides me; and how short a space—

Countess. O thou mayst yet recover!

Con. Lady, forbear! this is no time to soothe

With flatt'ring hopes : his term is near its close ;
Therefore, I do again entreat it of you,
Send off the messenger with his confession,
Lest it should be too late to save the innocent,
And he be sent unto his long account
With a most heavy charge upon his head.

Countess. Thou mak'st me tremble. — Ho ! There,
you without !

Send here the messenger. (*Calling off the stage.*)

— His steed is ready :

He shall forthwith depart.

Enter Messenger.

Con. (to messenger). Take thou this packet, and
with full-bent speed

Go to the city to the governor,
And see that into his own hand thou give it,
With charges that he read it instantly.

It is of precious moment to his life

Who on the scaffold should this morning suffer.

Quick mount thy horse : few minutes' goaded speed
Will take thee to the gates. [*master!*]

Mes. Few minutes' goaded speed, five leagues to
Con. Five leagues ! thou'rt mad.

Mes. No, marry ! know ye not
The flooded river hath last night broken down
The nearer bridge ?

Con. What, art thou sure of this ?

Mes. I am now come from gazing on the sight.

From bank to bank the red swoln river rours ;
And on the deep and slowly-rolling mass
Of its strong centre-tide, grumly and dark,
The wrecks of cottages, whole ricks of grain,
Trunks of huge trees, torn by the roots, — ay,
save us !

And floating carcasses of perish'd things,
Bloated and black, are borne along ; whilst currents
Cross-set and furious, meeting adverse streams
On rude uneven surface, far beyond
The water's natural bed, do loudly war
And terrible contest hold ; and swelt'ring eddies
With dizzy whirling fury, toss aloft
Their surgy waves i' the air, and scatter round
Their ceaseless bick'ring gleams of jagged foam,
All fiercely whit'ning in the morning light.
Crowds now are standing upon either shore
In awful silence ; not a sound is heard
But the flood's awful voice, and from the city
A dismal bell heard through the air by starts,
Already tolling for the execution.

Con. What's to be done ? fate seems to war
against us.

No, no ! we'll not despair ! Mount thy fleet horse,
Life and death's in thy speed : —

Let nought one moment stop thee on thy way :

All things are possible to vig'rous zeal :

Life and death are in thy speed : depart ! depart !

And heaven be with thine efforts.

[*Exit messenger, after receiving the packet.*]

Zat. Is he gone ? is it done ?

Con. Yes, he is gone : God grant he be in time,
For unto human reck'ning 'tis impossible !

[*To countess, with an upbraiding look.*]

Half an hour sooner —

Countess. Oh, torment me not !

Who could foresee this hind'rance ? — O, good
father !

Look to thy penitent. Upon his count'nance

There's something new and terrible. Speak to
him :

Go close to him, good father. O my son !

Zat. I feel within me now — this is the feeling :

I am upon the brink, the dreadful brink :

It is a fearful gulf I have to shoot.

O yet support me ! in this racking pain

I still may hold a space the grasp of life,

And keep back from the dark and horrid — Oh !

(*Uttering a deep groan.*) It is upon me !

[*Struggles and expires with a faint groan.*]

*Countess, wringing her hands in agony of
grief, is hurried off the stage by the Confessor
and attendants, who rush in and take hold of
her.*

SCENE IV.

*An open square before the great gate of the prison :
a crowd of spectators, with guards, &c., are dis-
covered, waiting for the coming forth of RAYNER
to his execution, and a solemn bell is heard at
intervals. The gate opens, and enter RAYNER
walking between MARDONIO and HARDIBRAND,
and followed by RICHARD and BERTRAM, preceded
and followed by guards, officers, &c. The procession
moves slowly over the stage, and exeunt, followed
by the greater part of the crowd, though a good
many of them still remain upon the stage. Then
re-enter HARDIBRAND and RICHARD, followed by
one or two of the crowd : HARDIBRAND walking
up and down in a perturbed manner, and RICHARD
leaning his back against the side-scene, where he
continues motionless with his eyes fixed on the
ground. The murmur of the multitude is heard for
some time without, and then ceases, followed by a
dead silence.*

1st crowd. The sound of the multitude is still
now.

2d crowd (looking out). I fancy, by the crowd
who stand all gathered round yonder in dead silence,
he is now preparing for the block.

3d crowd. It must be so : mercy on us, what a
mantle of human faces there be spread round on
every side, and not one sound of voice amongst
them all ! [*A long pause.*]

Har. (starting and stopping suddenly, to 1st crowd).
Didst thou hear aught ?

1st crowd. No, they are still silent.

Har. Look out, I pray thee, and tell me what thou seest. [1st crowd looks out.

What dost thou gaze at with so broad an eye?
1st crowd. The executioner is now mounted upon the platform, and the prisoner—O! I cannot look any more!

[A loud confused noise is heard without.

Har. What's that?

2d crowd. It is like the cry of a great multitude, when they look upon something that is terrible.

1st crowd. Then the stroke is given, and it is all over now.

[HARDIBRAND turns hastily away, and rushes to the other end of the stage, whilst RICHARD gives a heavy groan, and still remains motionless. A shout is heard without.

Har. (returning furiously from the bottom of the stage). More of that horrible din!—

May they bring down the welkin on their heads!

2d crowd (to 1st crowd). What art thou looking at now?

1st crowd. Nay, there is nothing to look at now: the platform is down, and the crowd is returning home again.

Enter OHIO, running across the stage.

Ohio. I've done it! I've done it! I've done it!

[Exit.

Enter a messenger in great haste, followed by a civil Officer.

1st crowd. Where are you running to so fast?

Mes. Is the execution over?

1st crowd. Yes, it is over.

Mes. Ah! then I am too late.

1st crowd. What mean ye by that?

Mes. I brought a pardon for him.

Har. (rushing upon the messenger and collaring him). A pardon! O confound your tardy speed!

Had you upon some paltry wager striv'n,
You had run faster. O, thou cursed fool!

O hadst thou sped, I'd make a rich man of thee!

Mes. (disentangling himself). My steed and I
across the high-swoln flood,

Those on the shore shrieking to see our boldness,
Have fearless swum some miles short of the pass
Which we must else have gain'd, or, by my faith,
I had been later.

Har. Thou liest, thou cursed fool! thou shouldst
have sped

Swift as a bullet from the cannon's mouth.

[Collaring him again.

Enter RAYNER, MARDONIO, BERTRAM, and crowd.

Mar. (to HARDIBRAND, pulling him back from the messenger). Hold, general! what hath the poor man done?

Har. What has he done! he's brought a pardon, fiend!

[The crowd give a great shout, crying out "Pardon, pardon," and HARDIBRAND, turning round at the noise, and seeing RAYNER, springs forward, and catches him in his arms.

God bless us all, and let us keep our wits!
Is this true seeing that my eyes are blest with?
O welcome, welcome! this is wonderful!
My boy! my noble boy! my gallant boy!
Thou art a man again, and I—I'm mad:
My head wheels round, but 'tis a blessed madness.
What sayst thou? art thou silent?
Hast no voice?

Ray. To be upon the verge of death is awful;
And awful from that verge to be recall'd.
God bless you! O God bless you! I am spent;
But let me draw my breath a little while,
And I will thank you—I will—Bear with me:
I cannot speak.

[Recovering himself, and seeing the crowd gather round him with joyful and sympathising looks.

Surely 'tis a kind world I have return'd to;
There's sympathy and love in ev'ry heart.

Mar. (to messenger). Where is the pardon? let
me have it, friend,
That I may read it.

[Messenger gives him a paper, which he reads.

We charge thee upon our authority to set the —
[Reading the rest low to himself.

What! call ye this a pardon which acquits
The prisoner as guiltless of the crime?
May God be praised! how has all this been?

Mess. Count Zaterloo, who on his death-bed lies,
In deep remorse, a paper of confession,
Attested by a priest and his own mother,
Caused to be drawn, which to the governor
I've brought, I wot, as quickly as I might,
Though (pointing to HARDIBRAND) this good gentleman —

Har. (embracing the messenger). O no! O no!
thou'rt a brave fellow now,
And, as I've said, I'll make a rich man of thee.
But I'm bewilder'd still: how hath it been
That he is saved, seeing no pardon reach'd him?

Mar. Yes, thou mayst wonder! for some unknown friend

Had sawn across the main prop of the scaffold,
So that the headsmen mounting first, the platform
Fell with a crash; and he, all maim'd and bruised,
Unfit to do his office, was perform'd —

Har. Ay, ay, 'tis plain, thou needst not tell me
more. —

But he, the unknown friend —

Enter OHIO, running exultingly.

Ohio. 'Twas I that did it!
Beat me and scourge me as ye list: I did it!

He offer'd me his cloak : he pitied me ;
And I have paid him back.

Har. Ha ! well done and well said, my brave
black thing !

Art thou a prince ? in faith I think thou art.
I'll take thee home, and make a man of thee.

No, no ! (*Pointing to RAYNER.*) Here is my son, my
heir, my child :

All that I have is his : he will reward thee.
Thou hast a gen'rous mind, although debased
With vile oppression and unmanly scorn.

Ray. (*taking OHIO and HARDIBRAND both by the
hand.*) What shall I say to you ? my heart
would speak

What my voice cannot. O ! and here comes one
Who mocks all power of words.

[*Enter ELIZABETH running, and rushes into
RAYNER'S arms ; the crowd then eagerly
gathers round them, and closes upon them.*

Mar. (*stepping out from the crowd, and looking
upon them.*) Yes, gather round him, kindly
souls, though rude,

In the true artless sympathy of nature ;
For he is one o'er whom the storm has roll'd
In awful power, but spared the thunderbolt.—
When urged by strong temptation to the brink
Of guilt and ruin, stands the virtuous mind
With scarce a step between ; all pitying heaven,
Severe in mercy, chast'ning in its love,
Of times, in dark and awful visitation,
Doth interpose, and leads the wand'rer back
To the straight path, to be for ever after
A firm, undaunted, onward-bearing traveller,
Strong in humility, who swerves no more.

[*Exeunt.*

THE COUNTRY INN:

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.
WORSHIPTON, *nephew to SIR JOHN.*
AMARYLLIS, *a poet.*
DAVID, *servant, &c. of the inn.*
WILL, *post-boy of the inn.*
JENKINS, *servant to WORSHIPTON.*
Piper, Fiddler, &c.

WOMEN.

LADY GOODBODY.
MISS MARTIN, } *nieces to LADY GOOD-*
MISS HANNAH CLODPATE, } *BODY.*
DOLLY, *maid of the inn.*
Landlady.
HOPKINS, *LADY GOODBODY'S maid.*
SALLY.

Scene.—*A country inn, on one of the cross-roads
leading from the north of England to London.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*The kitchen of a country inn, DAVID and JENKINS
discovered sitting by the fire-side.*

David. John Thomson, says I, why do you put
yourself into a passion ? an angry man, says I,
John, may be compared to three things.

Jen. Yaw ! yaw ! (*yawning very wide*) how thick
that snow falls (*looking to the window*).

David. Well, well ! let it fall as thick as it
pleases !—To three things, John. In the first
place, in respect that he is very hot and very
restless and all that, he may be compared to the
boiling of a pot—no, no ! that was the third
thing.

Jen. Never mind, man, put it first this time for
a variety.

David. No, no ! let us have every thing as it
should be. In the first place, then, says I, in
respect that he is so sharp, and so fussy, and so
bouncing, he may be compared to your poor bottled
small-beer : and in the second place, in respect that
he is so loud and violent, and so hasty, he may be
compared—

Jen. Yaw ! yaw ! yaw ! (*Yawning again very loud.*)

David (very impatiently). Tut, man! can't you keep those jaws of yours together, and hear what a body says?

Jen. Yaw, yaw! Don't think because I yawn, David, that I don't hear what you say. But go on with your story: in the second place——

David. In the second place, says I, in respect that he is so violent and so loud, and so hasty, he may be compared to the letting off of a——

Jen. Of a train of gunpowder.

David. No, sir, it was not to that, sir.

Jen. To the letting off of what, then?

David. No matter what: I had a comparison of my own, but I'll keep it to myself.

Jen. Very well, David: just as you please; for I can see now what an angry man is like, without your giving yourself any further trouble.

David. Ay, ay! jeer away, sir! you are just like your poor silly affected master up-stairs, who simpers whenever I open my mouth to speak, as if nobody had any sense but himself.

Jen. I don't think that my master sets up for a wise man neither, Master David; but he's young and well-made, and——

David. He well made, hang him! his uncle is a better made man by half. Ay, there is a gentleman for ye! a reasonable, sensible, mannerly gentleman! he don't break in upon one with his sneers and his jeers when a body is talking soberly and sensibly.

Jen. To be sure he has rather more manners about him than we can pretend to.

David. By my faith he has! and more sense too. What do you think he said to me the other day? David, says he, you only want a great wig upon your head and a gown upon your shoulders, to make as good a proser as many that we listen to in the pulpit or the bench. Now, wa'n't it very condescending in him to call such a poor unlearned man as me a proser, along with such great folks as these? Not that I regarded so much the compliment to myself, for heaven knows, it becometh not a mortal man to be proud, but I love to hear people speak rationally and civilly.

Jen. Yes, there is nothing like it to be sure: but my young master is a very good master to me, and he spends his money like a gentleman.

David. I don't care a rush how he spends his money: they seem to be the greatest gentlemen now-a-days, who have least money to spend. But if you had fallen sick on the road, like that poor old creature in the rose chamber, would your master have stopped so long at a poor country-inn, to attend you yourself like a sick-nurse? I trow not! he would have scampered off, and left you to follow when you could, or to die, if you had a mind to it.

Jen. If I were old and sickly, indeed, I had as lief have Sir John for my master.

David. I believe so: he is a better man than

that skip-jack nephew of his, twenty times over, and a better looking man too. I wonder much how he has come to this time o' th' day (for he must be near forty, I guess) without taking a wife.

Jen. He thinks himself happier, I suppose, without one. And I am sure no lady of any spirit or fashion would think herself happy with him.

David. How so? what kind of man is he at home on his own estate?

Jen. Why half ploughman; for he often enough holds his own plough of a morning, and can cast ye up as straight a furrow as any clod-footed lout in the country; half priest, for he reads family prayers to his servants every Sunday evening as devoutly as the vicar of the parish; half lawyer, for there is never a poor silly idiot that allows himself to be cheated in the neighbourhood who does not run to him about it directly, and he will browbeat and outwit half a dozen of attorneys to have the goose righted again, if it were but of a crown's value.

David. Well, but there is nothing amiss in all this.

Jen. Then his other odd ways. Dinner must be upon the table every day at the very moment he has fixed, and he will not give ten minutes' law to the first lord of the land. Most inconvenient that for young fellows like me and my master.

David. So much the better; I commend him for it.

Jen. Then he pretends to be hospitable, and entertains the first people of the country, and yet he is not ashamed to boast that there has not been a drunken man in his house since he was master of it.

David. Nay, odds life! that is being too particular, indeed.

Jen. Ay, to be sure; and yet he puts always such an easy good-humoured face upon it, that people will not call him a hunks for all that. One half of it, I'm sure, would have made any other man pass for a very curmudgeon. What has such a man to do with a wife, unless he could get some sober young lady, educated two hundred years ago, who has kept herself young and fresh all the while in some cave underground, along with the seven sleepers, to start up to his hand and say, "Pray have me?"—As for my master, he would remain a bachelor if he could; but we young fellows, who have only our persons for our patrimony, must dispose of them in their prime when they will fetch the highest price.

David. To be sure, to be sure! Princesses a piece for you! young men, now-a-days, are mightily puffed up in their own conceits. They are colts without a bridle, but they bite upon the bit at last. They are butterflies in the sun, but a rainy day washes the colour off their wings. They sail down the stream very briskly, but it carries them over the

ca-cartica — cataract (what ye call a water-fall, ye know) at last.

Jen. Faith, David! you string up so many what do ye call 'em similitudes in your discourse, there is no understanding it: you are just like that there poet in the green chamber that writes upon the windows.

David. He, driv'ing fellow! he has not sense enough to make a similitude. If it were not for the words he contrives to make clink with one another at the end of every line, his verses would be little better than what a body may call mere stuff.

Enter DOLLY.

Dolly. You'll never write such good ones though, for all your great wisdom, Mr. David.

David. Ay, you're a good judge, to be sure! I'm sure you could not read them, though they were printed in big letters before your nose, hussy. You can tell us, I make no doubt of it, how his julep tastes, and how he smells after the garlic that he takes to lay the cold wind in his stomach, and how his ruffled night-cap becomes him too; for you have been very serviceable to him of late, and not very sparing of your visits to his chamber of an evening; but as for his verses, Mrs. Doll, you had better be quiet about them.

Dolly. I say his verses are as pretty verses as any body would desire, and I don't care a rush what you say about his night-cap or his garlic.

David. To hear how women will talk about what they don't understand! Let me see now if you know the meaning of the lines he has scratched on the middle pane of the north window:

“'Twas not that orient blush, that arm of snow,
That eye's celestial blue, which caus'd my woe,
'Twas thy exalted mind my peace which stole,
And all thy moving sympathy of soul.”

Now, can you understand that, mistress madam?

Dolly. I say the verses are very pretty verses, and what does it signify whether one understands them or not?

David. And then upon the other pane close by it:

“Give me the maid whose bosom high
Doth often heave the tender sigh;
Whose eye, suffused with tender care,
Doth often shed the soft luxurious tear.”

(*To JENKINS.*) Now this is Doll herself he means in these verses, for he came to this house the very day that the beggar-woman stole her new stockings from the side of the wash-tub, and I'm sure she shed as many tears about them as would have washed them as white as a lily, though they were none of the cleanest neither, it must be confessed. — If I were to write poetry —

Dolly. If you were to write poetry! Don't you remember when you made that bad metre for Goody Gibson's grave-stone, and all the parish laughed at it?

“All ye gentle Christians who pass by,
Upon this dumb stone cast a pitying eye;
I pray you for yourselves, not me, bewail,
I on life's follies now have turned tail.”

And don't you remember when you went to church afterwards, how all the children of the village pointed with their fingers, and turned round their backs to you as you passed? If you were to write poetry, forsooth!

David. O you filthy lying jade! it is well for you that I scorn to be angry with the likes of you.

Dolly (*laughing in his face*).

“I pray ye for yourselves bewail,
For I on life have turned tail.”

(*DAVID takes up a stool, and runs after her to cast it at her head.*) O mercy! my head, my head!

Jen. (*preventing him*). Nay, David, I can't see a lady used ill in my presence. Consider, my good friend, a man in a passion may be compared to three things.

David. Devil take your three things, and all the things that ever were in the world! If I but once get hold of her!

Enter Landlady.

Land. What's this noise for? are you all mad to make such a disturbance, and all gentlefolks in the house? I protest, as I am a living woman, you make my house more like a Bedlam than a sober inn for gentlefolks to stop at.

David (*still shaking his fist at DOLLY*). If I could get hold of her, I would dress her! I would curry-comb her!

Land. Won't you have done with it yet? curry-comb your horses, and let my maid alone. They stand in the stable, poor things, in dirty litter up to their bellies, while you sit here prating, and preaching as though you were the vicar of the parish.

David. Must one be always attending upon a parcel of brutes, as though they were one's betters? must a body's arm never have a moment's rest?

Land. Let thy tongue rest awhile, David: that is the member of thy body that hast most reason to be tired. And as for you, Doll, mind your own work, and other people will leave you alone. Have you plucked the crows for the pigeon-pie yet, and scraped the stale mutton? well do I know there's ne'er a bit of all this done; we shall be put to such a hurry-scurry to get the dinner dressed, that all the nice victuals will be spoiled (*bell rings*). How they do ring them bells! Run and see what's wanted, Dolly. (*Exit DOLLY.*) This comes of making a noise now! [*Exit JENKINS.*]

David. The greatest noise has been of your own making, I'm sure.

Land. O dear me! what will this house come to! It will turn my poor head at last.

Re-enter DOLLY in a great hurry.

Dolly. A coach, a coach! a coach at the door, and fine ladies in it too as ever my eyes beheld.

Land. A coach say you! that's something indeed. I wish the stairs had been scoured this morning. Run and light a fire in the blue chamber.

[Exit landlady and DOLLY severally, in great haste.

David. I wonder what can bring these lady-folks out now in such cold weather as this. Have they never a fire at home to sit by, in a plague to them! They'll bring as many vile smoking beasts with them, as will keep my poor arms—

[Exit grumbling.]

Re-enter Landlady, showing in LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, and HANNAH, followed by a maid carrying boxes, &c.

Land. O la, ladies! I am sorry the fires aint lit: but I have just ordered one to be lit in the blue chamber, and it will be ready immediately. I am sure your ladyships must be so cold; for it is to be sure the severest weather I ever see'd.

Lady Good. We shall warm ourselves here in the meantime.

Miss Martin. What place can be so comfortable in a frosty morning as a stool by the kitchen fire?

[Sits down on a stool by the fire.]

Land. O dear, ladies! here are chairs.

[Sets chairs for them.]

Lady Good. (to maid). Here is a seat for you too, Hopkins; sit down by the fire.

Hop. I thank you, my lady, I must look after the things in the coach.

[Sets down the box, &c. and exit.]

Lady Good. (to land.) Have you many travellers, ma'am, in this road?

Land. O yes, my lady, a pretty many. We had a little time ago, my lady, the Countess of Postaway, and a power of fine folks with her. It was a mighty cold day when she came, madam, and she was a mighty good-humoured lady to be sure: she sat by the fire here just in that very corner as your ladyship does now.

Miss Martin. It has been a highly honoured nook indeed.

Lady Good. Pray, ma'am, what have you got in the house for dinner? for it snows so fast I think it will be impossible for us to get any further to-day.

Land. O la, to be sure! I have got, my lady, a nice pigeon-pie for dinner, and some very tender mutton. But do you know, my lady countess would dine upon nothing but a good dish of fried

eggs and bacon, though we had some very nice things in the house, I'll assure you. I don't say, to be sure, that quality are all fond of the same kinds of victuals: but sometimes it will so happen that pigeons will not be equally plump and delicate as at other times, let us do what we will with them; and the mutton being fed upon old grass, my lady, will now and then be a little strong tasted or so.— O dear me! if it had not been all eaten up two days ago, I could have given you such a nice turkey! it was to be sure as great a beauty as ever was put upon a spit. Howsomever, you may perhaps after all, ladies, prefer the eggs and bacon.

Miss Martin. Yes, my good ma'am: the eggs and bacon that may be eaten to-day will answer our purpose rather better than the turkey that was eaten yesterday.

Lady Good. Have you any company in the house?

Land. O yes, my lady; we have a good pleasant gentleman, who has been here these three days, because his servant was taken ill upon the road, Sir John Hazelwood, and his nephew with him; and we have a strange kind of a gentleman who has been here these three weeks, just to be quiet, as he says himself, and to study the musics, though I can't say we ever hear him play upon any thing neither. Howsomever, he diverts himself all day long after his own fashion, poor man, writing bits of metre upon the windows and such like, and does harm to nobody.

Hannah (after gazing for a long time at the things ranged over the chimney). There is a pair of candlesticks the very same with those we had in our bedroom at the last inn: look if they aint, the very fellows to them, cousin, all but the little bead round the sockets. (To MISS MARTIN.)

Lady Good. (to HANNAH). My good child, you are always observing things that nobody else notices. (To MISS MARTIN.) Sir John Hazelwood is an old acquaintance of mine! I'll let him know that I am here presently.

Enter DOLLY.

Dolly. The room is ready, ladies, and the fire very good.

Lady Good. We shall go to it then. Let me have a candle, pray; I shall have some letters to seal by-and-bye.

Dolly. Yes, ma'am; and mistress got some wax ones when the great lady was here, I'll bring you one of them.

Lady Good. No, no, child! a tallow one will do well enough.

[Exit LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, and HANNAH, landlady conducting them.]

Enter WILL.

Will. Yes, Doll, give her a tallow candle, and a stinking one too.

Dolly. The lady seems a very good lady, Mr. Sauce-box; and as to stinking candles, I would have you to know we have no such things in the house.

Will. That is plaguy unlucky then, for this is the first time since I came to the house that you have been without them.—Confound the old stinky hypocrite! I wish they smelt like carrion for her sake.

Dolly. What makes you so bitter against the poor lady? I'm sure she is as civil a spoken lady as—

Will. Yes, mighty civil, truly. I hate your smoothspoken people: it is licking the butter off other people's bread that keeps their tongues so well oiled. I drove like the devil to get here before the snow came on; I spared neither myself nor my cattle to please her, and what do you think I had for my pains?

Dolly. I can't say: it is a long stage to be sure.

Will. Paltry half-a-crown, an' be hanged to her!

Dolly. But why did you take so much pains to please her? I never knew you do so before, but when you were promised a bribe for your trouble.

Will. Because I tell you she's a hypocrite, and would deceive Old Niek, if he were not as cunning as herself. When we passed through Middleton she bought as many coarse stockings as would have stocked a hosier's shop; and her maid told me they were all to be sent to her own estate to be given to the poor of the neighbourhood; so, thinks I to myself, this must be some rich liberal lady that gives away money with both hands, I won't stand upon trifles with her, and off I set like the deuce. But 'tis all a lie: she'll sell them again, I'll be bound for it, and make a groat of profit upon every pair. I'll be revenged upon her! Hark ye, Doll; I'll give thee a new top-knot if thou'lt help me in any way to be revenged upon her.

Dolly. Nay, nay, you promised me one last fair, Will, and brought me home nothing but a twopenny bun after all. I know you well enough; so you may play your tricks off by yourself: I'll have nothing to do with you. [*Exit.*]

Will. What ails the wench now, I wonder; ever since that there poet, as they call him, has been in the house, she has spoken to me as if I were a pair of old boots. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

A parlour.

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD and WORSHIPTON.

Sir John. Well, Ned, here is a rich heiress unexpectedly fallen in our way; you or I for her?

Wor. If women favoured men for their merit, Sir John, I should not presume to enter the lists with you; but, luckily, they prefer a good complexion to a good understanding; a well-made leg to what my grandmother used to call a well-ordered mind; and

a very little fashion to a great deal of philosophy; which makes us good-for-nothing fellows come farther into their good graces than wiser men think we are entitled to.

Sir John. You are very humble and very diffident truly: the meaning of what you say being simply this, that you are a mighty handsome fellow. Well, be it so; make as much of your personal qualifications as you can: it were hard indeed if they did not stand you in some good account, since you and your fashionable brotherhood take no pains to acquire any other.

Wor. And they will stand us in good account, my good sir. Upon my honour we treat the sex in a much fairer manner than you do. She who marries one of us sees what she gets, but he who pretends to a woman on the score of his mental accomplishments, holds out to her a most deceitful lure. A man's temper and opinions may change, but he always wears the same pair of legs.

Sir John. There is some reason in this, I confess: and there is one advantage you have in thus tricking out your four quarters for the market,—they are in no danger of going off for less than they are worth. Your man of ton, as you call it, most commonly ends his career by marrying just such a woman as he deserves.

Wor. End his career! who would marry if it were not to prolong it? A man may indeed sometimes be tempted to marry a fashionable beauty to please his vanity.

Sir John. Or break his heart.

Wor. Pooh, pooh! there are more people who die of broken heads now-o'-days. A man may sometimes marry a woman of rank to be looked up to by his old friends.

Sir John. Or down upon by his new ones.

Wor. You are crusty now.—But a rich wife is the only one who can really excuse a young fellow for taking upon himself the sober name of husband.

Sir John. If this is your opinion, you had better still retain the more sprightly one of bachelor.

Wor. And leave the heiress to you, Sir John.

Sir John. No, Worshipton; there is not a woman now existing, as the world goes, that would suit me; and I verily think that here as I stand, with all my opinions and habits about me, I would suit no woman: I must e'en remain as I am.

Wor. I wish I could do so too: I should ask no better.

Sir John. What should hinder you, young man?

Wor. I am under the necessity of marrying: my circumstances oblige me to it.

Sir John. I am at a loss to comprehend the necessity you talk of.

Wor. Will three hundred a year and a commission in the army keep a man's pocket in loose money, my good sir, support a groom and valet, a pair of riding horses, and a curriole?

Sir John. I crave your pardon, sir: these things being necessary, you are perfectly in the right; and if you choose to impose a disagreeable restraint upon yourself for such necessities, nobody has any right to find fault with you.

Wor. Impose upon myself a restraint! Ha, ha, ha! pardon me! this is rather an amusing idea of yours.

Sir John. Why, you would not be base enough to marry a woman and neglect her.

Wor. No, Sir John; I should pay her as much attention as women of the world now expect, and she who is not satisfied with that must be a fool.

Sir John. Well, pray heaven you may find one wise enough to be satisfied with you! But if you seriously mean to pay your addresses to Sir Rowland's heiress, you must inform her of the real state of your affairs. I'll have no advantage taken of a young woman under my eye, though it should be for the interest of my family.

Wor. I shall pretend to nothing but what she may be assured of if she has eyes in her head.

Sir John. No, not so easily assured as you imagine. There is many a handsome man in the world whom nature never made so. Flattery has softened many a rugged visage, and licked many an awkward cub into shape; and he who takes this method of becoming a pretty fellow before marriage, is bound in honour to continue it, that he may still remain such after marriage.

Wor. What! must I be repeating the same thing to her all my life long? Tell a woman once in plain English that she is charming, and there is no danger of her forgetting it.

Sir John. Well, deal honourably, and I shall rejoice in your success.—But I must go to the stable and give directions to my groom: I shall return presently. [*Exit.*]

Wor. (alone). Honourably! yes, yes, we are all mighty conscientious in every thing that is for the interest of another. But watch me as you please, my good Sir John, you sha'n't find me out. What a plaguy thing it is to have an uncle of forty-one! What an age it is! for one has but little hope of a legacy from it, and it has, at the same time, all the cold, cautious, advice-giving spirit of three score and ten. This Sir Rowland's daughter is a good scheme, upon my soul. He must be sickly, I think, from his always living at home in such a retired situation. I dare say he'll die soon, and who knows but the lady may step off too, being of a sickly stock. Yes, I feel a persuasion within me that I am born to be a lucky fellow. But hush! here come the ladies. The fat aunt walks first, and the rich heiress follows. A genteel-looking woman, faith! this is admirable luck. But who is this awkward creature that comes sneaking after them? some humble relation, I suppose.

Enter LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, and HANNAH.

Lady Good. I beg pardon if I have made any mistake; I thought Sir John Hazelwood—

Wor. There is no mistake, madam; Sir John will be here immediately. Permit me to place chairs.

Lady Good. You are very obliging, but we have sate so long in a close carriage this morning, that we should be glad to stand a little while. Sir John's politeness has made him sacrifice his own convenience, I am afraid.

Wor. I am sure he is well repaid in the honour he receives. (*To* MISS MARTIN.) I hope, ma'am, you feel no bad effects from the cold journey you have had?

Miss Martin. None at all, I thank you; we have just felt cold enough to make a warm room very comfortable after it.

Wor. What a charming disposition, thus to extract pleasure from uneasiness!

Miss Martin. The merit of finding a good fire comfortable after a cold winter journey, is one that may be claimed without much diffidence.

Lady Good. Pray, sir, did you ever see such a heavy fall of snow come on so suddenly?

Wor. Really, madam, I don't recollect. (*Turning again to* MISS MARTIN.) But it is the character of true merit—

Lady Good. Pardon me, sir, you have something of the family face; are you not related to Sir John?

Wor. I have the honour to be his nephew, madam. (*Turning again to* MISS MARTIN.) I shall fall in love with rough weather for this day's good fortune.

Lady Good. I suppose, sir, you are acquainted with the family of the Mapletots in your county?

Wor. I believe I have seen them.

[*Turning again to* MISS MARTIN, and continuing to speak to her with much devotion.

Lady Good. (to HANNAH.) Well, my dear, you and I must talk together I find. How did you like the country we passed through to-day?

Hannah. La, aunt! it is just like our own; I saw no difference.

Lady Good. You are foolish, child! is not ours a flat country clothed with trees, and this a bare and hilly one?

Hannah. La, I did not look out of the coach-windows all the way, except when he stopped at the turnpike; and I'm sure it is a little tiled house with a gate by the side of it, just like the one near our own entry; only that our's has got a pear-tree on the wall, and it has got some dried turf piled up by the door, with a part of an old wheelbarrow.

Lady Good. Well, you'll have more observation by-and-bye, I hope.

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Sir John. I am happy in the honour of seeing your ladyship and these fair ladies.

Lady Good. And we reckon ourselves particularly fortunate in meeting with you, Sir John; you are very good indeed to give up so much of your own accommodation to poor storm-bound travellers. Allow me to present my nieces to you. (*After presenting her nieces.*) It is a long time since we met, Sir John; you were then a mere lad, and I was not myself a very old woman.

Sir John. I remember perfectly the last time I had the pleasure of seeing your ladyship, though being a bachelor still, I don't care to say how long it is ago. Your brother Sir Rowland was with you then; I hope he is well.

Lady Good. He is very well: I ought to have introduced his daughter to you particularly. (*SIR JOHN going up to MISS MARTIN.*) No, no! this (*pointing to HANNAH*) is my brother Rowland's daughter. She is somewhat like her mother, who died, as you know, at a very early age, leaving him but this child.

[*WORSHIPTON, who is about to present with much devotion a glove to MISS MARTIN, which she had dropped, lets it fall out of his hand, and retiring some paces back, stares with astonishment at HANNAH.*

Sir John (*to HANNAH*). I am happy to have this opportunity of paying my respect to the daughter of my old friend. I hope, madam, you will admit of this plea for being better acquainted.

Lady Good. (*aside to HANNAH*). Answer him, child.

Hannah (*curtseying awkwardly*). My father is very well, I thank you, sir.

Miss Martin (*looking slyly at WORSHIPTON*). I fancy, after all, I must pick up this glove myself. I am afraid some sudden indisposition—

Wor. (*confusedly*). I beg pardon! I—I have a slight pain in my jaw-bone; I believe it is the tooth-ache.

Lady Good. The tooth-ache! how I pity you! there is no pain in the world so bad. But I have a cure for it that I always carry about in my pocket for the good of myself and my friends: do swallow some drops of it; it will cure you presently (*offering him a phial*).

Wor. (*retreating from her*). You are infinitely obliging, madam, but I never take any thing for it.

Lady Good. (*following him with the phial*). Do take it, and hold it in your mouth for some time before you swallow it. It is very nauseous, but it will cure you.

Wor. (*still retreating*). Pray, madam, be so obliging as to excuse me: I cannot possibly swallow it.

Lady Good. (*pressing it still more earnestly*). Indeed, indeed, it will cure you, and I must positively insist upon your taking it.

Wor. (*defending himself vehemently*). Positively then, madam, you oblige me to say—(*breaking suddenly away*). Pest take all the drugs in the world! (*Aside.*)

Sir John. You must not, Lady Goodbody, insist on curing a man against his will: he likes the pain perhaps: let him enjoy it.

Wor. (*returning*). Indeed I am very much obliged to your ladyship; I am much better now. Forgive my impatience; I don't know what I said.

Lady Good. I am very glad you are better, and I forgive you with all my heart, though it is a remedy that I have long had the greatest faith in, distilled by myself from the very best ingredients, and has cured a great many people, I assure you. (*To SIR JOHN*). So you took this lady for Sir Rowland's daughter? (*Pointing to MISS MARTIN*). Do you see no traces in her countenance of my sister and Colonel Martin? She lost both her parents early, and she has ever since been my child.

Sir John. You are happy in having such a daughter.

Lady Good. I am so: she is a very good girl, and has many excellent qualities, which young women now-a-days do but rarely possess.

Sir John. I dare say she is a most amiable companion, whom you would be very unwilling to part with.

Lady Good. Nay, Sir John, I am not so selfish neither, but that I should willingly give her up to a good husband.

Miss Martin (*aside to LADY GOODBODY*). Bless me, ma'am, why will you do this? you know I can't bear it. (*Aloud to SIR JOHN*). You must not trust Lady Goodbody's account of me; for if she thought size necessary to make a woman perfect, it would be difficult to persuade her that I am not six feet high.

Sir John. Excuse me, ma'am, I have always trusted to Lady Goodbody's opinions, and have never felt more inclination to do so than at this moment.

Lady Good. She always behaves like a fool when she is praised, and, excepting this, I don't know a fault that she has.

Enter a Servant announcing dinner.

(*To MISS MARTIN*). Go before, my dear, and place my chair as you know I like it.

[*Exit MISS MARTIN, followed by SIR JOHN leading out LADY GOODBODY.*

Wor. (*looking askance at HANNAH, and then going up to her with an unwilling shrug*). Permit me to have the honour— [Exit, handing her out.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, and HANNAH, SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD, WORSHIPTON, and AMARYLLIS, *discovered sitting by a table, with wine and glasses, &c. before them.*

Lady Good. But indeed, my dear Sir John, you ought to marry.

Sir John. Indeed, my dear Lady Goodbody, I can't see that I am in duty bound so to do.

Lady Good. Ah, but you are though! It would have made your good worthy grandmother so happy to have seen children of yours growing up to preserve the honours of the family.

Sir John. It is too late now to think of pleasing my grandmother after she has been twenty years in her grave: your ladyship must offer some other argument to convince me.

Lady Good. You owe it to your country then: all families who have good fortunes and good blood in their veins should be kept up for the sake of their country. Is not every body sorry when a house of this kind becomes extinct?

Sir John. If I thought my estates would cease to bear corn and hay upon them in possession of a different family, I should marry to-morrow for the good of the country most certainly. I should be very sorry, to be sure, to make everybody sorry for my want of heirs: but I remember when my neighbour, Squire Wheelbarrow, lost his only son, there was as much merry-making, and as much ale drunk at the very next fair, upon his own estate too, as if nobody had cared a rush about the matter. I believe you must produce some stronger reason, still, my lady.

Wor. Yes, do keep it up, madam! don't let him off so easily.

Lady Good. (*gaily*). For the sake of the ladies then, Sir John, you ought to be a bachelor no longer.

Wor. Now your ladyship attacks him for a strong post.

Amar. Now, madam, you touch the finest chord of the soul's harmony.

Sir John. She does; I allow it. But I contend that I am of more service to the ladies in my present state than I could possibly be in any other. Have I not danced at our country balls with all the neglected damsels who could find no partners to lead them out for these ten years past? and do I not still serve as a forlorn hope to half the desponding maidens and unsettled widows of the West Riding of Yorkshire?

Wor. (*to LADY GOODBODY*). Upon my honour, madam, he tells you serious truth as to the neglected damsels; for he has danced with them so often, that it would be no longer the fashion for any

other kind of damsels to dance with him if he had not too good an estate to be rejected.

Lady Good. Your services to the ladies are too general, Sir John; to make one deserving woman happy is the best way of showing your respect for them.

Sir John. And what lady, my good madam, will expect happiness from an elderly rusticated bachelor?

Lady Good. No sensible woman dislikes an agreeable man because he may be past the heyday of his life. My niece here (*pointing to Miss MARTIN*) has often said to her giddy companions, that an agreeable man of forty is preferable to the frivolous young men of the world that one meets with everywhere now-a-days.

Miss Martin. You would oblige me very much, my dear madam, if you would speak your own sentiments, without doing me the honour to make me so much wiser than I pretend to be.

Sir John. If your ladyship pleases, we shall drop this subject. I am obliged to you for your friendly advice, but it is not in my power to profit by it; for I cannot, for the mere love of being married, yoke myself to a bad wife; and I am so capricious and so strange with my old-rooted habits, that I really don't deserve to have a good one.

Wor. That is the very ease with him, madam; he must have, forsooth, such a woman as the sun never beheld: a woman of wit who holds her tongue; a good housewife who teazes nobody with her economy; and a woman who knows the world, and yet prefers retirement in the country, and his honour's amiable conversation, to every thing in it. May I be — if ever I require more of any woman than to be well dressed and look pretty, as long as I live.

Lady Good. (*to SIR JOHN*). Do you tolerate oaths in your presence?

Sir John. I don't at least encourage them by my example.

Wor. How should you, my good sir? You bury yourself so much in the country you scarcely know what oaths are in use.

Sir John. That is not my reason for abstaining from them, however. If ever I should betake myself to swearing, I shall give myself very little concern about the fashion of the oath. Odds bodikins will do well enough for me, and lack-a-daisy for my wife, if I should ever be happy enough, following Lady Goodbody's advice, to have one. But, Mr. Amaryllis, are you silent all this while? It is surely your turn next to tell us what kind of a woman you prefer: some very refined being undoubtedly.

Amar. Beauty, wit, fashion, and economy are prized by most men, Sir John, but let the maid whose tender sensibility, whose soft delicacy, whose sympathy of soul gently animates her countenance,

be my portion, and every other thing I can dispense with.

Miss Martin. You three gentlemen, at least, are so far lucky in your tastes, that you are in no danger of ever becoming rivals.

Lady Good. I must own, however, Sir John's choice appears to me to be the most reasonable, and not so difficult to be met with neither. My nieces spend many lonely months in the country with me, and Miss Martin prefers it, though she is naturally of a gay disposition; why should we not believe, then, that there are many young women in the world of the same character?

Miss Martin (aside to LADY GOODBODY). For heaven's sake, ma'am, give this up! you'll put me beside myself.

Lady Good. (aside to MISS MARTIN). You're a fool, and don't know when one is serving you.

Sir John (to MISS MARTIN). There is nothing can be said in your praise, madam, that will not be readily credited; but to prefer country retirement, and a bachelor past the noon of his days, is a singular taste for a young and gay woman.

Miss Martin. Perhaps it is so: but unluckily it is one to which I make not the smallest pretensions. I love the amusements of town to a folly; retirement is irksome to me; and I hate a capricious old

[*Stopping short as if shocked at herself, with great embarrassment.*]

Lady Good. (very angrily). Miss Martin, how can you be so perverse?

Sir John. Pray, my dear madam, let us not fall out about this foolish jest, which we have kept up too long. Here comes a strange original old fellow who is in the custom of amusing us a little after dinner, but he forgets that there are ladies with us at present.

Lady Good. Pray let him come, we shall be glad to hear him talk a little.

Enter DAVID.

David (to SIR JOHN). A good afternoon to your honour.

Sir John. How do you do, my honest friend David?

David. As well as a dry mouth and an empty head will allow a poor silly fellow like me to be.

Sir John. Ay, David, wise men always speak modestly of themselves, though they don't insist upon every body believing them. Here is something for thy dry mouth; you must drink a bumper to the ladies' healths.

David. Such ladies as these deserve bumpers apiece to their healths.

Sir John. So they do; and here's the first for you.

David (drinking). My humble respects to your ladyship.

[*Filling him a glass.*
[*To LADY GOODBODY.*]

Lady Good. I'm proud of the respect of so wise a man, Mr. David.

David. O Lord, madam, why should I be held in any account? What though a body may have a better understanding of things, and a better way of setting his words in order, as it were, than another; 'tis all but the gift of God, and why should a body be proud of it?

Miss Martin. But folks will be proud of any gift, Mr. David, unless they be endued, like you, with the rare gift of modesty also.

David. Faith, young lady, you're in the rights of it there. Here's to your very good health: here's to your secret inclinations.

Miss Martin. I thank you; but you are waggish as well as wise.

David. O yes, madam! nothing comes amiss to me. After I have been talking, mayhap of the pope, or the emperor, or the land-tax, or the solemn league and covenant, I can just go and break my jests among the women as if I were no better than one of themselves.

Miss Martin. How wonderfully condescending to the poor silly women!

David. O yes, madam, I have no pride about me: I can just talk like one of themselves. (*Drinking to HANNAH.*) My service to you, young lady. (*Raising his voice.*) Yes, yes, commend me to the women: they don't envy any little wit that one may have. But, conscience, I care for the face of no man! (*Looking at AMARYLLIS.*) Some of them, mayhap, have read more books than me, and can tell you the Latin for one word and the Greek for another, and the likes of that; but for good deep sense, and a knaek at a comparison, I'll defy the best of them all. Ods diekens! I could find ye out a similitude for the sun, moon, and stars, in the paring of a blaek pudding's end.

[*Laughing without, and WILL's head seen peeping at the door which DAVID had left ajar.*]

Sir John. What's that?

David. By my troth, I've forgot my errand! I have brought the poor girl who sings so well to divert your honours, and she is waiting at the door with some ill-mannered companions along with her.

Lady Good. Pray bring her in, we shall be glad to have a song from her.

[*DAVID goes to the door, and leading in SALLY, shuts it in WILL's face with great indignation.*]

David (to SALLY). Come in, hussy, and let those sneering varlets amuse themselves. Sing the ladies one of your new songs.

Sir John. I believe they would rather have one of your old ones.

Sally. Will you please to have the Sailor's Courtship to the Tinker's Daughter; or, "My tatter'd Hose and clouted Shoon?"

Sir John. I rather think the clouted shoon will do best.

SONG.

Though richer swains thy love pursue,
In Sunday gear, and bonnets new;
And ev'ry fair before thee lay
Their silken gifts with colours gay;
They love thee not, alas! so well
As one who sighs and dares not tell;
Who haunts thy dwelling, night and noon,
In tatter'd hose and clouted shoon.

I grieve not for my wayward lot,
My empty folds, my roofless cot;
Nor hateful pity proudly shown,
Nor alter'd looks, nor friendship flown;
Nor yet my dog with lanken sides
Who by his master still abides;
But how will Nan prefer my boon,
In tatter'd hose and clouted shoon!

Miss Martin. She has a charming voice, and sings with some skill.

Sir John. Who taught you these songs, Sally?

Sally. My father, sir; he's a fid—

David (*pinching her arm aside*). Fiddler an't genteel; say he's a musicianer.

Sally. He's a musicianer, sir.

[*WORSHIPTON laughs impertinently, and stares at SALLY, who keeps retiring in confusion as he still continues to stare, and at last runs out.*

David. Is the sheep-faced fool gone?

[*Exit after her in great indignation.*

Wor. (*to AMARYLLIS*). Let us go and coax her to return. [*Exeunt WORSHIPTON and AMARYLLIS.*

Sir John. She is very young, and we must excuse her.

Lady Good. There are more people here than her who ought to plead the same excuse. Miss Martin, you have behaved very strangely, and can only be pardoned on account of your youth.

Miss Martin. I have done so many foolish things for six-and-twenty years past, that you are really very good, my dear madam, to pardon me on that score.

Lady Good. What do you mean? what do you mean, child, by calling yourself older than you are?

Miss Martin. I have been of age these five years, and most people, I believe, will call that six-and-twenty.

Sir John. Your servant, ladies, we shall meet again at the tea-table. [*Exit.*

Lady Good. Very well, very well, Miss Martin! since you will be six-and-twenty, though you know well enough you want two months and a half of it, with all my heart. But allow me to tell you, a maiden of that age should look pretty sharply about her if she would not still remain a lonely maiden all her life.

Miss Martin. I am sure it were better to remain

a lonely maiden all my life than take up with such pitiful company as some of your good matrons do, and rather more respectable too.

Lady Good. No, child; a married woman is always more respectable than a single one, let her be married to whom she will.

Miss Martin. Indeed! Can one give to another what he is not possessed of himself? Can a woman receive any additional respectability because some drivelling, insignificant man, whom all the world despises, has put a wedding-ring upon her finger?—ha! ha! ha! But I suppose a good settlement is the honour your ladyship means.

Lady Good. No, indeed: I say, every married woman is more respectable than a single one, independently of all settlements. What else do you think would have induced me, with the fortune I had, to marry Sir Benjamin Goodbody? for his person was disagreeable, and his best friends admitted he was no conjurer. Don't mistake me, however; I mean no disrespect to his memory. He was a very good man, and I have lamented him sincerely. And what else do you think would have induced my cousin Frances to give her hand to that poor puny creature, Mr. Periwinkle, but to place herself in this respectable state.

Miss Martin. Ha! ha! ha! I did not expect to hear such strong examples quoted from my own family.

Lady Good. Don't make a jest of it; I speak seriously, and you ought to think seriously.

Miss Martin. I think very seriously that, if you would not pester me continually with attempts to make up a match for me with every man of fortune that falls in our way, I should be very happy, my dear aunt, to live still with you, and take care of your declining years, in return for the tenderness and attention you have bestowed on my youth. Why would you put me away from you? are you tired of my company?

Lady Good. Oh, Mary! talk not of taking care of my declining years: I should be contented to be crippled or bed-ridden all my life, could I but see you happily and honourably married.

Miss Martin (*kissing LADY GOODBODY'S hand, tenderly*). My dear aunt! pardon my petulance and eagerness. I will strive to please you more: but do give up the present pursuit, I beseech you.

Lady Good. No, no, my dear! I love you too well for that. But I am unfit to say any thing to you at present. [*Exit.*

Miss Martin (*looking after her*). My dear, kind, perverse aunt! you will be the death of me. (*To HANNAH.*) Come, my dear, we'll retire to our rooms too. What have you been thinking of all this time?

Hannah. I have just been wondering whether my grandmother was christened Hannah or Hannabella.

Miss Martin. What puts that into your head?

Hannah. Because Mr. Worshipton said at dinner,

when my aunt called me Hannah, that she should have called me Hannabella, which is a prettier name.

Miss Martin. Mr. Worshipton has been amusing himself. — Oh heigh ho! I wish we were at home again, in our old mansion in the north.

Enter HOPKINS.

Hop. (*gently putting her hand on MISS MARTIN'S shoulder*). My dear child! pardon the liberty: I still feel for you the affection of a dry nurse: what is the matter with you?

Miss Martin. Still the old grievance, my dear Hopkins; my aunt trying to make up a match for me.

Hop. Ay, poor good lady: she can't leave that alone for the soul of her. She would make up matches at home for every country girl in the neighbourhood if she could. I even believe, if I had not been once married already, which she thinks sufficient for the credit of any woman, she would still be for trying to make up a match for my old crazy bones. Heaven help me! — But don't let it vex you thus, my dear ma'am: I have brought you something that will please and divert you.

Miss Martin. What is that, Hopkins?

Hop. A letter from my little boy whom my lady puts to school, written with his own hand, dear little fellow! and the first he ever wrote in his life. It begins "Dear Mother," and all as pretty as any other letter.

Miss Martin. I thank you, my good Hoppy! I shall indeed have a pleasure in reading it. Go with me to my room, and show it to me there: it does my ill-humour good to see thee so happy; I will strive to think less of my own concerns. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A small room leading to other rooms in the house: JENKINS discovered standing at one of the doors, behind which hang great coats, &c. beckoning to somebody who does not appear; presently enters WORSHIPTON, stepping upon tiptoe.

Wor. Thou hast some intelligence for me? (*In a low voice.*)

Jen. Yes; the old lady and her woman are coming this way presently to go to Miss Martin's room, and the heiress will follow them as soon as she can find a glove that she is searching for. I heard this just now as I listened at her door; so conceal yourself here amongst these great coats for a few minutes, and you may way-lay her as she passes. (*Speaking in a half whisper.*)

Wor. Is my uncle still reading in the next chamber?

Jen. I believe so. (*Going to a door at the bottom of the stage, and listening.*) He is just now rising to go away. (*WORSHIPTON shrinks back, and is going*

hastily out.) No, no! don't be afraid; he is gone out the other way to visit old Rycroft, I suppose.

Wor. (*speaking in a loud voice*). Good then: we shall have the coast clear: let us hide ourselves. Thou must remain with me, for I may have occasion for thee. [*Hide themselves amongst the great coats.*]

Enter LADY GOODBODY and HOPKINS, talking as they enter.

Lady Good. (*in rather a low voice*). Very true, Hopkins, and if my god-daughter turns out an industrious girl, I'll add something to what she saves myself, to get her a husband; for you know she is not very sightly.

Hop. (*in a loud voice, having lingered some paces behind to pick up something she has dropped*). Ay, there is plenty of husbands to be had, my lady, though a girl be ever so homely, if she have but money enough. [*Exeunt LADY GOODBODY and HOPKINS.*]

Wor. (*behind the door*). Ay, they are talking of their heiress now. They are extremely suspicious of designs upon her, but we'll jockey them for all that. Ha! here comes the game.

Enter HANNAH (and WORSHIPTON comes from his concealment).

Hannah. O la! are you there, Mr. Worshipton? I saw nobody here but the great coats hanging by the wall.

Wor. You are not offended, I hope, that a great coat should be turned into something that can speak to you, and gaze upon you, and admire you, Miss Clodpate. (*Ogling her.*)

Hannah. La, now! it is so droll!

Jen. (*peeping from his hiding-place*). Droll enough, by my faith!

Wor. I have been waiting here concealed a long time for this happiness; for your aunt is so jealous I can find no opportunity of speaking to you. She knows well enough it is impossible to behold such beauty and attraction without — pardon me: you know very well what I would say to you if I durst.

Hannah. La, no! how should I know? Do you mean that I am beautiful, and what d'ye call it?

Wor. Indeed I do: your beauty must be admired, though your prudent aunt does all she can to conceal it.

Hannah. La, now! you say so because my hair has been allowed to grow so long, and aunt and every body says that my cars are the prettiest thing about me. But it an't aunt's fault: I shall have it cut when we go to town.

[*Putting her hair behind her ears awkwardly with her fingers, and beginning to look rather brisk.*]

Wor. (*looking at them with affected admiration*). O, beautiful indeed!

Jen. (*peeping from his hiding-place*). Ay, I

thought the beauty lay hid under some snug covert or other. It was very well concealed, by my faith!

Hannah. La, now! did you think they were as pretty as they are?

Wor. I must confess I should have expected to find them somewhat of a longer shape. But conceal them for pity's sake, my charming Hannah: this is dangerous.

Hannah. Hannabclla, you know.

Wor. O yes, Hannabella I mean. It is dangerous to look upon so much beauty, when one at the same time thinks of the extraordinary accomplishments of your mind.

Hannah. La, now! who has told you that I got by heart six whole parts of the hundred and nineteenth psalm, word for word, in the space of two mornings only, and every body said it was very extraordinary? Somebody has told it you I know.

Wor. No, nobody; I just found it out myself.

Hannah. La, now! that is so wonderful! Aunt herself said that my cousin Martin could not have done it so well.

Wor. Your cousin Martin! Would any one compare you together? Don't you know how much every body is delighted with you?

Hannah. La, no! nobody tells me any thing about it.

Wor. Indeed! that is very extraordinary: but they have their own ends in that. Don't they watch you, and keep always somebody near you?

Hannah. To be sure, my aunt often desires my cousin to take care of me when we go out.

Wor. I thought so. — Ah! my charming Hannabclla! (*Sighs two or three times, but she continues staring vacantly, without taking any notice of it.*)

Jen. (*aside to WORSHIPTON, as he walks near his hiding-place, rather at a loss what to do.*) Give a good heavy grunt, sir, and she'll ask what's the matter with you: mere sighing is no more to her than the blowing of your nose.

Wor. (*ogling HANNAH, and giving a groan.*) Oh! oh!

Hannah. La! what is the matter with you? have you the stomach-ache? My aunt can cure that.

Wor. Nay, my dear Hannabella, it is yourself that must cure me. I have got the heart-ache. It is your pity I must implore. (*Kneeling, and taking her hand.*)

Hannah. O, sure now! to see you kneeling so — it is so droll! I don't know what to say, it is so droll!

Wor. Say that you will be mine, and make me happy: there is nothing a lover can do that I will not do to please you.

Hannah. Miss Languish's lover made songs upon her.

Wor. I'll do so too, or any thing: but don't let

your aunt know that I have spoken to you, she would be so angry.

Hannah. O no! she is very fond of people being married.

Wor. Yes, but she will be angry at us though; so don't tell her, nor Miss Martin, nor any body a word of the matter. Do promise this, my charming Hannabella! my life depends upon it. (*Kneeling again, and taking her hand.*) O don't pull away from me this fair hand!

Hannah. La! I'm sure I an't pulling it away.

Wor. (*starting up suddenly from his knees.*) There's somebody coming.

[*Runs out, and leaves HANNAH strangely bewildered, and not knowing where to run.*]

Hannah. O dear, dear! what shall I do!

Enter HOPKINS.

Hop. What is the matter, Miss Clodpate? My lady sent me to see what is become of you: are you frightened for any thing, that you keep standing here in such a strange manner?

Hannah. O la, no! but I just thought somehow, that you would think there was somebody with me. (*HOPKINS looks about the room suspiciously.*) O no: you need not look for any body: those are only great coats by the wall, you see; and Mr. Worshipton's an't there, you see; for his has got five capes to it, and the cloth is of a much lighter colour, and it has got more button-holes to it too than any body's else in the house.

Hop. (*still staring strangely about.*) Mr. Worshipton's! was he here?

Hannah. La, no! an't I just telling you that he an't here?

Hop. (*aside.*) Well, this is droll enough too — but no, no! it can't be any thing neither. (*Aloud.*) Your aunt is impatient for you, Miss Clodpate.

Hannah. O la! I'm going to her directly.

[*Exeunt HANNAH and HOPKINS.*]

Jen. (*coming forward from his hiding-place, and shrugging up his shoulders as he looks after HANNAH.*) This is the price my master is willing to pay for his curriple and his horses.

Re-enter WORSHIPTON.

Wor. I think we have done pretty well, Jenkins, for the first onset.

Jen. Yes, to be sure, sir; — but — but —

Wor. But what, Jenkins?

Jen. Pardon my freedom, sir; — but don't you think she is rather too great a fool for —

Wor. Poh! poh! poh! she is all the better for that: it is a great advantage, and one that I am certain of.

Jen. As to the certainty of it nobody will dispute that, I believe.

Wor. Don't trouble thy head about it, if I'm

satisfied. And remember the caution I gave you to say nothing, in the way of asking questions at the servants, to lead them to suspect what we are about.

Jen. Don't be afraid of that, sir: I can't if I would; for the man-servant that attends them is a country booby, who has not been in the family a fortnight, and knows nothing at all about it; and my lady's woman, with her staunch old-fashioned notions, has taken such a dislike to me that I hate to have any thing to say to her.

Wor. So much the better. Yes, yes! things will go swimmingly on: I shall soon jockey them all.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A chamber all littered over with books, papers, old coats, shoes, &c. &c. AMARYLLIS discovered sitting by a table with a pen in his hand, and paper before him. After musing some time, he writes and then blots out what he has written.

Amar. (to himself). This won't do: it does not sound well. What a teasing thing it is, when one has got a beautiful line, to be stopped thus for want of a good rhyme to couple with it! (*Repeating with great emphasis and gesticulation.*)

“On thy ideal pinions let me fly,
High-soaring Fancy, far above the sky:
Beyond the starry sphere tow'ring sublime,
Where vulgar thought hath never dared to—

No, climb does not please me: it is too heavy a motion for thought. (*Musing and rubbing his forehead.*)

Beyond all thought inspiring vulgar rhyme.”

No, that won't do neither. (*Musing again and biting his nails.*) Pest take it! if I should bite my fingers to the quick it won't come to me. (*A gentle knock at the door.*) Who's there? (*In an angry voice.*)

Dolly (half opening the door). 'Tis I, sir; does your fire want coals?

Amar. (in a softened voice). O, it is you, Dolly. Come in and see, my good girl. (*Enter DOLLY, and pretends to be busy in putting the room in order, whilst AMARYLLIS takes his pen and begins several times to write, but as often lays it down again, looking at the same time over his shoulder at her.*) Plague take it! she puts it all out of my head. (*Leans his arm on the table for some time, still looking frequently about her.*) Faith, I believe she has a sneaking kindness for me, she finds always so many little things to do in my room. She's a good, rosy, tight girl, on my soul! (*Aside.*) No, my pretty Dolly, that book is too heavy for you: I'll put it in its place. (*Getting up with great animation and running to her.*)

Dolly. O no, sir! I'll do it very well myself. I

just thought, as how your room would be in confusion, and so—

Amar. And so you came to put my head into confusion too, you little baggage.

Dolly. O sure! I hope not, sir.

Amar. You're a sly gipsy, Dolly. But you think of me sometimes then, eh?

[*Pinching her ear and patting her cheek.*]

Wor. (without). Amaryllis! Amaryllis! are you at home, Amaryllis?

[*AMARYLLIS runs back to his table again, and pretends to be writing, without attending to the inksstand and several books which he oversets in his haste, whilst DOLLY makes her escape by the opposite door just as WORSHIPTON enters.*]

Wor. I heard you were at home, so I made bold to enter. What, writing so composedly after all this noise?

Amar. (looking up with affected apathy). Yes, I believe the cat has been playing her gambols amongst my books.

Wor. It may have been the cat, to be sure, for those creatures have witchcraft about them, and can do many wonderful things o' winter nights, as my old nurse used to tell me; but if you had told me it was half-a-dozen of dogs that made such a noise, I should scarcely have believed you. Cats too can put on what forms they please, I've been told; and though they generally assume that of an old woman, yours has been more civil to you, I believe, in taking the more agreeable form of a young one. I caught a glimpse of her, Amaryllis, as she fled into the other chamber.

Amar. Poh! Dolly has been putting my books in order: is she gone? (*Pretending to look round for her.*)

Wor. Well, well, never mind it! I came on a little business to you, else I should have been sorry to disturb you; for I know well enough you are always employed about some sublime thing or other.

Amar. You are too flattering. You come upon business?

Wor. Yes, Amaryllis, and you are so good-natured, that I sha'n't make any preamble about it. I want to please a lady, or make a lady believe I am pleased with her, which is the same thing, you know; and I want to borrow one of your poems that I may present it to her as written in praise of herself. However, she is not very refined in her taste, any common-place thing will do.

Amar. I am infinitely flattered, Mr. Worshipton, that you should apply to me for a common-place thing. Since this is the style of poetry that suits you at present, I can't help thinking you might have succeeded pretty well in writing it yourself.

Wor. Poh, now! you don't take my meaning. I meant any little piece that has cost you little time

or study, will do very well for my purpose : I should be very sorry to take one of your good ones.

Amar. Sir, I have bestowed some time and study upon all my pieces, and should be rather unwilling to think I had any other to offer you.

Wor. How perverse you are in misunderstanding me ! The best poet that ever lived has a best and a worst poem, and I only make the humble request to have one of your least sublime ones. Do, my dear friend, look through your budget. Many of your works, I know, are master-pieces, and I have had a great desire for a long time to hear you read some of them, but was unwilling to disturb you of an evening.

Amar. (*softened*). I believe I must find something for you. Will you have a love-song or a sonnet ?

Wor. Any of them will do ; she does not know the one from the other.

Amar. (*taking papers from his table*). Here are verses addressed to Delia playing on the lute.

Wor. (*taking it*). This will do very well ; for though I don't believe she plays upon the lute, it will be civil to suppose that she does, till we really know the contrary.

Amar. You speak lightly of the lady, Worshipton, for a lover.

Wor. I am not so refined in my ideas of these matters as you are, Amaryllis. I am a man of the world, and that character can't be supported long on a slender fortune : the lady is very rich.—But mum : not a word of this to any one.

Amar. You may depend upon me. But you said you should like to hear me read some of my poems. I am not very busy at present ; I will indulge you with pleasure.

Wor. You are extremely obliging.—For a man pretty well received by women of the first circles, as I believe without vanity I may say of myself, it would be a silly trick to marry at all, did not my circumstances compel me to it ; but I shall make such a choice of a wife as shall make me pass as much as possible for a single man still.

Amar. (*impatently*). Very well !—I have a poem here which I think you will be pleased with.

Wor. You are very good indeed.—But you see how I am circumstanced : I must have fortune.—How foolish it was in the Marchioness of Edgemoor to think I was going to clope with Lady Susan ! I never paid more than common attention to her in my life. It is impossible for me to marry without fortune.

Amar. (*still more impatient*). Well that is all very true.—But here is a pastoral which you will not, I hope, find unworthy your attention, if you will have the goodness to give it me.

Wor. You are infinitely obliging ; but I am extremely sorry my time will not at present allow me so great a pleasure.

Amar. Then I'll read you this elegy, which is shorter.

Wor. I'm really obliged to you, but—

Amar. Or perhaps you would like to hear my grand ode, which is in the next room. (*Runs out to fetch it*.)

Wor. (*alone*). How that man pesters one with his vanity ! Shall I make my escape while he is gone ? No, no ! that would be too rude : I'll try another way of getting off.—Worshipton ! Worshipton ! (*Calling out with a feigned voice*.)

Re-enter AMARYLLIS, with his poem in his hand.

Amar. Now, Worshipton, I'll show you what I believe, without vanity, I may call hitting off the figurative and sublime style in poetry, pretty well.

Wor. I beg pardon : I am extremely mortified, but I cannot possibly stay to hear it now, for Sir John waits without, calling for me, and I must positively go to him. Did you not hear him call very loud ?

Amar. O, if Sir John is without we can ask him in, and he shall hear it too. (*Going towards the door*.)

Wor. (*stopping him eagerly*). No, no, my good friend, not now, if you please : it is impossible : we shall hear you another time.

Amar. I shall be at home all the evening ; shall I expect you half an hour hence ?

Wor. No, not quite so soon, I thank you ; we shall be engaged. But we shall have great pleasure very soon—good bye to you. (*Hurrying away*.)

Amar. (*stopping him*). In an hour then, perhaps, I may expect you : I shall be at leisure all the evening.

Wor. Really you are most exceedingly obliging, but I am afraid it will not be in our power. Excuse my haste, I am very much disappointed. (*Going hastily*.)

Amar. (*stopping him again*). Nay, surely after supper you can contrive to come to me.

Wor. O no, no ! one has enough to do then to digest the horrible eating of this diabolical inn, without surfeiting one's self—I beg pardon ! without giving one's self the pleasure, I meant to say, of—excuse me ! excuse me ! I must not keep him waiting any longer ; you heard how loud he called me : I am extremely disappointed indeed.

[*Exit, breaking from him in great haste.*]

Amar. (*looking after him angrily*). Well, let him go, pitiful fellow ! he is so taken up with himself and his own little paltry vanity, he has neither capacity nor taste to relish high poetry.

[*Exit very majestically.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A dark narrow passage-room, with the door of an adjoining chamber left open, in which are discovered
LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, and HANNAH.

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD and WORSHIPTON.

Sir John. The light is gone out : let us wait here till David brings us another candle. Ha ! is it fair to wait here ? (*Perceiving the ladies.*)

Lady Good. (*within, to* MISS MARTIN.) Indeed, Mary, you ought to consider yourself very fortunate in having the opportunity of pleasing an agreeable man.

Miss Martin (*within*). Mr. Worshipton, do you mean ?

Wor. (*in a low voice, stealing eagerly nearer the door*). They are talking of me, dear creatures ; let us hear what they have to say upon this subject.

Sir John. Fy, Worshipton ! would you turn eaves-dropper ?

Lady Good. (*within*). No, you know well enough it is Sir John I mean.

Sir John (*drawing also near the door*). Ha ! talking of me too. Well, if people will converse with their doors open, there is no help for it.

Miss Martin (*within*). How should I know who your ladyship means by an agreeable man ?

Lady Good. You may know at least whom I do not mean ; for that poor frivolous fine gentleman can be agreeable to nobody.

Wor. (*aside to himself*). Old hag ! her face is as senseless and as coarse as a red-topped January turnip.

Lady Good. (*within*). Sir John is a man that any woman might like. He is a man of fortune.

Miss Martin (*within*). So is our neighbour, Squire Numbscull.

Lady Good. (*within*). Fy, child ! Sir John is a well-made man, and—

Miss Martin (*within*). And so I must like him for not being crooked.

Lady Good. (*within*). You are both perverse and foolish. Sir John—

Miss Martin (*within, earnestly*). If you have any love for me, aunt, drop this subject for ever : the very mention of his name is distressing to me.

Sir John (*in a low voice, turning from the door quickly*). You need not be so vehement, fair lady : I have no intention to give you the smallest trouble.

Lady Good. (*within*). I leave you to your own humours, Miss Martin ; you have got beyond all bearing with your nonsense.

[*Exit into an inner chamber.*]

Sir John. I thought her sensible, I confess ; but how confoundedly pert and flippant she has become.

[*Aside, on the front of the stage.*]

Wor. (*going to him conceitedly*). You seem disturbed, Sir John.

Sir John. Not a jot ! not a jot, truly ! It rather amuses me.

Enter DAVID with a candle, holding his spread hand before it as if to prevent it from blowing out.

David. I should have brought the candle sooner, but I have but a short memory, your honour (*to* SIR JOHN), and a man with a short memory is like a—

Sir John. No matter what he's like : go on with the light, and we'll follow thee. (*Exit* DAVID, *looking very foolish.*) That fellow has become nauseous with his similes.

[*As they are going out, WORSHIPTON stops* SIR JOHN.

Wor. They speak again ; do stop here a moment.

Hannah (*within*). Would it grieve you, cousin, if my aunt were to propose Mr. Worshipton to you, instead of Sir John ?

Miss Martin (*within*). No, my dear, not at all.

Wor. (*in a low voice*). You see I am in favour with the niece, Sir John, though the aunt gives the preference to you.

Hannah (*within*). I thought as much, for he's a very pretty gentleman, isn't he ?

Miss Martin (*within*). He is even so.

Hannah (*within*). And he dresses so pretty and new fashioned, don't he ?

Miss Martin (*within*). It is very true.

Hannah (*within*). And then he talks so clever, like the fine captain that run off with Miss Money. He is as clever every bit, although he don't swear so much ; an't he, Mary ?

Miss Martin (*within*). I make no doubt of it. And had Lady Goodbody laid her snare to catch him for me, it would not have grieved me at all.

Wor. (*in triumph*). Do you hear that, Sir John ?

Hannah (*within*). It would not have grieved you at all ?

Miss Martin (*within*). No, my dear ; for with all these precious qualities of his, his good or bad opinion is of no consequence to me. I could bear such a creature to suppose I have designs upon him, without being uneasy about the matter. (*Walking up and down disturbed, and then talking to herself.*) To appear to Sir John Hazelwood as a female fortune-hunter, endeavouring to draw in a wealthy husband for her own convenience—O, it is not to be endured ! To be degraded in the eyes of the very man whose good opinion I should most value—it is enough to make one distracted !

[*WORSHIPTON retires behind* SIR JOHN *very foolishly, who remains fixed to the spot with surprise.*]

Hannah (*within*). Do you love Sir John ?

Miss Martin (*within*). No, my dear, I am not weak enough to do that, when I know I shall never

be beloved again. Could I have gained his good opinion, I should have been contented, without pretending to his heart.

Sir John (*vehemently*). But thou shalt have both, by this blessed hour!

Miss Martin (*within*). But now, as my aunt carries on her attack, I don't know how to maintain my credit: I shall be compelled to be downrightly rude to him.

Sir John. Ay, very right, very right, my brave girl!—It is a glorious girl! I adore her for her spirit.

Hannah (*within*). It gets very cold: I'll shut the door now, for the smoke is all gone.

Miss Martin (*within*). What, has the door been standing open all this while?

Hannah (*within*). Didn't you see me open it to let out the smoke?

Miss Martin (*within*). I am so harassed and vexed, I don't see what is before mine eyes: shut it directly.

[*HANNAH shuts the door.*]

Sir John. We are dark now, but I hear David's footsteps in the passage. Poor fellow! I have affronted him. David! friend David! (*Calling.*)

Re-enter DAVID with a light, looking very sour.

David. What do you want, sir?

Sir John. To be lighted to our rooms, my good David.—Nay, don't look so grave, man. I spoke rather shortly to you, indeed, because I was thinking of something else at the time; but you are too wise, my good David, to mind such small trifles as these.

David (*with his face brightening*). Lord love you, sir! I have both given and taken short words ere now: that is nothing to me. But I wish I may remember to call your honour in the morning, for as I was a saying, a man with a short memory—

Sir John. Yes, yes, let us have it all now, as we go along; and put this under your pillow to prevent you from over-sleeping yourself, my friend David. (*Giving him money.*)

David. O sir, I can't refuse any thing your honour offers me, but there is no occasion for this.

Sir John. Put it in your pocket, man: there is a virtue in it.

[*They move on; SIR JOHN following DAVID, and WORSHIPTON kicking his shins from side to side, with affected carelessness, as he goes after them.*]

Sir John (*archly turning as he goes out*). Thou'rt making a strange noise with thy feet, Worshipton.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

WORSHIPTON'S chamber.

Enter WORSHIPTON, calling as he enters.

Wor. Jenkins! Jenkins!

Jen. (*without*). Here, sir.

Enter JENKINS in his great coat and boots.

Wor. Are you ready to set off for this same licence?

Jen. Yes, sir, in a moment.

Wor. Well, make good speed then: there is no time to lose. Remember all the directions and precautions I have given thee: and think as thou goest along that thou art working for thyself as well as me, for thy services shall be nobly rewarded. Thou shalt have a slice out of Sir Rowland that will fatten thee up by-and-bye into a man of some consequence. Good speed to thee, my good Jenkins! and use thy discretion in every thing.—Hast thou bespoken music for our serenade?

Jen. I have found a sorry fiddler, who has got but three strings to his violin, for the fourth is supplied by a bit of pack-thread; and an old Highland piper, who has stopped here on his way from London to Lochaber; besides a bear-leader, who is going about the country with his hurdy-gurdy.

Wor. Well, well! if they make but noise enough it will do. But the most important thing is to have the chaise in waiting behind the old mill, that while the music is dinning in the ears of the old lady and her woman, we may convey our prize to it without being suspected. Have you engaged Will in our interest? and does he say the road between this and Middleton church is now passable?

Jen. You may depend upon him, sir, and the road too.

Wor. Thou art sure I may depend upon him?

Jen. Sure of it, sir. He will do much, he says, to serve your honour, but he'll go through fire and water to vex the old beldame. Lady Goodbody he means: he owes her a turn, I believe, for a half-crown she scrubbed off him when she paid him for the last stage he drove her.

Wor. This is fortunate. Where is Sir John just now?

Jen. With old Rycroft: he always gives him his draughts with his own hand, lest it should be neglected.

Wor. Then I may go to the stable without danger, and have some conversation with Will myself. By-the-bye I have never visited that old sick creature yet; do you tell him that I inquire for him sometimes?

Jen. I do, sir, and Rycroft don't expect more from you.

Wor. Very well, that is enough.—But we lose time. Here is money for thee: set off immediately.

[*JENKINS receives money and exits.*]

Wor. (*alone*). If this succeeds now, it will be a very lucky turn in my fortune; for I should have found it a difficult matter to have lived much longer upon credit. (*Musing a while.*) I wish after all it were a less expensive thing to be a man of fashion. Gold, as the proverb says, may be bought

too dear.—No, no: it can't be bought too dear by one who knows how to spend it with spirit. I shall, at least, have every thing my own way, for she is a great fool; that is one good thing we are sure of.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

A passage or outer room.

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD, looking eagerly to the opposite side of the stage.

Sir John. Here comes a lady, but not the one I'm in wait for.

Enter HANNAH.

Sir John. Good morning, Miss Clodpate, I hope your morning dreams have not been unpleasant: you are early up.

Hannah. I mistook the hour when the clock struck, for it is a queer-sounding clock they have here, and don't strike at all like the one we have at home.

Sir John. Good young ladies like every thing at home best.

Hannah. Yes indeed I do, for it was made by Mr. Pendlam, the great clock-maker in London. Isn't he clock-maker to the king?

Sir John. Indeed I don't know, ma'am.—But what pretty gloves you have got, Miss Clodpate; are not they of a particular colour?

Hannah. La! do you think them pretty? My aunt says they are not pretty, but I think they are, and that was the reason why I bought them.

Sir John. And an excellent one too, madam. Pray when did you see your worthy father, Sir Rowland? I hope he enjoys as good spirits as he used to do long ago.

Hannah. I saw him the twenty-fourth of last September, and he was very well, I thank you, sir.

Sir John. Does he never leave home now?

Hannah. O, there is Miss Martin coming; I must go away.

Sir John. And why must you go?

Hannah. Because my aunt says—in case you should have any thing to say to her.

Sir John. You are perfectly right to do whatever your aunt desires you. [*Exit HANNAH.*]

Enter MISS MARTIN by the opposite side, SIR JOHN looking at her with great satisfaction as she approaches. She curtsies slightly, continuing to pass on.

Sir John. Good morning, madam.

Miss Martin. Good morning, sir.

Sir John. Do you pass me so hastily, Miss Martin? To run away so were enough to put it into a vain person's head to believe himself dangerous.

Miss Martin. Perhaps, then, yours is not without that idea.

Sir John. Yet I ought not to be flattered by it neither; for women, it is said, fly from small dangers, and encounter the greater more willingly.

Miss Martin. Yes, Sir John, we are the reverse of the men in this respect, which accounts likewise for your detaining me here.

Sir John. Nay, in this you are mistaken: it is no mean danger that proves my boldness at this moment. [*Placing himself between her and the door gaily.*]

Miss Martin. Your boldness indeed is obvious enough, whatever I may think of your courage.—But I have no particular desire to pass this way: I can find out my way to the breakfast-room by another door if you have any fancy for standing sentry at this post. [*Turning to go by another door.*]

Sir John (quitting the door). And you will leave me thus scornfully. There is an old proverb I could repeat about woman's scorn.

Miss Martin. I know your old proverb perfectly well, Sir John; and I am obliged to you for mentioning it at present, since it sets me completely at liberty, without ill manners, to say, I am heartily tired of this parley. [*Exit, with affected carelessness.*]

Sir John. Well, this is strange enough! she will charm me, I believe, with every thing that is disagreeable to me: for I dislike a gay woman, I can't endure a talking one, and these kind of snip-snap answers I detest.—But I have been too particular in my notions about these matters: I have always been too severe upon women:—I verily believe they are better kind of creatures than I took them for.—Softly, however! I will observe her well before I declare myself. [*Exit.*]

Enter AMARYLLIS, with a coat in his hand, and dressed in his night-gown.

Amar. (alone). What a plague is the matter with the string of my bell this morning that it won't ring! I wish my Dolly would come and brush this coat for me. [*Listening.*] I hear her voice coming up-stairs; she'll be here immediately.—This girl becomes every day more pleasing and more necessary to me. Ever since I entered this house she has aired my linen, set my slippers by the fire in a morning (for, good soul! she heard me complain that I am troubled with a chillness in my feet), and done all those little kindly offices about me with such a native grace as beggars all refinement. But what, indeed, are the embellishments of artful manners to the graces of simple unadorned nature?—She is at hand.—Dolly! my sweet Dolly! [*Calling to her.*]

Dolly (without). Coming, sir.

Amar. There is something of natural harmony in the very tones of her voice.

Dolly (without, in a sharp, angry key). Get down to the kitchen, you vile, abominable cur! Do you think I have nothing to do but mop the stairs after

your dirty feet? Get down to the kitchen with you! (*The howling of a dog heard without.*) Yes, yes, howl away there! I'll break every bone in your skin if you comes this way again, that I will

Enter DOLLY.

Amar. Why Dolly, my good girl, this is rather an unpretty way of talking.

Dolly. 'Tis but the dog, sir. Vile, nasty hound! he is worser than his master.

Amar. Than his master?

Dolly. Yes, than his master, Mr. Worshipton. His dog's tricks are like his own, for he don't care what trouble he gives to a poor servant.

Amar. So you don't love Mr. Worshipton, Dolly? Should you have treated a dog of mine so, eh? (*Pinching her cheek kindly.*) You smile at that question, you gipsy: I know you would not.

Dolly. I should, indeed, have had some more regard for the brute, so as he had belonged to your honour.

Amar. I thank you, my sweet girl, but you ought to speak gently to every thing.—And don't call me "your honour." I don't like to hear my pretty Dolly call me so.

Dolly. O daisy! what shall I call you then?

Amar. Call me sir, or Mr. Amaryllis, or, when you would be very kind to me, my dear Mr. Amaryllis.

Dolly. My dear Mr. Amarals.

Amar. Amaryllis is my name, Dolly.

Dolly. Yes, yes! I know your name is Amarals.

Amar. No, child, Amaryllis.—But you'll pronounce it better by-and-bye. And if my Dolly will take this coat and brush it for me, when she brings it to my chamber again, I have something to say to her in private which will not, I hope, be displeasing to her. [*Exit, looking tenderly at her.*]

Dolly (alone). What can he have to say to me now? Odds dickens! I'll wager he means to buy me a new gown.—Faith! he means some other thing perhaps. Well, if he were not so much taken up with his books, and his papers, and his poetry, and such trash, I should like mightily to keep a maid of my own, and be called Mrs. Amarals.—I'll bring it to this if I can. (*Going out with the coat.*) He shall brush his own coat, then, howsomever.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Moonlight: a field or small court behind the inn, and every thing covered with snow.

Enter Fiddler, Piper, and Hurdy-Gurdy Man, each with his instrument.

Fiddler. How cold it is! 'tis well we are for-

tified with roast beef and brandy, friend: didn't I tell you we should want it all? [*To Piper.*]

Piper. Very true: but you would not keep a lady of family and condition waiting till we crammed ourselves, Maister John.

Hurdy-gurdy man. Dat would be impolite in verite.

Fiddler. Hang me! if I would play with an empty stomach to the best lady in Christendom. What makes her fancy that our music will sound better in this here cold field than within doors in such a night as this? I likes to be snug myself, and I never likes to put any one to hardship.

Piper. Why, thou art a good-humoured, kindly hearted fellow, John; I must say that for thee. But this is the true way for all love music, dinna ye ken? Out among the high rocks, or under a castle-wall, man!—But now, as we are all to play together, as it were in a concert (*taking out his snuff-box, and rapping on the lid with an air of importance*), dinna ye think, gentlemen, it will be expedient to inquire first, whether we can play the same tunes or not, as I suppose none of us trouble ourselves with music-books and sic like.

Fiddler. I can play a pretty many tunes, piper, but none of them all goes so well on my fiddle as Ally Croaker.

Piper. Ay, that is good enough in town to play to an orange-woman under a lamp-post, or sic like; but this is a lady of family, man, and she must have something above the vulgar.

Fiddler. Play any thing you please, then: it will be all the same thing in my day's work whether I play one thing or another.

Piper. Day's work, man! you talk about playing on your fiddle as a cobbler would do about mending of shoes. No, no! we'll do the thing decently and creditably.

Hurdy-gurdy man. Suppose we do give her de little chanson d'amour?

Piper. Song a moor! what's that?

Hurdy-gurdy man. I do play it very pretty on my hurdy-gurdy.

Piper. Ay, you may play it well enough, perhaps, for your Italian foreigners, or sic like, that don't know any better; but any body that has been in Lochaber, good troth! would count it no better than jargon, man.

Hurdy-gurdy man. But I do say when de peoples of my country hear your pipe, dey do so. (*Stopping his ears, and mimicking one who runs away.*) And I do say dat I play more better music dan you, one, two, ten, twenty times over.

Piper. Heaven help ye, man! it's lang sin pride began: will ye compare yourself to the Laird of M'Rory's piper.

Fiddler. A great affair to be sure of the Laird of M'Rory's piper.

Piper. You rran eat a bow o' meal before you be like him though.

Fiddler. Thank heaven! I have more christian-like victuals to eat.

Piper. Better than you or your grandfather either ha' been glad o' worse fare.

Fiddler. Yes, that may be the case in your country like enough, where, unless it be a tailor, or sic like (*mimicking him*), few of you taste any thing that has ever had life in it.

Piper. Sir, an' it were not for respect to the lady yonder (*pointing to the window where HANNAH appears*), I would run this dirk into that nasty bulk of yours, and let out some o' the plum-pudding you pretend to be stuffed with, you swine that you are!

Fiddler. O never mind the lady, Master M'Rory; I'll box you for twopence.

[*Putting himself in a boxing posture.*]

Piper. Done, sir, for half the money.

[*Putting himself in the same posture.*]

Hurdy-gurdy man. Dese men very foolish: my hurdy-gurdy and I be but strangers in dis country: we will keep out of de way.

[*Retiring to a corner of the stage.*]

Enter WORSHIPTON and JENKINS.

Wor. Hold, hold! what is all this for? I hired you to give us harmony and not discord, and be hanged to you!

Fiddler. You shall have that too, an' please your honour.

Wor. But I want no more than I bargained for, so keep this for some other occasion, if you please.

Fiddler (*giving up*). Well, it don't signify, I can pick a quarrel with him another time.

Piper (*to fiddler*). Since the gentleman desires it, sir, I shall let you alone for this time; but confound you, sir, if you say a word against my country again, I'll make you a man of no country at all.

[*They take up their instruments, and go to different sides of the stage, still making signs of defiance to one another.*]

Wor. (*going to the window*). Are you there, my charming love?

Hannah. Yes, I have been here some time.

Wor. I could not come sooner.—Remember your promise; and in the mean time, what music shall they play?

Hannah. Just let them play a concert.

Wor. A concert.—Well, gentlemen, you are desired to play a concert.

Fiddler. That is to say, we are all to play together. What shall we play? (*To piper.*) Shall we play the Lady's Fancy?

Piper. A castock for the Lady's Fancy.

Fiddler. The Soldier's Delight then?

Piper. A —— for the Soldier's Delight! a tune for a twopenny ale-house.

Hurdy-gurdy man. Don't mind him (*to fiddler*), he be waspish: you and I will play Ma cher Amic.

Piper. Well, well! play what you please, both of you, but I'll play the Battle of Killycranky, and hang me, if your "Ah me" will be heard any more than the chirping of a cricket in the hearth.

[*They begin to play, and the piper drowns them both with his noise.*]

Wor. (*stopping his ears*). Give over! give over! bless my soul! the squeaking of a hundred pigs and the sow-driver at their heels is nothing to this. (*Going to the window.*) Well, my love, how did you like the concert?

Hannah (*above*). Very well, I thank you.

Wor. (*aside*). A lady of precious taste! (*Aloud.*) But would it not be better to hear them one at a time? Which of them shall I desire to play first?

Hannah (*above*). Bid that fiddler there, without the breeches, play me a tune on his bagpipes.

Piper. I must let you to wit, madam, that I am no fiddler, and the meanest man of all the M'Rorys would scorn to be a fiddler. My father before me was piper to the laird, and my grandfather was piper to the Highland Watch at the siege of Quebec; and if he had not piped long and well to them, madam, there wad ha' been less French blood spilt that day, let me tell you that, madam.

Wor. My good Mr. M'Rory, she meant you no offence, I assure you she respects your grandfather very much. Do oblige us with a tune on your bagpipes.

[*Piper makes a profound bow, and standing by the side-scene, half concealed, plays a Highland pibroch.*]

Wor. (*to piper*). I thank you, sir; your music is excellent: it is both martial and plaintive.—But where is our little warbler? Ha! here she comes.

Enter SALLY.

Come, my good girl, can you sing the song I gave you?

Sally. Yes, sir.

Wor. Let us have it then.

SONG.

Ah, Celia, beauteous, heavenly maid!

In pity to thy shepherd's heart,

Thus by thy fatal charms betray'd,

The gentle balm of hope impart.

Ah! give me hope in alldays sweet,

Sweet as thy lute's melodious strain;

I'll lay my laurels at thy feet,

And bless the hour that gave me pain.

Wor. Very well sung, indeed. (*To HANNAH.*) Don't you think, my charming Hannah, we have had music enough?

Hannah. Just as you please: I don't care.

Wor. I'll send them off then. (*To JENKINS,*

who comes forward.) Take them all to the other side of the house, and make them play under Miss Martin's window. You understand. (*Aside.*)

Jen. Yes, sir.

[*Exit* JENKINS and music, and enter WILL, who retires to a corner of the stage.

Wor. (*to HANNAH.*) How did you like my song, Hannabella?

Hannah. Very well: but la! it aint the song you promised to make upon me: it don't say one word about either you or me.

Wor. Ay, but it does though; for you are Celia, and I am the shepherd, and that is the fashion of love-songs.

Hannah. Well, that is so droll?

Wor. So it is.—And now, my dearest creature, fulfil your promise, and come over the window to me; the postchaise is waiting for us.

Hannah. La! is it the yellow chaise that stands commonly in the yard?

Wor. I can't tell you what colour it is, but it carries us off to be married. Come over the window, my love.

Hannah. La; I didn't promise to go over the window: aunt says they never do good who get over the window to be married: I only promised to run off with you.

Wor. But that is just the same thing. Do come now! there is no time to be lost. You have only to set your foot upon that stone which juts out from the wall, and you are in my arms in an instant.

Hannah. No, no! old aunt Gertrude went over the window to be married, and she fell and broke her leg, and never was married at all.

Wor. But you can't break your leg here, the wall is so low.—Come, come, there is no time to lose.

Hannah. O no, no! I know I shall come to harm.

Wor. Do, my dearest Hannabella, there is not the least danger. (*In a coaxing tone of voice.*)

Hannah. O no, no! aunt Gertrude broke her leg, and I'm sure I shall break mine too.

Wor. (*losing all patience.*) Damn your aunt Gertrude, and all the fools of the family! I'll give you leave to cut my head off if you fall.

Hannah. I'll go away, I won't stay here to be damned. (*Whimpering, and turning from the window.*)

Wor. Forgive me, my love; don't go away: I'll do any thing to please you.—What shall we do?

Will (*coming forward.*) Don't press the lady to get over the window, sir; I'll find a way of getting her out of the door, which I shall explain to you afterwards.

Wor. But her chamber enters through the old lady's; so how can you get her out.

Will. By unkenning the old lady, to be sure; I'll do that fast enough.

Wor. (*to HANNAH.*) Then wait in your chamber, my dearest creature, till we come for you. (*Aside as he goes off with WILL.*) What a fool it is! who could have thought she would have been so obstinate. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

A small hall, with the doors of several rooms opening into it.

Enter WORSHIPTON, and WILL with a candle and burnt paper in his hand.

Will (*thrusting the burnt paper under one of the doors.*) Now, my good Lady Charity! I'll be even with you for the half-crown you saved off me.—She'll smell the burning soon enough, I warrant ye; for your notable ladies, like her, poke their noses into every corner, and get out of bed at every little noise, to see that no rat be running off with one of their old shoes.—Do you go, please your honour, and wait at that door there, which is the only one that opens to the staircase, and I'll send the young lady to you immediately. You told her our plan?

Wor. Yes, I returned to the window, and told her.

Will. I have procured a trusty lad to drive in my place, and you'll find every thing as you ordered it.

Wor. I thank you, my good fellow: I'll make your fortune for this.

Will. I know your honour is a noble-minded gentleman. [*Exit* WORSHIPTON.

Will (*alone, listening at the door.*) Yes, yes, she smells it now: I hear her stirring. (*Bawling very loud.*) Fire! fire! fire! The house is on fire! Fire! fire! fire!

Enter LADY GOODBODY in her night-clothes, followed by HANNAH.

Lady Good. Mercy on us! how strong I smell it here! Where are all the servants? Call every body up. (*Exit HANNAH by the staircase door.*) Is that the way out? Stay, Hannah, and take me with you.

Will. Your ladyship had better take hold of my arm, and I'll take you safe out.

Lady Good. Do take me out! do take me out! Fire! fire! fire! is there nobody coming to us? (*Takes hold of WILL's arm, who staggers along with her first to one side of the stage, and then to the other.*) Why, what are you about, fellow? I'll get better along by myself.

Will. Never fear! never fear! I'll warrant I'll take care of your ladyship.

Lady Good. Why don't you go faster then? Let go my arm, I say. Is the fellow mad or drunk?

Will. I'll take care of your ladyship. Old ladies

are often a-stumbling : take good care of your feet, madam.

Lady Good. Look to your own feet, fool ! and let me alone ! The man's distracted ! let go my arm, I say ! (*She struggles to get free : he keeps fast hold of her, and hobbles zigzag over the stage, she all the while calling out fire, till they get to the staircase door, where he falls down with his body right across the door to prevent its opening, as if he were in a fit.*) Heaven preserve us ! the man's in a fit, and the door won't open. Who's there ? Fire ! fire ! fire !

Enter Landlady and DOLLY.

Land. Fire in my house, mercy on us ! how strong it smells here. I'm a ruined woman ! Where can it have broken out ? Oh ! Oh !

Dolly. Lack-a-daisy ! I smell it over head. I'll pawn my life it is in the north garret, where my new gown lies. O dear ! O dear !

Land. (*running distractedly about.*) Fire ! fire ! Water ! water ! will nobody assist a poor ruined woman ? Oh, all my good furniture ! Oh, my new dimity bed.

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD in his night-gown.

Sir John. Confound your new dimity bed ! Where is Miss Martin ?

Lady Good. O my child ! my child ! where is my child ?

Sir John. I'll go for her. But here she comes : all's well now ; let it burn as it will. (*Enter Miss MARTIN, and SIR JOHN runs eagerly up to her, but stops short suddenly.*) My old sick fellow is in bed, and can't stir a limb to save himself ; I must carry him out in my arms.

[*Going hastily out, but is stopped by AMARYLLIS, who enters grotesquely dressed in his nightcap.*

Amar. Where are you going ? where has it broken out ?

Land. O sir ! it is broken out up-stairs, and all my goods will be burnt. Who will assist a poor ruined woman ?

Amar. There is no fire up-stairs, I assure you, but I smell it here.

Land. Then it is down stairs, and we shall all be burnt before we can get out. (*They all crowd about the staircase door.*) Raise that great fellow there.

Lady Good. He's in a strong hysteric fit.

Dolly. Give him a kick, and that will cure his extericks.

Sir John. A hasty remedy, gentle maiden.

[*SIR JOHN and AMARYLLIS lift WILL neck and heels from the door.*

Enter DAVID from the staircase.

David. Who stopped the door there ? what's all this bustle for ?

Land. O, David, David ! isn't there fire below stairs, David ?

David. Yes, as much as will roast an egg, if you blow it well.

Land. Nay, but I am sure the house is on fire, for I dreamt this very night that Pompey's whelp was gnawing a hole in my apron, and that bodes me no good. I'll go and look all over the house. Come, Doll.

[*Exeunt landlady and DOLLY.*

Sir John (*to AMARYLLIS*). We had better search too.

[*Exeunt SIR JOHN and AMARYLLIS.*

David. What's the matter with Will ?

Lady Good. He's in a strong fit.

David. I never knew him in one before : I'm afraid he's dead, poor fellow ! What will become of old Grizel his mother now ? He gave the best half of his earnings to keep her out of the work-house.

Lady Good. Did he indeed ! good young man ! Run and get assistance for him. But, happen what will, old Grizel sha'n't go to the workhouse, for I'll take care of her myself. Haste, good David ! run for the apothecary directly. (*Exit DAVID.*) Go, Mary, fetch me some drops from my room. (*Exit Miss MARTIN.*) Poor young man !

Will (*getting up, and falling on his knees to LADY GOODBODY*). O, my good blessed lady ! I'm a Jew, and a Turk, and a Judas Iscariot. I have played the knave with you all this while out of spite. If I had not been a beast I might have known that you were a main good, charitable lady. But I'll fetch her back again : I'll run to the world's end to serve you.

Lady Good. You are raving, I fear : who will you fetch back ?

Will. The great heiress, your niece, madam, who is run off to marry Mr. Worshipton, and all by my cursed contrivance too.

Lady Good. The great heiress, my niece !

Will. Yes, my lady ; your niece, Miss Clodpate : but I'll fetch her back again, though every bone in my skin should be broken.

Lady Good. This is strange, indeed ! (*Considering awhile.*) No, no, young man, don't go after her : she is of age, and may do as she pleases.

Will. Ods my life, you are the best good lady alive ! I'll run and tell my old mother what a lady you are.

Lady Good. Nay, I'll go and see her myself ; I may be able to make her situation more comfortable, perhaps.

Will (*bursting into tears*). Thank you, madam ! Heaven knows I thank you ! but as long as I have health and these two hands, I'll take care of her

who took care of me before I could take care of myself.

Lady Good. You are a good young man, I see, and I have a great mind to take care of you both. She has brought you soberly up, I hope, and taught you to read your Bible.

Will. O dear, madam! old Grizel can't read a word herself, but many a time she desires me to be good—and so I will: hang me if I don't read the Bible from beginning to end, hard names and altogether!

Lady Good. Come into the parlour with me: you must tell me more of this story of Mr. Worshipton and my niece.

Re-enter Miss MARTIN with the drops.

Miss Martin. I sought them every where, and thought I should never—

Lady Good. We don't want them now; carry them back again.

[*Exeunt LADY GOODBODY and WILL by one side, and MISS MARTIN by the other.*]

SCENE III

The inn yard, with the stable-door in front, at which WILL appears, as if ready to saddle a horse.

Enter AMARYLLIS.

Amar. I hear, Will, you are going by Lady Goodbody's orders to desire the young couple to return to her from church. I should be much obliged to you if you would take Dorothea behind you, for she has some business in the village this morning, and there is no conveyance for her unless you take her up.

Will. What, our Doll do you mean?

Amar. Yes, Will.

Will. Hang her! let her walk: Blackberry won't carry double.

Amar. I am sure he will, if you try him.

Will. Why should I hobble all the way with a fat wench behind me? She's able enough to walk.

Amar. Don't be so ill-natured now: she would not be so to you if she could serve you.

Will. No, to be sure: as far as a kick goes to cure one of the extericks, kindly Christian! she will be ready enough with her service.

Amar. Come, come, don't be so crusty now. Here is money for you: Blackberry must carry double. [Giving him money.]

Will. Ay, to be sure, if I coax him well, I don't know but he may: for though he is but a brute, he has as many odd humours about him as any reasonable creature.

Amar. Do, my good fellow; and put a soft pillion under her, for the road is very rough.

Will. Nay, hang me if I do that! she an't so delicate, good sooth!—Let her be ready to set off in ten minutes, if she means to come, for I won't wait an instant for the first madam in England. A soft pillion for her truly!

[*Grumbling as he goes into the stable.*]

Amar. (*alone.*) He has been my rival, I see, by his spite. But no wonder! my charming girl must have many admirers. [Exit.]

ACT V.

SCENE I

The kitchen. Landlady discovered going up and down, busy with her family affairs, and DAVID, with two countrymen, drinking a pot of beer together.

1st man (*drinking.*) My sarvice to you, David.

David (*drinking.*) And here's to your very good health, Master Simons. But as I was a saying, if I were Squire Haretop, d'ye see, I would look after mine own affairs, and not let myself be eaten up by a parcel of greedy spendthrifts and wandering newsmongers. I would look after mine own affairs, d'ye see; that is what I would.

2d man. To be sure, David, it would be all the better for him, if so be that he were in the humour to think so.

David. Ay, to be sure it would, Master Gubbins. For this now is what I have always said, and advised, and commented, and expounded to every body, that a man who don't look after his own affairs, is, at the best, but a silly colt that strews about his own fodder.

Land. Heaven help ye, David! would any one think to hear you talk, now, that you had been once the master of this inn, and all by neglecting of your own concerns are come to be the servant at last?

David (*with great contempt.*) Does the silly woman think, because I did not mind every gill of gin, and pint of twopenny sold in the house, that I could not have managed my own concerns in a higher line? If my parents had done by me as they ought to have done, Master Simons, and had let me follow out my learning, as I was inclined to, there is no knowing what I might have been. Ods life! I might have been a clerk to the king, or mayhap an archbishop by this time.

[*A knocking at the door; landlady opens it, and enter two farmers.*]

1st farmer. Is Dolly within?

Land. No, she is gone a little way a-field this morning about some errands of her own.

2d farmer. That is a pity now, for we bring her such rare news.

Land. Lack-a-daisy! what can that be?

2d farmer. Her uncle, the grazier, is dead at last; and though he would never allow her a penny in his lifetime, as you well know, he has died without a will, and every thing that he has comes to Dolly.

1st farmer. Ay, by my faith! as good ten thousand pounds, when house and stock, and all is disposed of, as any body would wish to have the handling of.

Land. Ten thousand pounds! how some people are born to be lucky! A poor woman like me may labour all her life long, and never make the twentieth part of it.

Enter SALLY.

Come hither, Sally; did Doll tell you where she was going this morning?

Sally. No, but I can guess well enough; for she is all dressed in white, and I know it is to Middleton church to be married to that there gentleman that writes all the songs and the metre.

Land. 'Tis lucky it's no worse. Step into the parlour, sirs, and I'll come to you presently. (*Exeunt farmers and SALLY different ways.*) What luck some people have! married to a gentleman too! fortune makes a lady of her at once.

David. By my faith! and fortune has been in great want of stuff for that purpose when she could light upon nothing better than Doll. They lacked of fish to make a dish that filled their pan with tadpoles.

Land. Don't be so spiteful, now, David; some folks must be low in this world, and others must be high.

David. Yes, truly, she'll be high enough. Give some folks an inch and they'll take an ell; let fortune make her a lady, and she'll reckon herself a countess, I warrant ye.—Heaven help us! I think I see her now, in all her stuff silks and her great bobbing top-knots, holding up her head as grand and as grave as a cat looking out of a window.—Foh! it were enough to make a body sick.

Land. Fy, David! you are as spiteful now as if somebody were taking something out of your pocket: I'll assure you she has a more genteeler behaviour than most young women in the parish: I have given her some lessons myself.

David. Ay, by my faith! and her gentility smacks mightily of the place that she got it from.

Re-enter SALLY in great haste.

Sally. Lack-a-daisy! I went to the stable just now to tell Will about Dolly's great fortune; and he is gone, and Blackberry is gone, and the chaise and horses are gone.

Land. There is witchcraft about this house!—I'll pawn my life some of the gentlefolks are missing too; let us go and see. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Enter LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, and SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Sir John (*speaking as he enters*). I am heartily sorry for it: my nephew alone is to blame, and he will be severely punished for his fault.—You expect them to return when the ceremony is over: we shall see them soon then.

Lady Good. I dare say we shall: and in the mean time let us drop this disagreeable subject.

Sir John. Forgive me, Lady Goodbody, for appearing to regret so much the honour of connecting my family with yours.

Lady Good. Indeed, Sir John, I could have wished to have received that honour from another party. Your nephew, however, sets you a good example in marrying, though I'm afraid it will be lost upon you.

Miss Martin (*fretfully*). Your ladyship has teased Sir John so often upon this subject, that, if he has any spirit at all, he will certainly remain a bachelor from mere contradiction.

Sir John. Yes, Miss Martin, that is a motive urged with authority by those who recommend it from experience. Nay, so greatly, it is said, do young ladies delight in it, that every thing they do ought to be explained by the rule of opposition. When they frown upon us, it is a smile of invitation; when they avoid us, it is a signal to stand upon the watch for a tête-à-tête (*approaching her with an arch smile as she draws herself up with an affected indifference*); but when they toss back their heads at our approach, in all the studied carelessness of contempt, we may consider ourselves as at the very pinnacle of favour. Is it allowable, madam, to take this rule for my guide?

Miss Martin. By all means, Sir John; self-love will naturally teach you to judge by that rule which proves most for your own advantage. I hope, however, you will allow those unlucky men upon whom we bestow our smiles, to find out another for themselves.

Lady Good. (*to MISS MARTIN, displeased*). You have got a sharp, disagreeable way of talking of late, which is not at all becoming, child: you used to smile and look good-humoured to every body.

Miss Martin. And so I may again, madam, when I am with the poor silly folks who don't know how humiliating it is for them to be so treated: I hope I shall always be civil enough to spare Sir John Hazelwood that mortification.

[*Making him an affected and ironical curtsey.*]
Lady Good. (*peevishly*). Let us have no more of this!—Sir John, I shall now give up teasing you about matrimony. I see you are incorrigible.

Sir John. Then you see further than I do, madam, for I rather think it possible I may be persuaded to enter into it at last.

Lady Good. I'm sure I most earnestly wish it for your own sake; and so confident am I of your making an excellent husband, that I would even venture to recommend you to the dearest relation I have.

Miss Martin (aside, breaking away from them suddenly, and hurrying to the other end of the room). The same again! I can bear this no longer.

Sir John (to LADY GOODBODY). You see, madam, this conversation is interesting only to you and me: had I not then better make love to your ladyship?

Lady Good. Why there was a time, Sir John, when I was not without admirers.

Sir John. How much I should have liked — but it would have been a dangerous gratification — to have seen these attractions in their full strength which are still so powerful in their decline.

Lady Good. There is still a good likeness of me, as I was in those days, which Mary now wears upon her arm: whilst I go to give some orders to my woman, make her pull off her glove and show it to you. You'll have the sight of a very pretty hand and arm, by-the-bye; our family is remarkable for pretty hands. [Exit.

Sir John (going up to MISS MARTIN). May I presume, madam, thus authorized, to beg you will have the condescension to gratify me.

Miss Martin. I can't possibly: it is not on my arm at present.

Sir John. Nay, but I see the mark of it through your glove: may I presume to assist you in pulling it off?

[Offering to take hold of her glove, whilst she puts away his hand with great displeasure.

Miss Martin. You presume indeed: I can't suffer it to be pulled off.

Sir John. Then I must indeed be presumptuous, for positively I will see it. (Taking hold of her hand, whilst she, struggling to pull it away from him without effect, at last, in her distress, gives him with the other hand a good box on the ear, and then, bursting into tears, throws herself into the next chair, and covers her face with both her hands.) My dear Miss Martin, forgive me! I fear I have behaved ungenerously to you: but believe me, careless as I may have appeared, I have beheld you with the most passionate admiration. [Kneeling at her feet.

Miss Martin (turning from him disdainfully). Get up, Sir John, and find out some amusement more becoming your understanding and your years.

[Walks to the bottom of the stage with assumed dignity, whilst SIR JOHN sits down much agitated on a chair on the front: she, turning round, perceives his agitation, and forgetting her displeasure, runs up to him eagerly.

Miss Martin. Good heaven! is it possible that you are thus affected? What is it that disturbs you so much?

Sir John. A very foolish distress, madam, but it will not long disturb me.

Miss Martin. I hope it will not.

Sir John. Nay, it shall not, madam.—First when I beheld you, I was weak enough to think that I discovered, in an assemblage of features by no means (pardon me) particularly handsome, as many worthy and agreeable qualities as would have been unpardonable in the most ardent physiognomist. I saw through the weak designs of your aunt, and applauded your delicacy and spirit. I will confess, that passing by the door of your apartment the other night, as it stood open, I heard you mention me to your cousin in a way that completely ensnared me. I was foolish enough to believe I had at last found a woman in whose keeping I might entrust my happiness. But it was a weakness in me: I see my folly now; and this is the last time I shall be the sport of vain capricious woman.

Miss Martin. Is it possible?—Oh, we have both been deceived! I have been deceived by something very far different from vanity—my wounded pride still whispering to me that I was the object of your ridicule: and you have been deceived by a physiognomy that has indeed told you untruly, when it ventured to promise any thing more from me than the ordinary good qualities and disposition of my sex.—We have both been deceived; but let us part good friends: and when I am at any time inclined to be out of humour with myself, the recollection that I have been, even for a few deceitful moments, the object of your partiality, will be soothing to me.

Sir John (catching hold of her as she goes away). No, madam, we must not part. (Looking steadfastly and seriously in her face.) Can you, Miss Martin, for once lay aside the silly forms of womanship, and answer me a plain question upon which the happiness of my life depends? Does your heart indeed bear me that true regard which would make you become the willing partner of my way through life, though I promise not that it shall be a flowery path, for my temper and habits are particular.

Miss Martin. Indeed, Sir John, you address me in so strange a way, that I don't know what I ought to say.

Sir John. Fy upon it! I expected a simple, I had almost said a manly answer, from you now. (Pauses, expecting an answer from her, whilst she remains silent and embarrassed.) No, I see it is impossible: the woman works within you still, and will not suffer you to be honest. Well, I'll try another method with you. (Taking her hand and grasping it firmly.) If you do not withdraw from me this precious hand, I shall suppose you return me the answer I desire, and retain it as my own for ever.

Miss Martin. Why, you have hurt it so much in

that foolish struggle, that you have not left it power to withdraw itself.

Sir John. Now, fy upon thee again! this is a silly and affected answer. But let it pass: I find notwithstanding all my particular notions upon these matters, I must e'en take thee as thou art with all thy faults. (*Kissing her hand devoutly.*)

Miss Martin. I think I hear Worshipton's voice.

Sir John. Ah, my poor miserably bridegroom of a nephew! I must be angry with him now, and I know not at present how to be angry.

Enter WORSHIPTON and HANNAH.

Wor. My dear uncle, I crave your blessing.

Sir John. I think, sir, it would become you better, in the first place, to crave my pardon.

Wor. The world makes great allowance, my good sir, for young men of fashion in my situation; knowing us to be of a free, careless, and liberal disposition, it calls us not strictly to account in matters of elopement.

Sir John. A liberal disposition! No, sir; more selfish than the miser who hides his hoarded gold in the earth. I wish you had made what is really right, and not what the world thinks allowable, the rule of your conduct.

Wor. I shall not argue with you about conduct, Sir John; it is a very awkward word in a young fellow's mouth: but if you will do me the honour of visiting me in town next winter, I shall introduce you to such society and amusements as country gentlemen have not always the opportunity of knowing. You will, I doubt not, have more deference for the world when you are better acquainted with it.

Sir John. You are infinitely obliging, my most liberal sir.—And so this is all the apology you mean to offer for deceiving a young girl, and making her the victim of your frivolous and fantastical wants?

Wor. No, no! I do mean to make an apology to the old lady.—Ha, ha, ha! though I can't help laughing when I think how I have cheated that wonderful piece of goodness and circumspection. I must coax her a little to bring round the old fellow, my father-in-law, for I must have a brace of thousands to begin with immediately.

Sir John. Yes, you are perfectly right to make as much of him as you can.

[*SIR JOHN leans thoughtfully against the side-scene, and WORSHIPTON struts conceitedly up and down, whilst MISS MARTIN and HANNAH come forward from the bottom of the stage, engaged in conversation.*

Hannah (in a busy half-whisper). So you see, my dear Mary, you must just tell my aunt that he ran away with me, and I could not help it. For, O la! he is so in love with me you can't think! And do you know we were married by such a

queer-looking man: he had fifteen holes in his cassock, for I counted them all over the time of the service. And do you know, when we came to the church door, Mr. Worshipton had never a ring to put upon my finger. And do you know he borrowed an old ugly silver one of a woman who sold ballads by the gate, and gave her half-a-guinea for it, though it is not worth a sixpence. But I'm just as good a married woman, you know, for all that, as if it had been gold. (*Holding up her finger with the ring upon it.*) An't I?

Miss Martin. I believe it will make no great difference.

Hannah. I thought so.—Now do speak to my aunt for me.

Miss Martin. I certainly will, my dear Hannah, though you have played so slyly with us.

Hannah. But la! don't tell her about the half-guinea for the ring, for that would make her angrier than all the rest of it.—Oh! here she comes: stand before me a little bit. (*Shrinking behind MISS MARTIN'S back.*)

Enter LADY GOODBODY.

Lady Good. Well, Mr. Worshipton, what have you done with my niece?

Wor. There she is, madam. (*HANNAH comes from behind backs, and makes LADY GOODBODY an awkward frightened curtsy.*) We are both come to beg your forgiveness, and I hope she will not suffer in your ladyship's good opinion for the honour she has conferred upon your humble servant.

Lady Good. He must be a very humble servant indeed who derives any honour from her.

Wor. We hoped from the message you were so obliging as to send us, that we should not find you very severe.

Lady Good. I think, however, I may be allowed to express some displeasure at not being consulted in a matter so interesting to my family, without being considered as very severe.

Wor. (aside to SIR JOHN). I only wonder she is not more angry with me. (*Aloud to LADY GOODBODY.*) I was afraid, madam, of finding you unfavourable to my wishes, and durst not risk my happiness. But I hope you have no doubt of the honour of my intentions.

Lady Good. Certainly; I cannot doubt of their being very honourable, and very disinterested also. I have known men mean enough and selfish enough to possess themselves by secret elopements of the fortunes of unwary girls, whilst they have had nothing to give in return but indifference or contempt. Nay, I have heard of men so base as to take advantage of the weakness of a poor girl's intellects to accomplish the ungenerous purpose. But it is impossible to ascribe any but disinterested motives to you, Mr. Worshipton, as Miss Clodpate has but a very small fortune.

Wor. (*starting*). What do you mean, madam? the only child of your brother, Sir Rowland! you called her so yourself.

Lady Good. I told you she was the only child of my brother by his wife Sophia Elmot; but disagreeable circumstances sometimes take place in the best families, which it goes against one's feelings to repeat; and there was no necessity for my telling you, in indifferent conversation, that he has married his own cook maid a year and a half ago, by whom he has two stout healthy boys.

[*WORSHIPTON stands like one petrified for some time, but perceiving a smile upon Miss MARTIN's face, takes courage.*]

Wor. Come, come! this joke won't pass upon me: I'm not so easily played upon.

Sir John. It is a joke I'm afraid that will not make you merry, Worshipton.

Wor. I'll believe nobody but Hannah herself, for she can't be in the plot, and she is too simple to deceive me. (*To HANNAH.*) Pray, my good girl, how many brothers have you?

Hannah. La! only two; and one of them is called Rowland after my father, you know, and one of them little Johnny.

Wor. O, hang little Johnny, and the whole fools of the race! I am ruined beyond redemption.

[*Pacing up and down, and tossing about his arms in despair.*]

Hannah (*going up to him*). La! Mr. Worshipton, what is the matter?

Miss Martin (*pulling her back*). Don't speak to him now.

Lady Good. (*going up to him soothingly*). Don't be so much overcome, Mr. Worshipton; things are not so very desperate. Hannah will have five thousand pounds at her father's death: he allows her the interest of it in the meantime, and I shall add two hundred a year to it. This, joined to your pay, may, I think, with prudence and economy, enable you to live together in a very snug comfortable way.

Wor. Curse your snug comfortable ways of living! my soul abhors the idea of it. I'll pack up all I have in a knapsack first, and join the wild Indians in America. — I wish I had been in the bottomless ocean ere I had come to this accursed place.

Sir John. Have a little patience, Worshipton, and hear my plan for you. I'll pay your debts; you shall have the same income you had before, with more prudence perhaps to manage it well; and your wife shall live with her friends in the country.

Hannah. No, but I'll live with mine own husband, for he knows well enough he is mine own husband.

[*Taking hold of WORSHIPTON, whilst he shakes her off in disgust.*]

Lady Good. How can you use your wife so, Mr. Worshipton!

Hannah (*whimpering*). Oh! he don't love me! Oh dear me! he don't love me a bit!

Wor. What is the creature whimpering for? I shall run distracted!

Sir John. For heaven's sake be more calm! If you'll promise to live prudently in town, we shall manage your lady in the country for you. But remember, Edward, the first time I hear of your old habits returning upon you, she shall be sent to London to pay you a visit.

Wor. O dog that I am! and so this is all that I have made of my plots and my — Idiot and fool that I am!

Sir John. Consider of it, Worshipton, and consider of it well.

Wor. I am distracted, and can consider of nothing.

Enter AMARYLLIS, followed by DOLLY and Landlady.

Amar. I am come to pay my compliments to you, Worshipton, with all possible good will; I wish you and your fair bride joy, most cordially.

Wor. Nay, I wish you joy, Amaryllis.

Amar. Ha! who has been so officious as to tell you of my marriage already?

Wor. Married! — No, faith; I gave you joy because I thought you a bachelor still. Married! what a dog you have made of yourself! — But no; your refined, your angelic Delia has favoured your wishes at last, and, with such a woman, you may indeed be a married man without being miserable.

Land. (*to WORSHIPTON*). What did you say about Delia, sir? he is married to our Doll.

Amar. (*fretfully to landlady*). Who desired you to follow me here, ma'am?

Land. It was your own wedded wife, sir, that desired me to come; and since you have chosen to marry the maid, I see no reason you have for to turn up your nose at the mistress. And you need not go for to be ashamed of her neither: she is as clever a girl as ever whirled a mop, and as honest a girl too; and that is more than can be said for many a one that carries her head higher.

Wor. (*bursting into a laugh*). How, Amaryllis! are you married to Mrs. Dolly?

Amar. Dorothea is a very good girl, Mr. Worshipton.

Wor. Yes, yes! I see 'tis even so. Ha! ha! ha! (*Laughing violently for a long time, till he is obliged to hold both his sides.*) This is excellent! this is admirable! I thank thee, Amaryllis! thou hast been playing the fool as well as myself. Give me thy hand, man. — Ha! ha! ha!

Sir John (*stepping forward, after having whispered some time behind backs with the landlady*). No, good nephew, moderate your laughter a little: Amaryllis has been playing the fool in a very different way from you; for he has married his bride without expecting one farthing with her, and

learns on returning from church, as our good landlady has been informing me, that an uncle of hers is just dead, who has left her a very handsome fortune.

[*WORSHIPTON, whose mirth stops in a moment, endeavours to resume the laugh again, but finding it won't do, retires in confusion to the bottom of the stage.*

Sir John (to *AMARYLLIS* and *DOLLY*). Much happiness may you both have in your good fortune! With the woman of your choice and a competency, *Amaryllis*, you will be in the most favourable state of all others for courting the Muses.

Amar. Yes, *Sir John*; with my own slender patrimony, and the fortune my wife brings to me, I hope to make my little cot no unfavoured haunt of the fair sisters. I am not the first poet who has been caught by the artless charms of a village maid; and my wife will have as much beauty in my eyes, dressed in her russet gown, as the—

Dolly. But I won't wear a russet gown though: I have money of my own, and I'll buy me silk ones.

Sir John. Well said, *Mrs. Amaryllis*! Gentle poet, your village maid is a woman of spirit.

Amar. She is untaught, to be sure, and will sometimes speak unwittingly.

Sir John. Never mind that, my good sir; we shall have her taught. You shall make my house your home till your cot is ready for you, where I soon hope to have a lady who will take some pains to form your charming *Dorothea* for her present situation.

Lady Good. So you are to have a lady then? If you had told me so before, I might have spared all my arguments upon this subject.

Sir John. Indeed, madam, you might have spared them, though they were very good ones, I confess: the sight of this lady (*taking MISS MARTIN'S hand*) made every other argument unnecessary. I hope you will give me your blessing with her. I want but this, and will not inquire of you how many brothers she has.

Lady Good. So my *Mary* has caught you after all. Thank heaven for it! She is good enough for any man, and I would rather give her to you than to any other man in the world. As for her brothers, she has but one, and he has increased instead of diminishing her fortune.

Sir John. Talk no more of these things. I hate the very name of fortune at present.

Lady Good. Pardon me; but I must tell you what my nephew *Robert* did: it may be good for another new-made nephew of mine to listen to it. (*Glancing a look to WORSHIPTON.*) He and his sister were left orphans without any provision: I bought him a commission in the army: and with the addition of fifty pounds which I sent him every year on his birth-day, as a godmother's gift, he contrived to live respectably without debt, and was esteemed by his brother-officers.

Sir John. I know it well: a friend of mine had the pleasure of knowing him abroad, where he served with distinction and honour.

Lady Good. Yes, he was afterwards ordered abroad with his regiment, where he had it in his power to acquire a little money with integrity; the best part of which (three thousand pounds) he sent home to his sister immediately, that she might no longer be dependent even upon me; and it shall be paid down to you, *Sir John*, upon her wedding-day.

Sir John. No; heaven forbid that a country gentleman should add to his ample income the well-earned pittance of a soldier! I will have nothing from the young hero but the honour of being allied to him; and what advantage may accrue, by-the-by, to my family, by setting so fair an example to such members of it as may not have walked altogether in his footsteps.

Wor. Well, well, I understand you; but tell me no more of your good-boy stories at present: this cross-fated day has taught me a powerful lesson which makes every other superfluous. [*Exeunt.*]

CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS;

OR,

THE LAST OF THE CÆSARS:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS, *emperor of the Greeks.*
 MAHOMET, *the Turkish Sultan.*
 OTHUS, *a learned Greek,*
 RODRIGO, *a Genoese naval commander,*
 JUSTINIANI, *a noble Genoese, and a soldier,*
 PETRONIUS, } *Greeks, and secret agents of MA-*
 MARTIION, } *HOMET.*
 OSMIR, *vizir to MAHOMET.*
 HEUGHO, *an old domestic officer of CONSTANTINE.*
 OTHORIC, *a rude but generous adventurer.*

Fortune-teller, citizens, attendants, &c.

WOMEN.

VALERIA, *wife of CONSTANTINE.*
 ELLA, *daughter of PETRONIUS.*
 LUCIA, *a lady attendant on VALERIA.*

Ladies and attendants.

The Scene in Constantinople, and in the camp of MAHOMET, near the city.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A large platform on the roof of the palace of PETRONIUS, from which are seen spires and towers, and the broken roofs of houses, &c., with the general appearance of a ruined city, the distant parts involved in smoke. ELLA is discovered with an attendant, standing on a balcony belonging to a small tower, rising from the side of the platform. As the curtain draws up the sound of artillery is heard.

Enter OTHUS and MARTIION.

Othus. Ah, see how sadly changed the prospect is Since first from our high station we beheld This dismal siege begin! 'Midst level ruin,

Our city now shows but its batter'd towers,
 Like the jagg'd bones of some huge animal,
 Whose other parts the mould'ring hand of time
 To dust resolves.

Mar. (coldly). It does indeed some faint resemblance hold

To what thou hast compared it to. How is't?
 Art thou not from the walls?

Othus. No, not immediately.

Mar. Wast thou not there when Mahomet's huge cannon

Open'd its brazen mouth and spoke to us?
 How brook'd thine ears that deep tremendous sound?

The coasts of Asia and th' Olympian heights,
 Our land-begirded seas, and distant isles,
 Spoke back to him again, in his own voice,
 A deep and surly answer; but our city,
 This last imperial seat of Roman greatness:
 This head of the world, this superb successor
 Of the earth's mistress, where so many Cæsars
 In proud successive lines have held their sway,
 What answer sent she back?

Othus. Fy, hold thy tongue!

Methinks thou hast a pleasure in the thought.
 This head o' the world — this superb successor
 Of the earth's mistress, as thou vainly speakst,
 Stands 'mid these ages, as in the wide ocean
 The last spared fragment of a spacious land,
 That in some grand and awful ministration
 Of mighty nature has engulfed been,
 Doth lift aloft its dark and rocky cliffs
 O'er the wild waste around, and sadly frowns
 In lonely majesty. But shame upon it!

Hcr feeble, worthless, and degen'rate sons —

Mar. Yes, what sayst thou of them? they also are

The fragments of a brave and mighty race,
 Left on this lonely rock.

Othus. No, blast them! on its frowning sides they cluster

Like silly sea-fowl from their burrow'd holes,
 Who, staring senseless on th' invader's toil,
 Stretch out their worthless necks, and cry "caw!
 caw!"

O, Paleologus! how art thou left,

Thou and thy little band of valiant friends,
To set your manly bosoms 'gainst the tide!
Ye are the last sparks of a wasted pyre
Which soon shall be trodd'n out.—
Ye are the last green bough of an old oak,
Blasted and bare: the lovelier do ye seem
For its wan barrenness; but to its root
The axe is brought, and with it ye must fall.—
Ye are—O God! it grasps my swelling throat
To think of what ye are.

Mar. A brave band, truly:—
But still our gallant emp'rour and his friends,
Opposed to Mah'met and his num'rous host
With all his warlike engines, are in truth
As if one toss'd against the whirl'd-up sands
Of their Arabian plains, one grasp of dust.

Othus. Yes, they are few in number, but they
are

The essence and truc spirit of their kind;
The soul of thousands. A brave band they are,
Not levied by the power and wealth of states;
And the best feelings of the human heart
Have been the agents of their princely chief,
Recruiting nobly. Virtuous Sympathy,
Who on the weaker and deserted side
Her ample, lib'ral front doth ever range;
Keen Indignation, who, with clenched hand
And sternly-flashing eye, ever beholds
The high o'erbearing crest of proud oppression;
And gen'rous Admiration, above all,
Of noble deeds, whose heav'n-enlighten'd smile,
And imitative motion, ever wake
With eager heart-throbs at the glorious sight
Of manly daring, have unto their numbers
Some score of dauntless spirits lately added;
Such as would ride upon the whirlwind's back,
If it might be, and with heaven's spearmen cope.
With such a band, methinks, all things are possible.

Mar. (*smiling*). Why, thou soft man of peace,
Who in gay banquets spend'st thy giddy nights,
And o'er some sculptured stone, or ancient lore,
Each idle morning wast'st in the cool shade,
Thou speakest with a bold and warlike voice!

Othus (*throwing back his cloak, and showing under it a warlike garb, with the scarf and devices belonging to the imperial band*). Ay, and wear, too, a bold and warlike form.

Behold what now I am! Thou shrinkest back,
And lookest strangely on me: give thy lips
No friendly blessing to my new estate?

Mar. Heaven bless the brave!

Othus. Amen! but thou art cold.

[*Sound of artillery is heard again.*

O hear that sound!

Doth it not stir thee as it thund'ring growls
Along the distant shore? [*Shaking his head.*

It moves thee not.

Is that the sound of female voices near us?
Mar. Yes; seest thou not on yon high balcony

That pale and fearful maid? her watchful ear
Is ever turn'd to ev'ry distant sound.

Othus. My gentle kinswoman upon the watch!
I know for whom she fears; nor do I marvel;
For she was present on that crowded shore,
When Genoa's captain brought his gen'rous succour,
And saw the brave contention of those men,
In their proud vessels bearing boldly on,
With wavy pendants floating on the wind,
Whose armed sides, like to a goodly bank,
Breasted the onward tide of opposition.

[*Speaking with a great deal of appropriate gesture.*
No wonder that her fancy has been moved!
Oh, it did stir the women on our walls—
The infants—yea, the very household curs,
That from their kennels turn'd to look upon it!—
But for that motley crowd of moving things
Which we miscall our men—Nay, by the light,
Thou too dost hear me with a frozen eye!

Enter ELLA hastily from the balcony, and puts her hand eagerly upon the shoulder of OTHUS, who turns round surprised.

Ella. What sayest thou of him? where fights he
now?

Or on the land, or on some floating fence?

Othus. Of whom speakst thou, fair Ella?

Ella. Nay, nay! thou knowst right well. Did I
not see thee,

High as I stood, e'en now, tossing thine arms,
And motioning thy tale with such fit gestures
As inage ships and sails, and daring deeds?
Of whom speak even the beggars in our streets
When they such action use? Thou knowst right
well,

Of Genoa's captain, and of none but him.

Didst see him from the walls?

Othus (*smiling*). My little kinswoman,
Thou lookest with a keen and martial eye
As thou dost question me: I saw him not;
I come not from the walls.

Ella. Didst thou not talk of him as I descended?

Othus. Yes, of that noble fight.—But dost thou
see? [*Pointing to his dress.*

There are more warriors in the world, Ella,
Though men do talk of us, it must be granted,
With action more composed. Behold me now
The brave Rodrigo's comrade, and the friend
Of royal Constantine; who is in truth
The noblest beast o' the herd, and on the foe
Turns a bold front, whilst with him boldly join
A few brave antlers from a timid crowd,
That quakes and cowers behind.

Ella. Yes, Othus, I did mark thy martial garb:
Heaven's angels bless thee!

Othus. And earth's too, gentle Ella.

[*Artillery heard again.*

Ella (*to OTHUS, starting fearfully*). O dost thou
smile, and such light words affect,

Whilst ruin growls so near us? hath sad use
Made misery and sport, and death and merriment,
Familiar neighbours?—I'll into my chamber.

Enter PETRONIUS and a disguised Turk.

Pet. (sternly to ELLA). Yes, to thy chamber go:
thou liv'st, methinks

On the house-top, or watching in the towers.

I like it not; and maiden privacy

Becomes thy state and years. *(To OTHUS.)* Ha!
art thou Othus?

Thou'rt well accoutred, sooth! I knew thee not.

Mar. Yes, he is now a valiant soldier grown:

His Grecian lute, and pen, and books of grace

Are thrown aside, and the soft letter'd sage

Grasps a rude lance.

Ella. Nay, mock him not, for it is nobly done.

Pet. (sternly to ELLA). Art thou still here?

[Exit ELLA, abashed and chidden.]

And now, my lord, — *[Turning to OTHUS.]*

Othus (angrily). And now, my lord, good evening:

I too, belike, shall trespass on your patience,

If longer I remain.

[Exit.]

Pet. Well, let him go, it suits our purpose better.

But who could e'er have thought in warlike garb

To see him guised? He, too, become a fool!

Mar. He thought, as well I guess, to move me

also

His brave devoted brotherhood to join:

This was his errand here.

Pet. I do believe it well: for Constantine,

With many fair and princely qualities

That in his clear morn no attention drew,

Now, on the brow of dark adversity,

Hangs like a rainbow on a surly cloud,

And all men look to him. But what avails

This growing sentiment of admiration

To our good means? Good Turk, where is thy

gold?

Turk (giving him a bag). There, Christian, whom

I may not well call good.

Pet. That as thou wilt: but Mahomet, thy master,

Shall find me still his faithful agent here.

This very night, as I have promised to him,

The people shall in insurrection rise,

Clam'ring to have the city yielded up;

And if your narrow caution stint me not

In that which rules the storm, it shall be raised

To the full pitch.

Turk. And what is that, Petronius?

Pet. More gold. Ay, by thy turban and thy beard!

There is a way to make our timid sluggards

The sultan's work within these walls perform

Better than armed men.

Turk. And what is that, I pray?

Pet. Why, more gold still. —

I have in pay, besides our mutinous rabble,

Who bawl, and prate, and murmur in our streets,
Prophets, and conjurers, and vision-seers,
And wise men, not a few, whose secret haunts
The timid flock to: many are the palms
That must be touch'd. — There are within our walls
Of idle, slothful citizens, enow,
If with their active master they should join,
Still to defend them: therefore, be assured,
He who shall keep this fickle, wav'ring herd
From such wise union, shall to Mal'met give
This mistress of the East.

Turk. Fear not; thou shalt be satisfied.

Pet. Right: let us now to work: 'tis near the time

When, from the walls returning with his friends,

The emperor his ev'ning hour enjoys,

And puts off warlike cares: now let us forth,

And urge those varlets on.

(To MARTHON.) Do thou into the eastern quarter go,

And stir them up. Where is our trusty Gorbuz?

The western is his province. Send him hither:

We must some counsel hold: meantime within

I wait his coming. Be thou speedy, Marthon.

[Exit MARTHON.]

(To the Turk.) Remember, friend.

Turk. Thou shalt be satisfied.

Pet. Good fortune smile upon us! *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.

A state apartment in the imperial palace, with splendid sideboards, set forth, on which are seen cups and goblets, &c. as if prepared for a grand repast, and several domestics crossing the stage, carrying different things in their hands.

Enter HEUGHO, followed by a stranger and two inferior domestic officers.

Heugho (after looking over every thing). Is nought omitted here? the rubied platters

And the imperial cup—I see them not.

1st off. What boots it now, encompass'd thus with foes,

And death and ruin grinning at our side,

To set forth all this sumptuous garniture,

Which soon shall in a Turkish harem shine?

The emp'r'r heeds it not.

Heugho (stamping with his foot). Dog, but I heed it!

And were the floating remnant of a wreck,

With the sea bellowing round it, all that now

Remain'd of the eastern empire, I thereon,

Until the last wave wash'd us from its side,

Would humbly offer to brave Constantine

The homage due to mine imperial lord.

Out on thee, paltry hind! go fetch them hither.

[Exit officer.]

Stranger. This is the hour, you say, when Constantine,

Like a tired woodman from his daily toil,
Unclasps his girded breast; and with his friends
Enjoys his social meal right cheerfully
For one so overshadow'd with dark fate.
I am a stranger here, and, by your leave,
I fain would tarry still to have one view
Of his most noble countenance.

Heugho. Thou'rt welcome.

And, gentle stranger, thou wilt see a prince,
Who ably might have reign'd, had not his heart
To the soft shades of friendly intercourse
Still turn'd, as to its truc and native place:
A prince with loving friends, but lacking troops:
Rich in the dear good-will of gen'rous minds,
But poor in kingly allics. One thou'lt see,
Whose manly faculties, beset with gifts
Of gentler grace, and soft domestic habits,
And kindest feelings, have within him grown
Like a young forest-tree, beset and 'tangled,
And almost hidd'n with sweet incumb'ring shrubs;
That, till the rude blast rends this clust'ring robe,
Its goodly hardy stem to the fair light
Discovers not. Hark! now they come!

[*Flourish of trumpets.*

Stand thou secur, and see whate'er thou wilt.

[*Calling to some people off the stage*

Ho! you without! move there with more despatch.

[*Several domestics again cross the stage as before.*

Stranger. Sec, yonder come the brave imperial friends,

If right I guess. They bear a noble mien.
And who is he who foremost walks with steps
Of gravely-measured length, and heavy eyes
Fix'd on the ground? [*Pointing off the stage.*

Heugho. That is Justiniani; a brave soldier,
Who doth o' tiptoc walk, with jealous care,
Upon the very point and highest ridge
Of honour's path, demure and circumspect,
Like nicest maid, proud of her spotless fame;
A steady, cheerless friend.

Stranger. And who is he with open, lib'ral front,
Who follows next?

Heugho. He is the brave Rodrigo;
That Genoese, who, with four gallant ships,
Did in the front of the whole Turkish fleet
So lately force his passage to our port,
Bearing us gen'rous and most needful succour.
Does he not look like one, who in the fight
Would fiercely strive, yet to the humbled foe
Give quarter pleasantly?

Stranger. And who comes after with more
polish'd aspect,

But yet, methinks, keen and intelligent?

Heugho. Oh, that is Othus; a soft letter'd sage,
Who wears his soldier's garb with its first gloss.

Stranger. Constantine comes not yet?

Heugho. No; first of all to his imperial dame,
Who o'er his mind a greater influence has
Than may, perhaps, with graver wisdom suit,

Being a dame of keen and lofty passions,
Though with fair virtues graced, he ever pays
His dear devotions: he will join them shortly.
But softly, here they are.

Enter JUSTINIANI, RODRIGO, OTHUS, and many others of the Emperor's friends, armed as if returned from the walls.

Rod. (to JUSTINIANI). Thou'rt sternly grave: has
aught in this day's fight
Befall'n, thy eager temper to disturb?

Just. Your first directed fire should, in good right,
Have been against that Turkish standard sent,
Rear'd in their front.

Rod. And shall we seriously expend our strength
In paying worship to each Turkish rag
That waves before our walls?

But frown not on me, friend: perhaps I'm wrong.
We who are bred upon a bark's rough side,
And 'midst the rude contention of the waves,
Must force our steady purpose, as we may,
Right in the teeth of all opposing things,
Wrestling with breakers on the scoured rock,
Or tilting it with a seal's cub, good faith!
As it may chance; y'ought do we know of forms.

Othus. Another time, valiant Justiniani,
With more respect to warlike ceremony
We will conduct ourselves.

Rodrigo well hath pled his own excuse;
And I, thou knowest, am but new in arms.

Just. Methinks, e'en to a child it had been plain
That, when so circumstanced—

Othus. Hush, hush, I pray thee, now! the emp'ror
comes:

This is his hour of cheerful relaxation,
Snatch'd from each circling day of busy cares,
A faint gleam thrown across a dismal gloom,
Let us not darken it with petty travails.

Enter CONSTANTINE.

Con. (saluting them). A pleasant meeting to us
all, brave friends,

After our day of toil! There be among us
Tired limbs that well have earn'd their hour of rest;
This kindly-social hour, this fleeting bliss
Of the tired labourer. Undo our bracings,
And let us sup as lightly as we may.

[*Taking off his helmet, which he gives to an attendant.*

This galls me strangely;
Mine armourer, methinks, has better skill
To mar men's heads than save them.
Nay all of you, I pray.

[*They all begin to take off their helmets, and part of their armour.*

And gentle Othus too, unbrace thyself:
How liketh thou the gripe of soldiers' gear?

Othus. Worn in the cause, for which I wear it
now,

It feels like the close hug of a rough friend,
Awkward but kindly.

Con. Thanks, gen'rous Othus! it had pleased me
better

To've had the gentle service of thy pen.
Thou couldst have told, if so it might have been,
How brave men acted, and how brave men fell.—
Well, let it be.

[*Turning aside to check his emotion, and then
assuming a cheerful face.*]

You gallant seamen, in th' applauding view
Of the throng'd beach, amidst the tempest's rage,
E'en on the last plank of your sever'd bark,
Ride it careeringly, my brave Rodrigo! [*mates*]
Rod. Yes, royal sir; with brave true-hearted
All things we do and bear right cheerfully.

Con. And so will we.—Your hand, my gallant
friend!

And yours, and yours, and yours, my brave Eu-
bedes—

And noble Carlos too—and all of you—

[*Taking all their hands, one after another.*]

I am indeed so mated.

Bring me a cooling cup, I pray, good Heugho,
My tongue is parch'd.

[*HEUGHO presents a cup to him, kneeling.*]

What, wilt thou still upon thine aged limbs
These cumbrous forms impose? These surly times
Suit not such ceremony, worthy Heugho.

Heugho. Be health and sweet refreshment in the
draught,

My royal master!

Con. (*tasting it*). And so there is: few cups pre-
sented thus

Come with such kindness. But I have, in truth,
Shrunk, as a potentate, to such small grasp,
That now I fairly may put in my claim
To the affections of a man.—Brave friends,
Health to you all!

[*Drinks, then turning with a smile to JUSTINIANI.*]

Justiniani, I with thee alone

Have cause of quarrel in this day's long toil.

Just. How so, and please your highness?

The holy hermit, counting o'er his beads,
Is not more scrupulous than I have been
Nought of his sacred duty to omit.

Con. Thou putst a gross affront upon the worth
Of all thy warlike deeds; for thou from them
Claimst not the privilege to save thyself
From needless dangers. On the walls this day
Thou hast exposed thyself like a raw stripling,
Who is ashamed to turn one step aside
When the first darts are whizzing past his ear.
Rodrigo there, beneath a panner
Would save his head from the o'er-passing blow,
Then, like a lion issuing from his den,
Burst from his shelter with redoubled ardour.
Pray thee put greater honour on thyself,
And I will thank thee for it.

Just.

I stand reproved.

Con. I'm glad thou dost.—Now to our social
rites!

No tired banditti in their nightly cave,
Whose goblets sparkle to the ruddy gleam
Of blazing faggots, eat their jolly meal
With toils, and dangers, and uncertainty
Of what to-morrow brings, more keenly season'd
Than we do ours.—Sprae not, I pray thee, Heugho,
Thy gen'rous Tuscan cup: I have good friends
Who prize its flavour much.

[*As he turns to go with his friends to the bottom
of the stage, where a curtain between the
pillars being drawn up, discovers their repast
set out; a citizen enters in haste.*]

Cit. I crave to speak unto the emperor.

Con. What is thine errand?

Cit. My royal sir, the city's in commotion:
From ev'ry street and alley, ragged varlets
In crowds pour forth, and threaten mighty things.
But one, whom I outran, comes on my steps
To bring a fuller tale.

Con. (*to citizen*). Thou'rt sure of this?

Cit. It is most certain.

[*Othus?*]

Con. (*to OTHUS*). What thinkst thou, good
Othus. I doubt it not: 'tis a degraded herd
That fills your walls. This proud imperial city
Has been in ages past the great high-way
Of nations driving their blind millions on
To death and carnage. Through her gates have
pass'd

Pale cowl'd monarchs and red-sworded saints,
Voluptuaries foul, and hard-eyed followers
Of sordid gain—yea, all detested things.
She hath a common lake or sludge-pool been,
In which each passing tide has left behind
Some noisome sediment. She is choked up
With mud and garbage to the very brim.
Her citizens within her would full quietly
A pagan's slaves become, would he but promise
The sure continuance of their slothful ease.
Some few restraints upon their wonted habits
And Mah'met's gold, no doubt, have roused the
fools

To this unwonted stir.

Con. It may be so: I shall wait further tidings.
Meantime, my friends, go ye, and as ye can,
Snatch a short soldier's meal. [*They hesitate.*]
Nay, go I pray you!

I must not to my friends say "I command."

[*They all go immediately, and without any order
standing round the table, begin to eat.*]
(*To the citizen remaining still on the front of the
stage.*) And so thou sayst—But lo! another
messenger.

Enter another Citizen in great haste.

2d cit. The citizens in crowds—the men and
women—

The very children too — mine eyes have seen it —
In crowds they come —

Con. Take breath, and tell thy tale
Distinctly. From what quarter comest thou?
2d cit. I'm from the east.

Enter 3d Citizen.

3d cit. I come to tell your highness that the city
Is in commotion; e'en with flesh-forks arm'd,
And all the implements of glutt'nous sloth,
The people pour along in bawling crowds,
Calling out, "bread," and "Mah'met," and "sur-
render."

Towards the royal palæce.

Con. And whence art thou?

3d cit. I'm from the western quarter.

Con. Ha! spreads it then so wide?

[*Calling to his friends at the bottom of the stage.*
Friends, by your leave,
I somewhat must upon your goodness bear.
Give me my helmet and my sword again:
This is no partial fray.

[*Beginning to arm, whilst all the rest follow his example.*

Rod. Well, let us jostle with these ragged craft,
And see who grapples best.

[*Buckling on his armour gaily.*

Just. A soldier scorns to draw his honour'd blade
On such mean foes: we'll beat them off with sticks.

Othus. Words will, perhaps, our better weapons
prove,

When used as brave men's arms should ever be,
With skill and boldness. Swords smite single foes,
But thousands by a word are struck at once.

[*As they all gather round CONSTANTINE, and are ready to follow him, enter VALERIA in great alarm, followed by LUCIA, and several ladies.*

Val. (to CONSTANTINE). O, hast thou heard it?

Con. Yes, my love, they've told me.

Val. From the high tower my ladies have
descried

The dark spires redd'ning in their torches' light,
Whilst, like the hoarse waves of a distant sea,
Their mingled voices swell as they approach.

Con. It is a storm that soon will be o'erblown:
I will oppose to them a fixed rock,
Which they may beat against but cannot shake.

Val. That is thyself. — O, no! thou shalt not go!
Yea, I am bold! misfortune mocks at state,

And strong affection scorns all reverence;
Therefore, before these lords, e'en upon thee,
Thou eastern Cæsar, do I boldly lay

My woman's hand, and say, "thou shalt not go."

Con. Thy woman's hand is stronger, sweet
Valeria,

Than warrior's iron grasp,
But yet it may not hold me. Strong affection
Makes thee most fearful where no danger is:

Shall eastern Cæsar, like a timid hind
Seared from his watch, conceal his cowering head?
And does an empire's dame require it of him?

Val. Away, away! with all those pompous sounds!
I know them not. I by thy side have shared
The public gaze, and the applauding shouts
Of bending crowds: but I have also shared
The hour of thy heart's sorrow, still and silent,
The hour of thy heart's joy. I have supported
Thine aching head, like the poor wand'rer's wife,
Who, on his seat of turf, beneath heaven's roof,
Rests on his way. — The storm beats fiercely on
us;

Our nature suits not with these worldly times,
To it most adverse. Fortune loves us not;
She hath for us no good: do we retain
Her fetters only? No, thou shalt not go!

[*Twining her arms round him.*

By that which binds the peasant and the prince,
The warrior and the slave, all that do bear
The form and nature of a man, I stay thee!
Thou shalt not go.

Con. Wouldst thou degrade me thus?

Val. Wouldst thou unto my bosom give death's
pang?

Thou lov'st me not.

Con. (with emotion, stretching out his hands to his friends, who stand at some distance). My
friends, ye see how I am fetter'd here.

Ye who thus bravely to my fortunes cling
With generous love, less to redeem their fall
Than on my waning fate by noble deeds
To shed a parting ray of dignity:
Ye gen'rous and devoted; still with you
I thought to share all dangers: go ye now,
And to the eurrent of this swelling tide
Set your brave breasts alone!

[*Waving them off with his hand, and then turning to her.*

Now, wife, where wouldst thou lead me?

Val. (pointing with great energy to the friends who are turning as if to go out). There, there!
O, there! thou hast no other way.

[*Brushing away her tears hastily, and then assuming an air of dignity, she takes CONSTANTINE by the hand, and leading him across the stage, presents him to his friends.*

Most valiant, honour'd men, receive your chief,
Worthy the graceful honours of your love,
And heaven's protecting angel go with you!

[*Exeunt CONSTANTINE and his friends, paying obeisance to her as they retire, which she returns with the profoundest respect, continuing to look after them till they are out of sight; then returning to the front of the stage with a deep sigh, remains for some time with her eyes fixed on the ground.*

Lucia. My dear and royal mistress, be not thus!
The people will their sov'reign lord respect.

Val. Will they? Where is my little Georgian maid,
Whose grandfire, though a brave and sov'reign prince,

Was piecemeal torn by a ferocious crowd?

Lucia. She told a wonderful surcharged tale,
Perhaps to move your pity: heed it not.

Val. Ah! whereunto do all these turmoils tend—
The wild contention of these fearful times?
Each day comes bearing on its weight of ills,
With a to-morrow shadow'd at its back,
More fearful than itself.—A dark progression—
And the dark end of all, what will it be?

Lucia. Let not such gloomy thoughts your mind
o'ercast;

Our noble emperor has on his side
The dark and potent powers.

Val. What is thy meaning?

Lucia. A rarely-gifted man, come from afar,
Who sees strange visions rise before his sight
Of things to come, hath solemnly pronounced it,
That Paleologus has on his side
The dark and potent powers.

Val. Alas! alas! are they the friends of virtue?
Who told thee this?

Lucia. One unto whom he told such marv'ulous things

As did all natural knowledge far exceed.

Val. Thou dost impress me with a strange
desire,

As though it were upon my mind impress'd
By secret supernatural power. Methinks,
Were this dread night with all its dangers past,
I too would fain—Ha! hark! what noise is
that? [*Listening with great alarm.*]

Hark, hark! it is the sound of many sounds,
Mingled and terrible, though heard afar.

Lucia. Shall I ascend the tower, and give you
notice

Whate'er I see?

Val. (eagerly). I'll go myself.

[*Exit in great alarm, followed by LUCIA and
ladies.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*An open street before the imperial palace. A crowd
of men, women, and children discovered, bearing in
their hands torches, with clubs, sticks, &c., and the
stage entirely lighted by the red glare of their
torches cast up against the walls of the building.
The confused noise and clamour of a great crowd
is heard as the curtain draws up.*

1st crowd. Holla! let them come forth who
trouble us,

And love they blood and beating, they shall have it.

2d crowd. Surrender! bread and wine, and
peaceful days!

Surrender, devils, or ye shall pay the cost!

[*All the crowd call out clamorously, and
brandish their torches, &c., in a threatening
manner against the palace.*]

3d crowd. Must we, men well instructed, rear'd,
and cherish'd,

The chiefest of all townsmen of the earth;
We, whom all nations know and look upon
With envious worship—must we from our meals
And quiet couches, like your rude barbarians,
Be scared and roused with the continued bellowing
Of curst artillery? it is a shame.

1st crowd. It is a crying, an insulting shame.

E'en Mahomet regards our polish'd race

And rare acquirements; but for Constantine—

2d crowd. Ay, ay! let him come forth with his
base crew

Of savage strangers; and should they refuse us,
E'en with good teeth and nails, fail other means,
We will do vultures' work upon them all.

(*All of them calling out together, and brandishing their
torches, &c., as before.*) Holla! holla! we
say to you again;

Emperor! Constantine! come forth to us!

[*A grand door of the palace opens, from which
two flights of stairs descend into the street,
and CONSTANTINE, with his friends, appear
coming out upon the landing-place. The
crowd raise a great noise upon seeing him, and
he stretches out his hand as if he wished to
speak, but they still continue loud and cla-
morous.*]

Con. Audience, if that your sov'reign may com-
mand it!

4th crowd. Yes, let us hear what he will say to us.
(*Several together.*) There is no harm in that: peace
all of you!

Con. Behold me at your wish, assembled citizens:
Was it the voice of children or of foes

That call'd me forth?

3d crowd. Go to with mocking words! are we
thy children?

Con. Ye say, indeed, too truly! children do
Support, and honour, and obey their sire:
They put their aiding hand to every burden
That presses on him: ever gather round him
When dark misfortune lowers; and, strong in them,
He lifts his honour'd head amidst the storm,
Blessing and bless'd.

But I have stood in the dark pass alone,
Facing its fiercest onset. In your homes
Ye've stretch'd your easy limbs and fann'd your
brows,

Whilst I in parching toil have spent the day,
Aided by strangers. Ye too truly say [*clear,*
"Are we thy children?"—When my sky was
Ye follow'd me with fond applauding love,

And bade God bless your sire; but when it lower'd,
Back to your homes ye shrank, and gen'rous strangers

Are by my side where children should have stood.
(*A confused murmur rises amongst them, and some call out.*) He speaks good reason, neighbours.

(*Others call out.*) Out on it! all fair words!

(*Others.*) Peace, sirs! we'll hear him out.

(*Others.*) No! no! no! no!

[*Brandishing their torches violently.*]

Othoric (*breaking through them with a great club in his hands.*) Peace, friends, I say! I am a strong Hungarian,

And I will hear him out. [*The clamour subsides.*]

Con. Yes, when the tempest lower'd, ye shrank away.

But if some gen'rous shame has moved you now —

If, thus assembled, with repentant zeal

Ye would return, behold these open'd arms!

O there be still amongst you men sufficient

To save your city, your domestic roofs,

Your wives, your children, all that good men love;

Were each one willing for a little term

To face but half the dangers which perforce

Not doing this, he stands exposed to;

To bear but half the toils which I bear daily,

And shall bear lovingly!

1st crowd. Go to! surrender and have done with it.

Who thanks — who calls upon thee for thy toils?

Con. That voice, which, in the hour of trial, bids

The good man give his soft and sensitive frame

To death and torture, and e'en fearful woman

Bend her fair neck unto the uplifted stroke,

Calls upon me — yea, and I will obey it!

Othoric. By the good saints, he speaks like a brave man.

1st crowd. Acts he like one? will he come down to us?

(*Several speaking together.*) He does; he comes in truth!

[*CONSTANTINE, after speaking in dumb show to his friends, descends the stairs.*]

2d crowd. Ay, in good faith, he comes unarmed too!

Con. No, citizens, unarm'd I am not come;

For ev'ry good man here some weapon wears

For my defence.

4th crowd. Yes, he says well; and we'll defend him too.

(*Several others.*) And so we will; huzza! huzza! huzza!

Long live brave Constantine, our noble Emperor!

(*Many speaking at once.*) No, no! peace and surrender is our call!

[*Raising loud cries, and brandishing their torches with violent threatening gestures.*]

4th crowd. Hear him out, fools, and he'll perhaps consent

To hon'rable surrender.

Con. (*to 4th crowd, and those who range themselves on his side.*) No, friends; if in this hope with me ye stand,

Turn to your place again; for whilst I breathe,

With men enough in these encompass'd walls

To fire one gun, never shall Turkish banner

Upon our turrets wave. In this firm mind,

Upon those walls I am content to die,

By foemen slain, or, if heav'n wills it so,

Here on this spot, by those I will not name.

Othoric. No! we will die first, be it as it may,

Ere one hair of thy noble head shall fall!

Crowd (*on CONSTANTINE's side*) Long live brave

Constantine! brave Paleologus!

Huzza! huzza!

Crowd (*on the opposite side.*) No; bread, and peace, and Mahomet, say we!

[*Both parties call out tumultuously, and threaten one another, and RODRIGO, JUSTINIAN, and ORTHUS rush down amongst them, leaving their other friends to guard the door of the palace.*]

2d crowd (*to RODRIGO.*) Ay, thou sea-lion! thou too needs must come

To growl upon us.

Rod. No, faith! I know you well: ye are at large

A set of soft, luxurious, timid slaves,

On whom a cat with muffled paws might mew,

And ye would turn from it. — But still amongst you,

I would upon it pledge my mane and claws,

There are some honest souls who have ere now

Quaff'd their full bumpers to a brave man's health,

And I, in sooth, am come, with their good leave,

To shake hands with them all.

[*Holding out his hand invitingly to the opposite crowd.*]

Come; who loves valiant worth and Paleologus,

Give me his hand.

(*Many of the crowd giving him their hands.*) There is one for thee.

(*Second.*) Ay, and there. (*Third.*) And there.

Rod. (*to one who hesitates.*) And thou, too, for thou wearest upon thy brow

A soldier's look: I must perforce have thee.

[*Casting up his hat in the air, and joined by all the crowd on his side.*]

Long live brave Constantine! huzza!

[*This they continue to do till the opposite party are dispirited and beat off the stage. RODRIGO then presents his newly-acquired friends to CONSTANTINE.*]

Con. I thank you all, my brave and zealous friends.

Within the palace walls I'll now conduct you,

And marshal there my new-gain'd strength, for which

I give heaven thanks.

[*Exeunt*; CONSTANTINE, followed by his friends, &c. RODRIGO walking last, and just about to go off the stage, when OTHORIC re-enters by the opposite side, and calls after him.

Othoric. Hark ye! a word with you, my noble captain.

Rod. (returning). What wouldst thou say?

Othoric. Look on my face; my name is Othoric; I'm strong, thou seest, and have a daring soul: Look on my face; my name is Othoric: Thinkst thou thou shalt remember me, though thou Shouldst ne'er again behold me?

Rod. I shall, my friend: thou hast a daring countenance.

Othoric. My deeds shall not belie it. With this crowd

I came, a stranger of most desp'rate fortune, And hired by treach'rous men fell work to do. But now, unhired, I'll do for your brave master A deed that shall make Turkish ears to tingle, And Christian too, or fail it or succeed.

Rod. What wilt thou do?

Othoric. The consciousness of what one arm performs

Let one heart keep.

Rod. Heaven aid and prosper then thy secret thought,

If it be good and honest! Fare thee well!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A small narrow street, before a private sombre-looking house.

Enter OTHUS and RODRIGO.

Othus. Move slowly here, for now we pass the fane,

In which the mystic vision-seeing sage To ears of faith speaks his wild oracles.

Rod. What, he of whom we've heard such marvellous things?

Othus. Yes; such perturbed times his harvest prove,

When anxious minds, in dread of coming ill, Would draw aside, impatiently, the veil Of dark futurity.—Softly, I pray: A female form now issues from the door: It moves, methinks, like Ella.

Enter ELLA from the house, with a female Attendant.

Rod. (eagerly). It is herself, and I will speak to her.

Fair maid, as well I guess by that light trip,

Thy lover's fate hangs on a lucky thread; Tough, and well whiten'd in a kindly sun.

Ella. Well hast thou guess'd: fortune is passing kind;

She leads thee, fights for thee, and guards thy head From ev'ry foeman's stroke.

Rod. Ay, but thy lover, Ella! was it not Of him we spoke?

Ella. Fy, do not mock me thus!

Othus. In truth he mocks thee, Ella, and no faith To fates foretold or mystic sages gives. [truly,

Rod. Believe him not, sweet maid. We seamen, Small dealings have with learned sorcery; Nor bead, nor book, nor ring, nor mutter'd rhymes, Are for our turn: but on the sea-rock's point, In shape of hern, or gull, or carrion-bird, Our un-feed wizards sit, and, with stretch'd throats, Speak strange mysterious things to wave-toss'd men, With many perils compass'd. Nay, oftimes

The mermaid, seated on her coral throne, Spreading her yellow hair to the sunn'd breeze, Will sing a song of future fortunes fair

To him who has the luck to meet with her: And e'en the nightly winds will through our shrouds

Distinctive voices utter unto those, Who in their storm-rock'd cradles lie, and think

Of their far-distant homes.—I do believe

That all good fortune shall betide thy love, Being thy love; for that doth far outdo

All other fortune; and besides, no doubt, A fair and courtly youth.

Ella. Go to! go to! thou mockest me again!

I love a brave man——

Rod. And not passing fair, Nor very courtly?

Othus. No, nor wearing now His youth's best bloom; but somewhat weather-beaten,

And sunn'd on sultry shores?

Ella. Fy on you both, you hold me in derision! I'm young, and all unlearn'd, and well I know

Not passing sage; but do I merit this? [Turns to go away from them in tears.

Rod. By heavens thou shalt not go!

[*Catching hold of her hand to prevent her.* Thou sweetest thing

That e'er did fix its lightly-fibred sprays To the rude rock, ah! wouldst thou cling to me?

Rough and storm-worn I am: but if thou lov'st me,—

Thou truly dost,—I will love thee again With true and honest heart, though all unmeet

To be the mate of such sweet gentleness. *Othus.* I hear a noise of footsteps: we'll retire; Let us pursue our way.

[*Looking behind as they go off.* 'Tis one belonging to Valeria's train, Who hither comes with quick and eager gait.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A large sombre room, with mystical figures and strange characters painted upon the walls, and lighted only by one lamp, burning upon a table near the front of the stage.

Enter a Conjuror in a long loose robe, and PETRONIUS, meeting him, by opposite sides.

Pet. Well, my good sage, how thrives thy mystic trade?

Go all things prosperously?

Con. As thou couldst wish: to many a citizen I have the fix'd decree of fate foretold, Which to the Sultan gives this mighty city, Making all opposition and defence Vain; and their superstition works for us Most powerfully.

Pet. So far 'tis well; but be thou on thy guard; I am expressly come to caution thee. Should any visit thee, whom thou suspectest To be connected with th' imperial friends, Be sure thy visions speak to them of things Pleasant to loyal ears.

Con. Fear not; I have already been forewarn'd, And have such caution follow'd.

Pet. Thou hast done wisely: still keep on thy guard,

And be not e'en surprised if thou, ere long, Shouldst have a royal visiter. My agents, Who in th' imperial palace are on watch, Have giv'n me notice that Valeria's mind Is this way bent. If so, let thy delusions Still tempt her in the city to remain, For herein is the Sultan much concern'd. Hush! we are interrupted.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. (to con.). A noble matron craves to speak with thee.

Con. Dost thou not know her?

Serv. No; in a black stole She's closely veil'd; yet noble is her gait; And her attendant underneath his cloak, But ill conceal'd, wears an imperial crest.

Pet. and Con. (both together). Can it indeed be she? [*Pausing to consider.*]

Con. I'll venture it. (*To servant.*) Go and conduct her hither. [*Exit servant.*]

It must be she: I'll boldly venture it.

Pet. Thou mayst with little risk: meantime, remember

The caution I have given thee.

Con. Trust to my skill, and be a while withdrawn, My noble patron. [*Exit PETRONIUS.*]

Enter VALERIA, concealed under a long black stole, followed by LUCIA and two female attendants, who remain at the bottom of the stage whilst she comes forward.

Con. Approach, great dame.

Val. Yes, in misfortune so; That is my eminence: and unto thee I come, an anxious suitor, if that truly [dealst, Th' unseen mysterious powers, with whom thou To human weal and woe alliance bear, And may unto the care-rack'd mind foreshow The path of awful fate that lies before it. I do beseech thee!—

Con. Say thou dost command; For through that sable stole, were it as thick As midnight's curtain, still I could behold Thy keenly-glancing eye, and the dark arch Of royal brows accustom'd to command.

Val. Ha! dost thou see me?

Con. Yea; and who is he, Whose shadowy unreal form behind thee towers, As link'd with thine though absent? O'er his head Th' imperial eagle soars, and in his hand He grasps the emblem of supreme command.

Val. (throwing back the stole with astonishment mixed with fear). O, most mysterious and wonderful!

Nothing is hid from thee: thou seest afar The distant death's day of the swathed babe, Falling in hoary age, and the life's morn Of those who are not.—Here then all confess'd, A wretched empress and a trembling wife, I stand before thee. O let thy keen eye Through the dark mist that limits nature's sight, Follow that phantom o'er whose head doth soar Th' imperial bird! for, be it good or ill, His fate is mine, and in his fate alone I seek to know it.

Con. And hast thou strength to bear it? art thou firm?

For that which smites mine eye must smite thine ear. *Val. (alarmed).* Thou reck'nest then to look on dreadful things?

Con. I may or may not; but with mind not braced

In its full strength, seek not thy fate to know.

Val. (after a hesitating pause of great agitation). I can bear all things but the dread uncertainty

Of what I am to bear.

Con. Then shall it be unto thee as thou wilt.

[*After some mysterious motions and muttering to himself, he turns his face towards the bottom of the stage, as if he had his eye steadfastly fixed upon some distant point; and continues so for some time without moving, whilst she stands, watching his countenance eagerly, with her face turned to the front of the stage.*]

Val. (impatiently, after a pause). O! what dost thou behold?

Con. Nay, nothing yet but the dark formless void.

Be patient and attend. — I see him now :
On the tower'd wall he stands : the dreadful battle
Roars round him. Through dark smoke, and
sheeted flames,

And showers of hurtling darts, and hissing balls,
He strides : beneath his sword falls many a foe :
His dauntless breast to the full tide of battle
He nobly gives. Still on through the dark storm
Mine eye pursues him to his fate's high cope —

Val. His fate's high cope! merciful, awful heaven!
[*After a pause.*]

O, wherefore dost thou pause? thine eyes roll terribly :

What dost thou see? thou lookst on things most dreadful!

O look not thus, but say what thou dost see!

Con. I see a frowning chief, the crescent's champion,

In bold defiance meet thy valiant lord.

The fight is fierce and bloody. —

Val. Again thou pauseth yet more terribly. —

Hast thou no utterance for what thou seest?

O God! O God! thou lookst upon his death!

[*Clasping her hands violently.*]

Dost thou not speak? wilt thou not answer me?

Thou lookst upon his death!

Con. I look on nothing, for thy frantic terrors
Have broken the fabric of my air-shaped vision,
And all is blank.

Val. And will it not return to thee again?

O fix thine eyes, and to it bend thy soul

Intently, if it still may rise before thee,

For thou hast made me frantic!

Con. (after a pause, and fixing his eyes as before).

The forms again return —

The champions meet : the fight is fierce and terrible :

The fateful stroke is given : and Constantine —

Val. Merciful heaven!

Con. And Constantine lays the proud crescent low.

Val. (pausing for a moment as if to be assured that she has heard right, and then holding up her hands in ecstasy). It is! it is! O words of bliss! — Thou seest it!

My Constantine lays the proud crescent low!

Thou lookst upon it truly; and their forms

Before thee move, e'en as the very forms

Of living men?

Con. Even so.

Val. O blessed sight!

It is not witch'ry's spell, but holy spirits

Sent from a gracious heav'n that shapes such forms;

And be it lawless or unhallow'd deem'd,

Here will I kneel in humble gratitude.

Con. (preventing her from kneeling). No, no, this must not be : attend again :

There's more behind.

Val. Ha! sayst thou more behind? Or good or evil?

Con. Mixed I ween : 'tis still in darkness lapp'd.

Val. In darkness let it rest : I've heard enough,
I would not look upon thine eyes again,
And in my fancy shape thy unseen sights,
For all that e'er — Is that which lies behind
A far extended vision? [*Pausing anxiously.*]

Thou wilt not answer me — well, rest it so.

But yet, O forward look for one short year,

And say who then shall be this city's lord.

Con. Thy husband and thy lord, most mighty dame,

Shall at that period be this city's lord.

Val. Then I am satisfied. Thou hast my thanks,
My very grateful thanks. There is thy recompense,

And this too added.

[*Giving him a purse, and then a ring from her hand.*]

We shall meet again

In happier days, when the proud crescent's low,

And thou shalt have a princely recompense.

[*Turning to her attendants as she goes away.*]

Come, Lucia; come, my friends; the storm will pass,

And we shall smile in the fair light of heaven

In happier days. [*Exit, followed by her attendants.*]

Con. (looking at his reward). Good sooth, this almost smites against my heart;

But goes she not far happier than she came?

Have I not earn'd it well?

Re-enter PETRONIUS.

Pet.

Thou hast well earn'd it.

What! harbour such poor scruples in a breast

So exercised in a trade like this?

Fy on't! But if thy conscience is so nice,

Know that thou hast in all good likelihood

Predicted truly; and her lord and husband

Shall be still, as thou sayst, this city's lord.

Con. How so?

Pet. Hast thou not skill enough to guess?

Much has the Sultan of Valeria heard;

And, with the future beauties of his palace,

His fancy, in the most distinguish'd rank,

Already places her. Thou wilt ere long,

I can foretell by certain fleeting shapes

Which at this moment dance before mine eyes,

A favour'd, famous, courtly prophet be.

My little Ella too, taught by my art,

May play, perhaps, her part; and so together

We'll amicably work. — May it not be?

Put up thy gold and say it is well earn'd.

Con. It must be had, and therefore must be earn'd,

Falsely or honestly. — Does Constantine,

As speaks this morning's rumour, send again
Another embassy to Mahomet
With terms of peace?

Pet. He does, my friend : already in the palace
He, and his band of self-devoted fools,
Deliberate on it. Thou, at no great risk,
Mays't prophecy the issue of their counsels.

Con. I have adventured upon bolder guessing.

Pet. Excepting that slight aid from Genoa,
Which by the master of a coasting vessel.
Kept secretly on watch, I am inform'd
Is now almost within sight of the coast,
No hope remains to Constantine. And this
Shall not deceive him long ; for I've despatch'd,
In a swift-sailing skiff, a trusty agent,
Who shall with costly bribes and false reports
Deter their boldness from all desp'rate efforts
To force a passage to the block'd-up port :
A thing, Rodrigo's bold success alone
Hath taught us to believe e'en possible.

Con. Thanks for your information, my good
lord :

I'll profit by it.

Pet. But use it prudently. And so good day.
Well thrive thy trade, and all good luck attend us.
[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE IV.

*An apartment in the imperial palace, with a view
through a grand arched door of another apartment,
in which are discovered CONSTANTINE, OTHUS,
JUSTINIANI, RODRIGO, and others, arising from a
council table. They enter and come forward.*

Con. Well, my brave friends, I to your care
intrust

This last attempt by honourable treaty
To gain peace from the foe. Heav'n bless your
efforts !

Jus. All that strict honour will permit to us
Shall be most truly done, imperial lord,
And one step farther on we cannot go.

Con. Had I wish'd more than this, Justiniani,
I had sent other ministers. —
Heav'n bless your efforts, brave ambassadors,
And make you wise as brave !

If we succeed not,

As much I fear, it is my earnest wish,
Ere the grand push that shall our fate decide,
To meet you all in blessed charity,
And join with you, perhaps, in the last rites
Of Christian worship that within our walls
Shall e'er be celebrated.

Othus. Your wish shall be fulfill'd : we all desire
it.

Con. I thank you. In an hour hence be prepared
To set out for the Sultan's camp. So brothers,
Good day, and all good favour !

[*Exeunt all but CONSTANTINE and OTHUS.*]

Con. (to OTHUS, as he is about to go after the
others). Wilt thou go also, Othus ?

Othus. Not if your highness does command my
stay.

Con. Ah, gentle friend ! I do no more command !
But this distresses thee. Well, gen'rous man,
Thou art commanded.

[*Pointing to a seat, and they both sit.*
Here, by thy friendly side,

I'll give my heart a little breathing space ;
For oh ! the gen'rous love of these brave men,
Holding thus nobly to my sinking fate,
Presses it sorely.

From thee nor from myself can I conceal
The hopeless state in which I am beset.
No foreign prince a brother's hand extends
In this my hour of need ; no Christian state
Sends forth its zealous armies to defend
This our begirded cross : within our walls,
Though with th' addition of our later friends,
I cannot number soldiers e'en sufficient
To hold a petty town 'gainst such vast odds.
I needs must smile and wear a brow of hope,
But with thee, gentle Othus, I put off
All form and seeming ; I am what I am, [me ?
A weak and heart-rent man, — Wilt thou forgive
For I in truth must weep.

Othus. Yes, unrestrained weep, thou valiant soul
With many a wave o'er-ridden ! Thou striv'st
nobly

Where hearts of sterner stuff perhaps had sunk :
And o'er thy fall, if it be so decreed,
Good men will mourn, and brave men will shed
tears,
Kindred to those which now thou shedst. Thy
name

Shall in succeeding ages be remember'd,
When those of mighty monarchs are forgot.

Con. Deceive me not ; thy love deceiveth thee.

Men's actions to futurity appear
But as th' events to which they are conjoin'd
Do give them consequence. A fallen state,
In age and weakness fall'n, no hero hath ;
For none remain behind unto whose pride
The cherish'd mem'ry of his acts pertains.
O no, good Othus, fame I look not for.
But to sustain in heav'n's all-seeing eye,
Before my fellow men, in mine own sight,
With graceful virtue and becoming pride,
The dignity and honour of a man,
Thus station'd as I am, I will do all
That man may do, and I will suffer all —
My heart within me cries, that man can suffer.

[*Starting up with vehemence, and holding up
both hands firmly clenched.*

Shall low-born men on scaffolds firmly tread,
For that their humble townsmen should not blush
And shall I shrink ? No, by the living God !
I will not shrink, albeit I shed these tears.

Othus. To be in toils and perils, nay in sufferings,
With th' applauding sympathy of men
Upon his side, is to the noble mind
A state of happiness beyond the bliss
Of calm inglorious ease.

Con. O no, good Othus! thou misjudgest of me.
I would, God knows, in a poor woodman's hut
Have spent my peaceful days, and shared my crust
With her who would have cheer'd me, rather far
Than on this throne; but, being what I am,
I'll be it nobly.

Othus. Yes, thou wilt be it nobly, spirit as brave
As e'er wore Cæsar's name!

Con. (*smiling sorrowfully*). Yes, there is cause for me; there is good cause.

But for those valiant men, link'd in my fate,
Who have in other lands their peaceful homes
And dear domestic ties, on whom no claim
Lays its strong hold—alas! what cause have they?
What is their recompense? Fame is not mine;
And unto them—O this doth press my heart!
A heart surcharged with many cares, and press'd
With that besides, which more than all—with that
Which I have wrestled with—which I have
striv'n—

With that which comes between me and myself—
The self that as a Christian and a man
I strongly strove to be—

Othus. You have before some secret cause of trouble

Hinted in broken words: will not your highness
Unto a faithful friend—

Con. (*turning away from him*). No, no, good Othus!

Sometimes I dream like a distracted man,
And nurse dark fancies. Power and lawless will—
Defenceless beauty—Mahomet—Valeria—
Shape out of these wild words what'er thou wilt,
For I can say no more.

Othus. Alas, I know it all!

Con. And yet why should it thus disturb my mind?

A thought, perhaps, that in no other breast
Hath any shelter found.—It is my weakness:
I am ashamed of it.—I can look
On my short fated span and its dark bound:
I can, God strength'ning me, my earthly task
Close as becomes a king; and, being closed,
To that which on this world's tumultuous stage
Shall happen after it, I am as nothing.

Othus. Alas! my royal master, do not thus
To racking thoughts give way! are there not means
To free you from this pain, if you to use them
Have courage? Let the empress be convey'd
Far from these walls. It is a cruel remedy,
But it will give you peace.

Con. I did attempt it, but she has so closely
Entwined herself upon me—O, my friend,

It needs must pass! I in th'unconscious grave
Shall be at rest.

Othus. But does she know the nature of your fears?

Con. O no! she does not! from that hateful subject,

As from a hideous serpent, still with her
I've kept aloof.—Alas! what can I do?
I could as well into her noble heart
Thrust the barb'd dart, as tell her what I fear.

Othus. Perhaps she still, as from the common horrors

Of a sack'd town, may be conjured to flee.
And here she comes: be it at least attempted.

Enter VALERIA, LUCIA, and attendant Ladies.

Val. (*to CONSTANTINE*). I come to claim thy promise: one short hour,

A hasty sunbeam through the cloud's dark skirt,
Thou giv'st to me, and I must claim my right.
Thy friends, too, ere they go, shall be my guests:
I have brought powerful suitors to assist me.

[*Pointing to her ladies.*

Ha! what disturbs thee? how is this, my love?

Thy face is changed and troubled.—What new cause—

Con. O, no new cause! one that has much disturb'd me.

Val. And one to me unknown?

Con. Speak to her, Othus!

Othus. By many various ills and cares oppress'd,
Your royal lord is still most closely touch'd
With that which does your weal regard. What fate
May, in a storm-ta'en city, of dire sights
And horrid cruelties, have in reserve,

If such the city's doom, who can foresee?
O, let him then his painful station hold,
Gen'rous Valeria! from one care relieved,
His heaviest care, the thought of leaving thee
The involved witness of such horrid things!

Val. What wouldst thou say in this? Thinkst thou the ruin

In which he perishes will have for me
Or form or circumstances? It will be
Th' upbreking crash of all existing things,
That undistinguish'd is, and felt but once.
Othus, thou talkst like an unskilful sage:
It was not thus thy master bade thee speak.

Con. Valeria, hard necessity compels us.
I have already safe asylum sought
For the last tender remnant of our race,
That something might from this dire wreck be saved,
And shall I not for thee—

Val. No; I am nothing
But what I am for thee! When that is finish'd—

Con. Ah, my Valeria, that will not finish!
Thou still mayst be for me—thou still mayst bear
Honour'd memorial amongst living men
Of him who was thy lord.—Good Lucia, aid me,

And gentle Servia, too, and all of you !

[*To the ladies.*

Cling round your mistress with your soothing love,
And say that in a foreign land you'll be
The faithful friends and soothers of her woe,
Where ev'ry virtuous heart will bear to her
The kindred ties of holiest sympathy.
Say ye will be with her in kindest zeal :
Ye will not leave her ?

Lucia and the other ladies. No, we'll never leave her !

[*Gathering round her affectionately.*
Most dear and royal mistress, whilst life holds,
In whate'er land, in whate'er state you are,
We'll never leave you.

Val. I know it well : thanks to your gen'rous love !

But yet forbear, nor thus beset me round !

[*Putting them gently from her, and fixing her eyes upon CONSTANTINE.*

O, Paleologus ! hast thou for me
In fancy shaped a world and an existence
Where thou art not ?

[*Running to him and falling on his neck.*
Here is my world, my life, my land of refuge,
And to no other will I ever flee.

Here still is light and hope ; turning from this,
All else is round me as a yawning tomb.

Con. My dearest love ! my gen'rous honour'd love !

My sweet Valeria ! thou distractest me ;
But have thy way, for I can urge no more.
Let dark fate come : I will abide its worst.

Val. Nay, say not dark ; there is a hope within me ;

'Tis sure, 'tis strong, it cannot be deceitful.

[*A signal heard from without.*

Hark ! Hark ! a signal !

(*Voices are heard calling without.*) Ships are in sight !
supplies and warlike aid !

Val. (*holding up her hands*) O blessed sound !
there is salvation in it.

Heaven sends us aid !

[*Voices again call out as before, and the signal is repeated.*

Again the blessed sound !

And here Rodrigo comes, wearing a face
Of welcome tidings.

Enter RODRIGO.

Succours, brave Rodrigo ?

Rod. Yes, ships from Genoa are now in sight,
Bearing, no doubt, brave aid, if to the port
They can make good their entrance.

(*All, except CONSTANTINE.*) Good heaven be bless'd.

Con. And says Rodrigo "if?" [*Shaking his head.*

Val. Nay, fear not, they will enter ; with them comes

Another brave Rodrigo ; through barr'd adamant,
Did it oppose them, they will force their way.

Rod. If they have but one jot of manhood in them,

They'll do all possible things.

Val. Ay, and all things are possible !

Con. In truth, thou talkst with such exulting confidence,

Thou almost temptest me to grasp at hope.

[*Voices call out as before, and a signal from the towers.*

Val. The animating sound ! Come, come ! O, come !

And o'er the blue waves hail the blessed sight !

[*Runs out exultingly, every one following her with animated alacrity.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Turkish camp, the tent of MAHOMET, who is discovered sitting alone in the eastern manner, with a great sheet of parchment spread out before him, which he is considering attentively.

Mah. (*after tracing some lines with a pen or pencil.*) Ho, Osmir ! art thou here ?

Enter OSMIR.

Come hither, vizir ; follow with thine eye

The various dispositions of this plan
Which for our grand attack I here have traced.

God and the Prophet being on our side,
That mingled broil of fierce and dreadful fight,

Which shall not cease till from the list of nations

This eastern empire, with its long told line

Of paltry Cæsars, be expunged and blank,

Shall not be long delay'd.

Osmir. All things must yield unto the towering spirit

And comprehensive genius of your highness.

Permit your slave. [*Looking over the plan.*

Conceived, indeed, with deep and wondrous skill !

But, mighty lord, if that a worm may speak,

Your van, methinks, is of a motley class,

The vile refuse and garbage of the camp ;

Are Mussulmen led on in glory's path

By such as these ?

Mah. (*smiling fiercely.*) No ; but brave Mussulmen o'er such as these

May step to glory's path. Garbage, I trust,

Is good enough for filling ditches up.

Some thousand carcasses, living and dead,

Of those who first shall glut the en'my's rage,

Push'd in, pell-mell, by those who press behind,

Will rear for us a bridge to mount the breach

Where ablest engineers had work'd in vain.

Osmir. This did escape my more contracted thoughts.

And here your highness stations Georgian troops :
Are they sure men in such important service ?

Mah. (*smiling again*). Ay, sure as death ; here is my surety for them.

Seest thou what warriors in the rear are placed,
With each a cord and hatchet in his hand ?
Those grizly hangmen, in their canvas sleeves,
Fight for me better than an armed band
Of Christian knights full cap-à-pie. Look o'er it :
Something, perchance, may have escaped my thoughts.

Osmir (*after again examining it*). No ; every thing is consummately plann'd. —

But, mighty sultan, this old officer,
Whom you have station'd here with your new troops,
Is not to be relied on.

Mah. How so, *Osmir* ?

Osmir. It is suspected that he has received
The en'my's gold ; one thing, at least, is certain,
He has had private meetings with the foe.

Mah. What ! art thou sure of this ? — Send for him quickly.

The fool 'mid blocks and bowstrings has so long
His base head tott'ring worn, he thinks, no doubt,
It needs must be his own. Send for him quickly,
And see that which is needful done upon him.

[*Drawing the pen sternly across the name on the plan.*

There ; from the world of living things I blot him ;
Another takes his place.

(*Giving a paper to OSMIR.*) These are the usual orders for the night ;

Assemble thou the sev'ral officers,
And give to each his own particular charge.

Osmir. Your slave obeys. [*Exit.*

Mah. (*alone, after musing for a little while*). Have I done well to give this hoary vet'ran

Who has for thirty years fought in our wars,
To the death-cord unheard ?

[*Sternly, after pausing a short space.*
I have done well.

In my disguised rounds, but two nights since,
List'ning at his tent-door, I heard him speak
Words that methought approach'd to slight esteem
Of my endowments and capacity.
Yes, he is guilty.

[*After walking up and down several times he opens another scroll.*

But I will fear no treason : here is that
On which I may rely. In mortal man
I have no trust ; they are all hollow slaves,
Who tremble and detest, and would betray.
But on the fates, and the dark secret powers,
So say those sure unerring calculations
Of deep astrology, I may depend.

[*Sitting down again, and considering the scroll.*

Ay, it must needs be so : this constellation

In close conjunction with the warrior's star,
Traced back in magic numbers three times three,
And nine times nine, and added three again,
Unto the hour of my nativity,
Makes it infallible. Here have I mark'd it
With my own science, num'ral, learn'd, and sure.
Ha ! ha ! your foolish Christians now believe
Men's future fortunes are by wizards seen,
In airy forms pourtray'd, like mimic shows,
And trust thereto with fond simplicity.

[*OTHORIC, who about the middle of this speech has made his appearance from behind the curtain of the tent, disguised like a Turk, but without a turban, now, stealing close up to MAHOMET, lifts up his dagger to strike.*

What do I hear ?

Othoric. It is thy fate, blind Turk, uncalculated.

[*Striking.*

Mah. (*parrying the blow with his sheathed scimitar, which he afterwards draws*). Ho ! help without ! treason and parricide !

Ho ! guards without, I say !

[*Guards rush in, and OTHORIC is seized, after defending himself desperately.*

Mah. (*to OTHORIC*). Who art thou ? What dark tyrant set thee on

To do this murderous and horrid deed ?

Othoric. And thinkst thou such deeds horrid ? —
But I came

To act and not to speak.

Mah. Say rather, villain, to be acted on.

Do racks and burning iron please thee well
That thou shouldst earn them with such desperate pains.

(*To the Guards.*) Stretch out his arms, and let me look on them.

[*Looking at his arms, and surveying him all over, he shrinks back as from a danger escaped, and then smiles grimly.*

There will be tough work on those sinewy limbs
When they are dealt with. Lead the traitor off.

I will give orders for his fate ere long.

[*To OTHORIC, who is about to speak.*

Thou shalt not speak : I hate thy horrible face.
Lead him away !

[*Exeunt OTHORIC and Guards, met by PETRONIUS and MARTON, who enter as they are going out.*

Pet. What prisoner is this they lead along ?

Mah. A dark assassin in my tent conceal'd,
Whose daring hand e'en now aim'd at my life.

Pet. (*casting up his eyes to heaven*). The life of great and godlike Mahomet !
It makes my blood turn cold.

Mar. I too am stunn'd, and tremble at the thought.

Mah. Yes, all may tremble who in the dark purpose
Have part or knowledge had.

Pet. and Mar. (both alarmed). What means my lord ?

[*MAHOMET walks several times across the stage with angry strides, whilst they look fearfully upon one another, and then going sternly up to them.*

Mah. I know the base transactions of last night :
Ye stuff'd my gold into the dirty palms
Of those who shook their torches in the air,
And cried long live brave Paleologus.
I know it all : think ye with upcast looks,
And mumm'ry such as this, to blind mine eyes ?

Pet. (falling on his knees). As there's a God in heav'n, to you, great Sultan !

We have been true ! [MARTHON kneels also.

Mah. Up, crouching slaves ! when men, so bred as you are,

Thus lowly kneel, my very soul abhors them.

Pet. Your death, great monarch, were to Paleologus

Triumph and safety, but to us swift ruin.

Mar. And shall suspicions so improbable

Fall upon us, who in your secret service
Have dangers braved, and from your hands alone
Look for the recompense ?

Pet. If we last night have fail'd —

Mah. (stamping with his foot). I will not hear you !

Enter OSMIR.

Osmir, knowst thou this horrible attempt ?

Osmir. I do, great prince, and bless the prophet's arm

That has preserved you. What base enemy
Has arm'd the desp'rate villain ?

Mah. Petronius here and his smooth Grecian friend

Throw accusation on the emperor.

Osmir. This moment in your camp there is arrived

An embassy of his most honour'd friends,
Sent by the emperor to treat of peace.

Mah. At this unlikely hour ?

Osmir. Yes, time now presses, and, as I should guess,

The hopes of succour from those friendly vessels
That vainly have attempted through your fleets
To force a passage, raising short-lived joy
Full soon extinguish'd, has to this late hour
Delay'd their coming.

Hope gone, they now are humbled suitors. Here,
Within your power, you have the chieftest men
Of the brave friends on whom he most depends ;
This does not look like preconcerted plots
Of secret murder, at this very hour
To be attempted.

Mah. No, Osmir, there is reason in thy words.

Osmir. But if your highness thinks it is expedient,
I will straightway arrest them.

Mah. (after hesitating). No ; they are valiant men, and do as such

Claim honour from a valiant foe. Go say,
That by the morning's dawn they shall have audience ;

The open camp, with wide-mouth'd cannon cloth'd,
And all my lofty garniture of war,
Shall be my hall of state. Secure those men
Until my farther orders !

[*Pointing to PETRONIUS and MARTHON, and exit, followed by OSMIR. Remain PETRONIUS and MARTHON guarded.*

1st guard. Come on, my masters, we'll conduct you safely.

Mar. (to PETRONIUS). Is it to plunge me in this dreadful gulf

That your cursed lessons have seduced my youth ?

Pet. Upbraid me not. I have not for myself

A better fate reserved. But we are noble,
And of high lineage ; fear not, for the Sultan
Will still respect us.

2d guard. Ay, so belike he will ; your noble heads

May with the royal scimitar be sever'd,

If he is much inclined to honour you.

Some men ere now, in other Sultans' days,

Have been so honour'd. [Exit.

SCENE II.

An open space in the camp, with the Janizaries and Turkish troops drawn up in order. Cannon and warlike engines seen mixed with the tents. A flourish of trumpets ; enter MAHOMET, with OSMIR and his train, and places himself in a chair of state near the front of the stage. Another flourish of trumpets, and enter OTHUS, JUSTINIANI, and RODRIGO, with a small train of attendants, walking slowly up the stage.

Mah. (to OSMIR, as they come forward). These men approach us with a hardy step,

Nor wear the suppliant's humbled brow. Come they

To sue or to command us ?

[*To OTHUS and the other deputies, who make obeisance to him.*

You are permitted to declare your errand.

If your hard-lesson'd chief, more prudent grown,
Will now resign his proud imperial city
Into the hands to whom high heaven's decree,
And power on earth resistless, soon shall give it,
I will receive that which he cannot hold
With grace and favour.

Othus. High heaven's decrees are known to mortal man

But in th' event fulfill'd ; and for earth's power,
The cannon-flanked cohorts, and wide front
Of far extended numbers, show it not

To him, who in the small and secret fortress,
E'en of one brave man's breast, more help discovers,
Oft in th' astounding hour of the storm's pitch,
Than in an armed host. Imperial Constantine
Will live or die within his city's walls
As may become their master. — Nevertheless,
He will so far to hard necessity —

Mah. I hear no more : your words are ineffectual,
And fall as powerless as the ruffian's sword,
Whom now, within my tent, your royal master,
Compell'd no doubt by hard necessity,
Has hired to murder me.

Just. (*stepping boldly forward*). Sultan, thou
sittest where thou safely mayst

Say what thou wilt, therefore of all mankind
Thou most art bound to say but what is meet.
Put those accusing words that thou hast utter'd
Into the mouth of any other Turk,
Wore he a giant's form, for in your camp
I know that such there be, and I will prove it,
With this good soldier's arm, a cursed falsehood.

Othus (*to JUSTINIAN, pulling him back*). Thou
art not wise. — Great Sultan, hear me speak.

If any base attack upon your life
Has been attempted, let the murd'rous villain,
If still he breathes, be here before us brought.
In presence of your highness we will question him :
Perchance he will confess what secret foe
Has armed his daring hand.

Mah. (*after giving orders to a guard in dumb show,
who immediately goes out*). Your suit is
granted.

These men speak boldly, vizir. [*Aside to OSMIR.*
Osmir (*aside to MAHOMET*). They shrink not
from the proof.

Enter OTHORIC fettered and guarded.

Mah. (*to OTHORIC*). As thou mayst hope a mi-
tigated doom,
I here command thee that thou truly answer
Whate'er those Roman deputies demand.

Othoric. I do not hope a mitigated doom,
And therefore, Sultan, cannot be commanded :
But if this brave man here will question me,

[*Pointing to RODRIGO.*
For in his presence I do feel my spirit
To manhood's height braced up, I'll truly answer,
Though every word did in my sinews fix
The burning pineer's tooth.

Rod. Ha ! Othoric art thou not ? the strong Hun-
garian ?

Othoric (*smiling*). Ay, thou rememberest my
name — I thank thee —

It pleases me to think thou'lt ne'er forget it.
Ask what thou wilt, and I will answer thee ;
Bid me do what thou wilt, and I will do it,
Barring the hind'rance of these chains.

Rod. Thanks to thee !
Then whatsoe'er the Sultan asks of thee,

Answer him truly. He will point his questions
Where his suspicion falls.

Othoric. I will obey.

Mah. (*sternly*). Who hired thee, thou bold and
hard-brow'd villain,
Such horrid deed to do ?

Othoric. I have been twice hired, mighty Ma-
homet,

To do fell deeds, in which I've lack'd performance.

Mah. And who first hired thee ?

Othoric. Thyself.

Mah. Base traitor !
Dar'st thou belie me to my very face ?

Othoric. That I belie thee not be this my token ;
My hire was given to me by Petronius,
Told from a sable bag, on whose seal'd mouth
Thy scimitar and crescent were impress'd.

Othus. Petronius !

Othoric. Yes, that smooth, subtle Greek.

Mah. He hired thee not to take the life of Con-
stantine ?

Othoric. True ; I was hired for wasteful in-
surrection,

Not for delib'rate murder. Though most wretched,
A stranger, griped by hard necessity,

The price he gave me ne'er had bought this arm
To such an act. [*deed,*

Mah. And who did hire thee for this second
Which thou must needs delib'rate murder call ?

Othoric. 'Twas Constantine.

Just. Thou liest, foul, artful villain !

Mah. Peace I command ! ye shall not interrupt
him.

'Twas Constantine that hired thee ?

Othoric. Yes, great Sultan !

But not with gold, and he himself, I ween,
Unconscious of the act.

Mah. What did he bribe thee with ?

Othoric. With that which does but seldom prove
the means

Of like corruption — gen'rous admiration

Of noble manly virtue. I beheld him,
Like a brave stag encompas'd by base curs,
And it did tempt me. — Other bribe than this

Have I had none ; and to no mortal ear

Did I reveal my purpose.

[*MAHOMET puts his hand on his forehead and
seems disturbed, whilst the deputies hold up
their hands exultingly.*

Rod. (*to OTHORIC*). O for a galley mann'd with
such as thou art,

Therewith to face a hundred armed ships,

Created with meaner life !

Yet thou must die, brave heart ! yet thou must die.

Thou hast done that which in no circumstance

Man's hand may do, and therefore thou must
perish.

But I'll remember thee : thy name is Othoric :

I will remember thee.

Osmir (to MAHOMET, who covers his face and seems disturbed, after a pause). Your highness gives no orders to your slave

Touching the prisoner.

Mah. (uncovering his face angrily). His crime is plain : death be his instant doom.

Osmir. And in what mode ? or simple or with pains ?

Mah. Distract me not.

Othoric. Vizir, be not so hasty.

I bear with me what will redeem my life,
And gain the Sultan's pardon.

Osmir. Ah ! thinkest thou to gain him with that bribe

Which Constantine gave thee ? [*Shaking his head.*]

Othoric. No, not with that. I wear upon this arm,

A potent band, with subtle magic wrought,
That, wheresoe'er 'tis on my body rubb'd
With mutter'd words which I alone do know,
Maketh the part firm and invulnerable
To sword, or bullet, or the arrow's point —
To all offensive things. Believe me not,
But see the proof. — Relieve mine arms, I pray,
That I may show this wonder.

Mah. Unlock his fetters : if he tamper with us,
His tortures are enhanced.

Othoric (to the guard who stands next him, after he has been unfettered, and at the same time uncovering his left arm). Young Turk, thou wearst a dagger by thy side :

To show that I am made as other men,
Of flesh and blood as soft and sensitive, [thee,
When with no charm secured, thrust it, I pray
Into this nerved flesh. Nay, do not shrink,
For I shrink not.

Mah. Do it, thou timid slave !

[*The guard slightly wounds OTHORIC'S arm with the point of the dagger.*]

Othoric. You see it is an arm of flesh and blood ;
And so you'll find my body in all parts,
Thrust where you will. — But mark me ; wheresoe'er

I rub this band, your weapons have no power.

[*Opening his breast and rubbing it with a bracelet which he takes from his arm, at the same time muttering some mystical words to himself.*]

Now try if e'er the stoutest arm amongst you,
With pike, or spear, or keenly-temper'd blade,
Can pierce this charmed breast.

Mah. (to an attendant). Attempt it, brawny slave ; thine arm is strong.

(TO OSMIR.) Give him a stronger weapon. — Now the proof !

[*The slave, receiving a sword from OSMIR, runs with full force upon OTHORIC, who falls down, pierced through the breast, and utters a convulsive laugh as he expires.*]

Rod. (exultingly). O, bravely done, thou spirit of true proof !

Just. Yes, nobly has he shunn'd the degradation Of slavish punishment.

Othus. It was a lofty mind in a rude state Of wild distorted virtue ; 'cross the fancy It stalks a gloomy, dark, gigantic shade,
Angel or fiend we know not.

Mah. (aside to himself, turning gloomily away).

And Constantine is served by men like these !

Othus (to MAHOMET). Seeing that of this crime our royal master

Doth clearly stand acquitted, by your word,
Most mighty Mahomet, we are permitted
To state his wishes.

Mah. No, ambassadors ;

I have already said I hear no more
Unless ye yield the city. — Leave ye have
In safety to return. — You and your chief
O'er a volcano's thinly-bridged gulf
Have ta'en your stand, and the dire crash is near.

Othus. And with our chief in that tremendous ruin,

If it must be, we will sink lovingly.

Just. We will sink honourably.

Rod. We will sink gloriously. Ay, by heaven's light,

And cheerly too, great Sultan !

[*Passing the body of OTHORIC as they turn to go away.*]

Thou noble wreck, thou wast rigg'd gallantly !

[*EXECUT OTHUS, JUSTINIANI, RODRIGO, and their attendants.*]

Mah. (coming forward to the front of the stage, and standing for some time in a thoughtful posture much disturbed). And Constantine is served by men like these !

Osmir (to slaves, pointing to the body of OTHORIC).

Take up the carcass of that savage ruffian,
And stick it on a stake for vulture's food.

Mah. (turning round angrily). No, reptiles, let it have a soldier's grave !

Osmir. This is exceeding mercy ; ne'ertheless,
Your orders, mighty prince, shall be obey'd
By those who are as dust beneath your feet.

Mah. Yes, I do know that I shall be obey'd
By those who are — I am begirt with slaves.

[*Turning away, and stamping on the ground as he walks.*]

My enemy is served by men like these !

I will give orders with all pressing speed
That now my grand attack forthwith be made :
What next may be attempted by such foes
Who may divine ?

Osmir. That is the safest counsel.

[*EXECUT ; MAHOMET tossing his arms and muttering as he goes out.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

An outpost belonging to the Turkish camp, with a view of the city of Constantinople in the background seen in the dimness of cloudy moonlight.

Enter several Turkish soldiers by different ways, meeting one another.

1st Turk. Ho! who are ye? our friends?

2d Turk. I know thy voice.

1st Turk. Yes, we are friends; but let us separate, And gain our tents as quickly as we may:

For now through all the camp the busy stir Of warlike preparation is begun;

And ere the morning dawn, each armed Turk Must hold him ready for th' approaching day Of havoc, blood, and spoil. Come, let us on!

3d Turk. Yes; but, good comrades, do once more look back,

And see, through the wan night, those buildings gleam

With the last Christian fires that e'er shall burn Within those circling walls.

2d Turk. Ay, there the Prophet has prepared our rest.

There soon, midst heap'd-up spoils, and the wild wailings

Of fetter'd beauty, in our new-won homes,

We'll east our reeking seimitars aside,

And lay us down in soft and lordly sloth.

Comrades, it is an animating sight.

But quickly let us gain our tents.—Hush! hush!

What Turk comes prowling this way, and alone? It looks like Mahomet.

1st Turk. It is the Sultan on his nightly rounds, Disguis'd; let us avoid him.

3d Turk. I'd rather cross a tiger on my way;

For, as the humour hits, it may be fatal

To know or not to know him. At the best

We shall be deem'd but lawless stragglers here:

Let us all separate and gain our tents.

[*Exeunt hastily, all by different ways.*]

Enter MAHOMET disguised, followed at a distance by the Vizir.

Mah. (alone, after walking thoughtfully from the bottom of the stage, whilst OSMIR remains in the background). What boots this restless wish? 'tis all blank silence

On that for which my greedy ears still watch.

There's ne'er a Turk, who, o'er his ev'ning pipe,

Will not far rather talk of daring feats

By petty robbers done, than all the fame

And grand achievements of his sov'reign lord.

'Tis cheerless silence all! Dull stupid race!

They arm them for to-morrow's fight, 'tis true,

With much alacrity, and talk of conquest,

Carnage, and spoils; but for their Sultan's name, The name of Mahomet, through all the camp I've scarcely heard its sound. Nay, once I heard it

In accents harsh pronounced, but as to listen I nearer drew, my steps the speaker scared, And all was into fearful silence hush'd.

Their Sultan's name!—Pest seize the stupid slaves!

O, Constantine! it is not thus thy soldiers

Do arm themselves for thee.

Ho, Osmir! art thou near me?

Osmir (advancing). Yes, my lord.

Mah. Hast thou been list'ning too?

Osmir. Yes, Sultan; and I find your Mussul-

men

Their arms preparing for to-morrow's battle,

Beneath your royal standard most determin'd

To conquer or to die.

They under your approving eye will fight,

As in the sunshine of propitious heaven.

Mah. Yes, I am in their minds full truly grown

A thing of gen'ral attributes composed—

A heaven of sunshine or of lowering storms:

But as a man and leader, in whom live

The mental and corporeal qualities

Of Mahomet—Pest seize the stupid slaves!

Enter PETRONIUS and MARTON muffled up in cloaks.

But who comes here? twice on my rounds already

Those men have cross'd me: am I known to them?

By the great Prophet they shall bear their secret

Where secrets are secure!—Ho! stop slaves there!

Stop, in the Sultan's name!

[*Running upon them furiously, and lifting his scimitar over the head of PETRONIUS, who immediately discovers himself.*]

Pet. Crush not a worm, my lord.

Mah. A worm indeed! What treason brings ye here,

Skulking, thus muffled up in dark disguise?

Have I not warn'd ye both that ye do live

Beneath mine iron power in strictest faultlessness?

For that when ye are found but to transgress

The galling limits of imposed duty

Even a hair's breadth, there abide you

A recompense more dreadful than torn slaves,

Writhing in horrid eestasy, e'er knew.

Beware: ye have no power to serve me now,

And unsuccessful traitors are most hateful.

Pet. It is, great Mahomet, to make amends

For unsuccessful services, that here

Thou findest us, on our way within the city

To gain for thee some useful information

Against to-morrow's push. Still in our power

Some little aid remains.

Mah. If thou sayst true, return to me again,

Leading thy beauteous daughter in thy hand,

Ere two hours pass, who shall within my tent

A pledge remain for thy suspicious faith

Until the city's ta'en.—Begone, I charge you,
And answer not again.

[*Exeunt* PETRONIUS and MARTHON.

Are all my orders issued for the morrow?
To each respective officer assign'd
His task and station? and my rearward troops,
My axe and cord-men, they are not forgotten?

Osmir. No, please your highness, nothing is forgotten.

And by the early dawn——

[*A mixture of confused distant sounds heard from the city.*

Mah. What sounds are these?

Osmir. Hast thou forgot we are so near the city?
It is the murmur'ing night sounds of her streets,
Which the soft breeze wafts to thine ear, thus softly
Mix'd with the chafings of the distant waves.

Mah. (*eagerly*). And let me listen too! I love the sound!

Like the last whispers of a dying enemy
It comes to my pleased ear. [*Listening.*

Spent art thou, proud imperial queen of nations,
And thy last accents are upon the wind.

Thou hast but one voice more to utter; one
Loud, frantic, terrible, and then art thou
Amongst the nations heard no more. List! list!

I like it well! the lion hears afar
Th' approaching prey, and shakes his bristling mane,
And lashes with his tail his tawny sides,
And so hear I this city's nightly sound.

Osmir. It is indeed a rich and noble conquest
Which heaven unto its favour'd warrior gives.

Mah. Yes, *Osmir*; I shall wear a conqueror's
name,

And other ages shall of *Mah*'met speak,
When these dumb slaves are crumbling in the dust.

But now the night wears on, and with the dawn
Must the grand work begin.

Yet one thing still remains; I must remind thee
That to my gen'ral orders this be added:—

Silent shall be the march; nor drum, nor trumpet,
Nor clash of arms, shall to the watchful foe
Our near approach betray; silent and soft,
As the pard's velvet foot on Libya's sands,
Slow stealing with crouch'd shoulders on her prey.

Osmir. I have already given the strictest orders.

Mah. Then all is well: go where thy duty calls.
In the meanwhile I'll snatch an hour of rest,
And dream, perhaps, that lovely Grecian dames,
Even with a crowned beauty in their band,
Are lowly bent to kiss my purple feet.

[*A distant bell heard from the city.*

What deep and distant bell is this which sounds
So solemnly on the still air of night?

Osmir. It comes from St. Sophia's lofty dome,
Where Constantine, with his small band of friends,
As I have learnt, should at this hour assemble.
To join together in religious rites
Of solemn preparation for to-morrow,

Which they regard as their last day of life,
And this as their last act of social brotherhood.

Mah. Brave men! do they so meet? [*Pausing.*
But it must be. [*doom:*

Why should it move me? Heaven decrees their
I act by high commission, though for instruments
I have but these dumb slaves. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A pillared aisle or open space in the church of St. Sophia, with other parts of the church seen in perspective. The great bell heard.

Enter HEUGHO, met by an inferior priest.

Priest. Thou com'st before thy master and his friends:

How far are they behind?

Heugho. Not many paces. [*Bell sounds again.*
Priest. Wherefore didst thou start?

Heugho. It smote mine ear most strange and dolefully.

Is there soul in its sound which sadly says,
It is the last bell that shall Christians warn
To holy rites within these fated walls?

How many hundred years this sacred pavement
Has with the tread of Christian feet been worn!
And now——Heaven's will be done!

Priest. So must we say, if that our turn be come.
We are a wicked and luxurious race,
And we have pul'd this ruin on our heads.

Heugho. But there are those who needs must fall
beneath it,

Whose noble worth deserved a better fate.
Priest. Think ye the grand assault will be so soon?

Heugho. 'Tis so believed: and see where now
they come,

In gen'rous love and brotherhood united,
Who shall, perhaps, no more see evening's close,
Or under social roof of living men
E'er meet again.

Priest. Nay, do not weep, good *Heugho*;
For in that blessed place they shall be join'd
Where great and good men meet.—But I must haste

To give my brethren notice. [*Exit.*

Enter CONSTANTINE, with OTHUS, RODRIGO, JUSTINIANI, and others of his friends, who walk with solemn steps and bareheaded towards the front of the stage, the great bell sounding for the last time as they advance. CONSTANTINE then stops, and stretching out his arm as if he wished to speak, they all gather respectfully round him.

Con. My friends, there greatly presses on my heart
Somewhat I've much desired to say to you,
If a full heart will grant me so much voice.

Othus. Then speak it, royal sire, we all attend
With ears of love and most profound respect.

Con. Thus station'd on a dark and awful verge,
In company with you, my noble friends,
I have desired, in this solemn act,
To make my peace with God. But, on my soul
If any unforgiven wrong to man
Yet rests, how shall I lift my hands to Him
Who has made all men, and who cares for all,
As children of one grand and wondrous house,
Wherein the mightiest monarch of the earth
Holds but a little nook?

I have been one, placed on a giddy height
Of seeming greatness, therefore liable,
In nature's poor infirmity, to acts
Of blind and foolish pride. I have been one
In much real feebleness, upheld, defended,
By voluntary aid and gen'rous zeal
Of valiant strangers owing me no service;
And therefore liable, in the mind's weakness,
Its saddest weakness, to ungrateful thoughts
Tinctured with jealousy. If towards you,
My noble friends, I have contracted guilt,
I trust—I know—I beg—what shall I say?
Your gen'rous hearts to all your deeds of love
Will add a last forgiveness.

Othus. O no, most royal Constantine! to us
And to all men thou'st ever worthy been,
Noble and gracious; pardon at our hands
Thou needest none.

Otnes. O no, thou needest none!
As we to thee have faithful followers been,
Thou'st ever been to us a gen'rous lord. [indeed,

Con. Your love would make it so: would that,
A voice within me seal'd its fair report!
Alas! it doth not; therefore now indulge me.
If there be one amongst you, unto whom,
With dark forbidding brow, in a stern moment,
I've given ungen'rous pain; one whose kind service
I have with foolish and capricious humours
More irksome made; one whose frank openness
Of manly love, offer'd to me as man
In gen'rous confidence, with heartless pride
I coldly have repell'd; yea, if there be
One of you all that ever from my presence
I have with sadden'd heart unkindly sent,
I here, in meek repentance, of him crave
A brother's hand, in token of forgiveness.
And be it in true charity stretch'd forth,
As to a man of much infirmity,
Who has with many trials been beset,
Wounding ofttimes in bitterness of soul
The love he should have honour'd.
What! is there none that will to me hold out
The palm of charity?
Then I'll embrace you all, and, with eased heart
Believe myself forgiven.

[*Embracing them all as they crowd affectionately
to him, and coming last to RODRIGO.*

And thou, my bold Rodrigo, who canst brave
The tempests when they rage, and onward bear,
With the opposed strength of towering navies
Black'ning before thee, com'st thou to my breast
In soft forgiving love? I know thou dost.

Rod. Ay, in that love that would forgive to thee
The sum of all thy sins, though multiplied
Ten thousand thousand fold.—
That would do in thy service—O cursed limit!
That there should be what to man's sinew'd strength,
In all the burning zeal of righteous boldness,
Impossible is. [*Clenching his hands vehemently.*

Othus (to RODRIGO). Cease! dost thou not re-
spect these holy walls?

Rod. I do respect them, Othus; ne'er a head,
Shorn to the scalp, doth bow itself more humbly
Before heaven's throne than mine, albeit in truth
My words unseemly are.

Con. Come to my heart, my friend! He reigns
above

Who will forgive us both.

[*Embraces RODRIGO, and then observing
HEUGHO, who has stood behind, not presuming
to approach him with the rest.*

But there is one who stands from me aloof
With modest backwardness, unto whose charity
I must be debtor also. Worthy Heugho,
Since earliest youth I from thy friendly hand
Have daily kindly offices received,
Proffer'd with love, exceeding far all duty
Belonging to thy state; yet, ne'ertheless,
I once, in a most vile and fretful mood,
Vex'd with cross things, thine honour'd age forgot.

Heugho. Oh, say not so, my dear and royal
master.

It breaks my heart that you should still remember.

Con. Well, well, be not thus moved, my worthy
Heugho,

I know I am forgiv'n; but lay thy hand,
Thine aged hand, upon thy master's head,
And give him a last blessing. Thou art now
Like to an ancient father with us grown,
And my heart says that it will do me good.

[*Bowing his head, whilst HEUGHO, lifting up
his aged hands over him, is unable to speak,
but bursts into tears, and falls upon his mas-
ter's neck. The band of friends close round
and conceal them: afterwards they open to
make way, and CONSTANTINE comes forward
with a firm enlightened countenance.*

And now, my noble friends, it pleases me
To think we all are knit in holy bands
Of fellowship; prepared, in virtue's strength,
Nobly to fight on earth, or meet in heaven.

Othus. Yes, Constantine, we to each other will
True brothers prove, and to our noble chief
Devoted followers, whate'er betide.

What say ye, valiant friends?

Otnes. All, all of us!

Con. I know you will, full well, I know you will.
Oh, that on earth it had been granted me
Your gen'rous love to've recompensed! alas!
Ye can but share with me——

Ommes. No other recompense,
But sharing fates with thee, our noble chief,
Do we desire, and on thy royal hand
Here will we seal it.

Con. (*eagerly preventing them as they are about to kneel and kiss his hands*). Forbear! forbear!
within these sacred walls

Bend before worthless man the humble knee!
Fy, let not such shame be!

Am I your chief? then be it shown in this,
That to the mighty Majesty of heaven
I humbly bow, more lowly than ye all,
And do, on your behalf, devoutly beg
The blessing of our Master and our Sire.

[*Kneeling and bowing his head very low to the ground, then rising afterwards with dignified solemnity.*]

Now to those sacred rites of our blest faith,
In which the humble soul ennobled bows,
In mem'ry of the dearest brotherhood
That ever honour'd man, I lead you on,
My noble brothers.

[*Exeunt CONSTANTINE, &c., by another aisle, which may be supposed to lead to the altar of the church, whilst several priests are seen at a distance in their robes, as if waiting to receive them.*]

SCENE III.

A hall, or ante-room in the imperial palace.

Enter PETRONIUS and MARTON disguised.

Pet. So far hath this well-counterfeited signet,
And this disguise, befriended us: here stop:
Whilst Constantine and his mad band are absent
On their religious ceremony, here
We will remain conceal'd until that Ella,
Returning (for 'tis near her wonted time,
As they have told us) from Valeria's chamber,
Shall give us fair occasion. — Rouse thee, Marthon;
Thou seemst like one bereaved of all sense;
What is the matter with thee?

Mar. Nothing; but thus to pass with culprit feet
Beneath the shade of night, these well-known courts,
Which I so oft have trod in front of day,
With the firm footsteps of an honest man,
Doth make me——

Pet. Fy! thou art become a fool.
Shake off such weakness: we're compell'd to this.
We shall beneath the Sultan's iron sway,
Disgraced from the late failure of our plots,
Live like lash'd slaves, if the bewitching beauty
Of my young Ella come not to our aid
To bend his rugged nature. Strong in her,

We shall not merely safe protection find,
But highest favour and authority;
And though by stealth I needs must bear her hence,
Being my daughter, I, in nature's right——

Mar. Hush! now I hear a lightly-sounding step.
Draw back a little space.

[*They step aside, whilst ELLA enters, and walks across the stage.*]

Pet. (*in a half voice, stealing softly up to her*).
Ella!

Ella (*starting*). What voice is that which names
me?

Pet. Ella!

Ella. Oh! 'tis the sound that I most dread to hear!
Pet. Sayst thou so, Ella, of thy father's voice?
Have my misfortunes, with the world's fair favour,
Deprived me also of my only child?

Ella. No, no! they have not: had misfortune only
Cast its dark shade upon thee, I had loved thee
And cherish'd thee in a lone desert, father!
But——but thou art——

Pet. Ha! wherefore dost thou pause?
What wouldst thou say? what is there in thy mind?

Ella. Thoughts which I will not utter——Oh,
depart!

Thou'rt not in safety. All men do condemn thee.
Thou art not come for good.—Oh, fly from hence!
Ruin, and shame, and death abide thee here:
Oh, fly, my wretched father!

Pet. Yes I will fly, but thou shalt go with me;
If not, I will remain and meet my fate. [*trac-tion.*]

Ella. Good heaven forbid! thou'lt drive me to dis-
O misery!

[*Wrings her hands in great distress, whilst MAR-
THON advances to PETRONIUS with suppli-
cating look.*]

Pet. (*to MARTON*). Away! thou art a fool: we
must be firm.

(*To ELLA*.) Wring not thy hands thus wildly,
simple maid:

Thou goest to be with me no wand'ring outlaw,
But one in splendour greater than a queen:
The favour'd mistress of the mighty Sultan.

[*ELLA gives a loud shriek, and struggles to
escape from him.*]

Enter RODRIGO.

Rod. Audacious villain! quit thy cursed hold,
Or take death for thy pains.
Ha! thou shrinkst back, and mufflest up thy face.
Say who thou art, or through thy villain's heart
I'll thrust this rapier.

Ella (*pulling RODRIGO back*). Hold, I do beseech
thee.

For pity, hold! it is my wretched father.

Rod. Wretched indeed!

Ella. Ay, therefore pity him.
Let him escape: he hath done me no harm.
He is here as a fox in his last wiles,

Who shelter seeks within the very kennel
Of the roused pack : Oh, have some pity on him !
He is my father.

Rod. Sweet Ella, hang not thus upon mine arm :
It hath no power to strike whom thou callst father,
Shame as he is unto that honour'd name.

But there are ties upon me, gentle maid :
The safety and the interests of Constantine
I am bound to defend : and shall a traitor——

Ella. Oh ! oh !

Rod. Fear not : our royal master is return'd
From blessed rites of holiest charity
With meekly chasten'd soul : whate'er his crimes
He is in safety——safety as assured
As thine own harmless self.

Enter CONSTANTINE.

Con. (to RODRIGO). Thou speakst with an un-
wonted earnestness ;
I've mark'd thy gestures ; something moves thee
much.

Who are these strangers ?

[*Turning to* PETRONIUS and MARTHON, who,
uncovering their faces, stand confessed before
him.

Ha ! Marthon and Petronius ! What new treason
Is now on foot, that here——but judge I harshly ?
Ye are, perhaps, struck with the circumstances
Of these most solemn times, repentant grown,
And if ye be, in a good hour ye come ;
I am myself a wean'd and pardon'd man.
Marthon, thou once wast wont to speak the truth ;
What brought you hither ? [mind

Mar. Most gracious prince, with no repentant
We hither came ; but one of us, at least,
Shall hence depart with a heart deeply smitten.

Con. Confess then what new treason ye devised.

Ella. No treason ; none to thee, most royal Con-
stantine.

For me he came, arm'd with a parent's right,
To bear me to the haughty Sultan's camp,
To live in queenly state. But, Oh protect me !
Let me remain and die with those I love
In decent maiden pride. Retain me here,
But pardon him : no treason brought him hither.

Con. Petronius, has thy daughter told me true ;
Was this thine errand ?

Pet. (approaching CONSTANTINE). Yes, most
gracious prince.

Con. Off then, disgrace to nature and to man-
hood !

Wouldst thou to shameful and degrading slavery
Betray thy virtuous child ? Say thou cam'st hither
To thrust i' the dark thy dagger through my heart,
And I will call thee sinless.

Pet. Wherefore this stern and bitter execration ?
I came to place her but a few hours sooner,
Saved from th' approaching storm, where your high
dames,

Yea, with their royal mistress at their head,
Full shortly shall be placed.

Con. Detested wretch ! what fiend has whisper'd
to thee

Such hideous thoughts ? man durst not utter them.

Pet. Man might, at least, surveying the position
And aspect of these times, in his own mind
This plain and shrewd conjecture form. But not
On such loose bottom do I ground my words ;
Mah'met himself hath sworn that your Valeria
Shall at the head of his most favour'd wives——

Con. Hold thy detested tongue ! for one word
more

Is instant death. Tempt me not with these hands,
Which have the symbols touch'd of blessed peace,
To do a horrible act.

Pet. I but repeat that which the Sultan hath
In public said.

Con. Forbear ! forbear ! I tell thee.

[*Wrenching his sword, scabbard and all, from
his side, and tossing it from him.*

There ! there ! Rodrigo : cast it from my reach :
Let not a weapon be within my grasp,
Or I shall be accused.

[*After a violent struggle of passion.*
I dare speak to him now.—Ho ! guards without !

Ella. Oh, mercy ! mercy !

Enter Guards.

Con. (to guards). Take these two men, Petronius
and his friend,
And through the city to our outmost post
Conduct them safely : there, in perfect liberty,
Permit them to depart where'er they list.
(To PETRONIUS.) Now, I'm revenged upon thee :
get thee hence,

And utter not a word.—Go thou, Rodrigo,
And with the gentle Ella in thy hand,
Conduct them to the palace gate. Hence quickly !

Mar. Nay, let Petronius go : I will remain,
And with the meanest soldier on your walls
Spend my last blood, if a true penitent——

Con. (waving him off impatiently). Well, be it as
thou wilt : but hence and leave me !

Rod. (to ELLA, as he leads her out). Did I not
tell thee he was safe, my Ella ?

[*Exeunt all but* CONSTANTINE, who, after walk-
ing up and down for some time in a perturbed
manner, starts at the sound of VALERIA'S voice
without.

Con. Ha ! here she comes ! alas ! how shall I
now

Look on her face, and hear her voice of love !
It is distraction !

Enter VALERIA.

Val. My Constantine, art thou so long return'd,
And yet to me no kindly summons sent,
Long as I've watched for it ? What is the matter ?

Thy brow is dark : these are disturbed looks :
What is the matter ?

Con. Nothing, nothing.
I am, thou knowst, with many cares perplex'd.
Follow me to thine own apartment ; here
I cannot speak to thee.

Val. (*aside, looking eagerly at him as they go out.*)
What may this be ? *[Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

VALERIA'S apartment.

Enter CONSTANTINE, followed by VALERIA, who
both remain silent for some time, she looking anxiously
with wistful expectation.

Val. Now we are here, my lord, in the still
privacy
Of this my inmost bower, but thou art silent.

[Pauses, and he is still silent.
There is a look of sadness on thy face
Of disturb'd wretchedness, that never yet,
E'en in thy darkest hours, I've seen thee wear.
Why art thou thus ?

Con. And dost thou ask ? I've been, in deep
humility,

Making a sinner's peace with God and man,
And now——and now—— *[His voice faltering.*

Val. What would you say, my lord ?
Con. And now I am with thee.

Val. And art thou sad for this ? hast thou not
still,

Loose from all shackles of imposed state,
Been with me in thine hours of joy or grief,
Like a way-faring man, who sitting down
On the green bank, his cumbrous vestment opens
To the soft breeze ?

Con. Yes, my Valeria ; I have been with thee
As with a true yoked heart, so strong in love,
That e'en the thought, which scudded o'er my mind
With culprit's speed from shameful consciousness,
Was not from thee conceal'd.

But now the hour is come, when e'en with thee
I must perform a task——a task of pain.

Val. Speak ; what meanst thou ?
Con. All have, e'en in the dearest intercourse
Of heart with heart, in some untoward moment
Transgressors been, and proved the cause of pain
Where most they should have banish'd it : and all,
In quitting earthly ties, do anxiously
Desire, in the true blessing of forgiveness,
To part with those whom they have held most dear.
Now dost thou understand me ?

[Holding out both his hands to her.
Val. I do ! I do ! thou hast my dearest blessing ;
The dearest thoughts and worship of my heart.

But oh ! what dost thou say ?——part !——how, my
Constantine !

Where dost thou go ? thou dost not leave the city ?

Con. No, love, but on its wall I go ere long,—
For in a little hour the day will break
Which must its fate decide,—that part to act,
Which, before God and man, in honest pride,
I'm call'd on to perform.

Val. But from those walls victorious thou'lt
return. *[CONSTANTINE smiles sorrowfully.*
Nay, but thou shalt return : high heav'n decrees it ;
Virtue, and every good and blessed thing
Have made it sure. E'en in a faith as strong
As at this moment I do hold to this,
Methinks, upon the chafed and tossing waves
Of the wild deep I could thus firmly tread,
Nor wet my sandal's thong.

*[Walking across the stage with firm steps of
stately confidence, and then going up to him
with an encouraging smile.*

Be thou assured !

I know it shall be so. A mystic sage,
Whom I, unknown to thee, have visited—
Pardon this weakness of thine anxious wife—
Darting his eye on forms of woven air,
Saw thee in combat with a Turkish champion,
And saw the crescent fall.

Con. And mayst thou not believe, that ere they
close

Their mortal warfare, many a boastful Turk
Beneath these arms shall fall ?

Val. Ay, but on surer words I rest my faith !
For I did bid him onward cast his eye
Into time's reach, and say, who of this city,
After the course of twelve revolving moons,
Should be the sov'reign lord ; and he replied,
In plain and simple words, thy lord and husband.

Con. And named he Constantine ?
Val. What other name but that of Constantine
Could to these appellations be conjoin'd ?
Thou turnest from me with perturbed looks :
Thou shalt not turn away : tell me ! O, tell me !
What sudden thought is this that troubles thee ?

*[Catching hold of him eagerly as he turns from
her.*

Con. Ask not ; Oh, do not ask ! 'tis pass'd al-
ready

As shoots a glaring meteor 'thwart the night,
Frightful but hasty.

Val. Thou must tell it me.

Con. Distract me not.

Val. Nay, nay, but thou must tell me.
What other name but that of Constantine
Could to my lord and husband joined be ?

Con. (*sinking down upon a chair quite overcome,
and covering his face with his hands, as he
speaks with a quick perturbed voice.*) Ma-
homet ! Mahomet !

*[VALERIA steps back from him, holding up her
hands in amazement ; then he, after a pause,
looking up to her with a self-upbraiding eye.*

I have offended in this very hour

When my press'd soul sigh'd for that loving peace
Which in its earthly close the soul desires.
I have offended.

Val. Yes, thou hast offended.
All the offences thou hast ever done me
Are in this fell and cruel stroke comprised;
And any other stroke, compared to this.
Had fall'n upon me lightly.

Con. It was a thought that hasted fast away,
And came unbidden. [*Going up to her penitently.*

Val. (*turning away in anger*). There is no thought
doth ever cross the mind,
Till some preceding kindred sentiment
Hath made a pathway for it.

Con. Yes, my Valeria, thou indeed sayst true;
But turn not from me angrily. My mind,
Ere now, consider'd has the character,
The faith, the power of Mahomet. — Frown not. —
Valeria, thou art fair. — Nay, do not frown!

Val. What dost thou say? hast thou until this
moment

Reserved for me this base degrading — No:
Torn and defaced be every hated form
Of outward grace! it is our curse, our shame!

[*Tearing her hair violently.*
Con. O be not thus! — forgive a hasty thought!
Think how a doating husband is distracted,
Who knows too well a lawless victor's power.

Val. What is his power? it nought regardeth me.
Con. Alas! the frowns of a detesting bride
Deter him not!

Val. (*smiling contemptuously*). But will he wed
the dead?

Con. (*starting*). What sayst thou? Oh, what
meaning is there here!

Yes, yes! I know it all! but it is dreadful:
It makes the cold chill o'er my limbs to creep:
It is not well: it is not holy. No!
O no, my noble love, mine honour'd love!
Give to thy fallen lord all that the soul
To widow'd love may give, but oh, stop there!
Heav'n will protect thee in the hour of need;
And for the rest, erase it from thy thoughts,
Give it no being there.

Val. It hath no being there. Heav'n will protect
me:

And he who thinks me helpless thinks me mean.

Con. I think thee all that e'er was tenanted
Of noblest worth in loveliest female form:
By nature excellent, defective only
In this, that fortune has thy virtues link'd
To the vex'd spirit of a ruin'd man,
Who in his hours of anguish has not prized them
As did become their worth.

Val. (*rushing into his arms*). No, thou hast prized
them,

In thy blind love, far, far beyond their worth.
My uncurb'd passions have alas! too oft
Vexation added to that burden'd heart

I should have cheer'd and lighten'd: on my head
Rests all the blame that e'er between us pass'd,
And I alone have need to be forgiven.

[*They weep on one another's necks without speaking, when an alarm bell is heard at a distance, and CONSTANTINE breaks suddenly from her.*

Con. It is the larum of my farther watch.

Val. I scarcely heard it: art thou sure of it?

[*A second alarm bell heard nearer.*

Con. And hark! a nearer tower repeats the
sound.

The enemy's in motion. — I must arm,
And instantly.

Val. Then let me be with thee till the last
moment!

I have a holy relic of great power;
It is, I trust, worth all thine arms beside;
And from this hand of love thou shalt receive it.

Con. (*smiling sorrowfully*). Thanks, sweet Va-
leria! from thy hand of love

I will with love receive whate'er thou wilt.

[*A third alarm bell is heard still louder, and enter attendants in haste.*

Yes, yes, I heard it; go, prepare mine arms.

[*To attendants, and exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A spacious hall in the palace.

Enter RODRIGO, with ELLA hanging fondly upon him, and continue their way as if intending to pass through it, when a trumpet sounds without, and they stop short.

Rod. It is the sound that summons us to meet:
There is no farther grace: therefore, sweet Ella,
My pretty Ella, my good loving Ella,
My gentle little one, that hangst upon me
With such fond hold, in good sooth we must part,
Here bid heav'n bless me, and no farther go.

Ella. Must it be so? I will bid heaven bless
thee,

And all good saints watch o'er thy precious life;
And they will bless and guard thee in the hour
Of fearful death. In this I have true faith;
Yet, on the very brink, to hold thee thus
Clasp'd in my grasp, and think how soon — Alas!
From many points will fly the whizzing balls,
And showering darts, and jav'lins sent afar,
Aim'd by fell strength; wilt thou escape all this?

Rod. Fear not, sweet Ella! whizzing balls there
be,

That, in midway, are from their course declined
By the poor orphan's little lisped prayer;
And there be arrows that are turn'd aside,
In their swift flight, by the soft sighs of love,
Unheard of earthly ears. This is a creed,
In the good faith of which poor seamen climb

Their rocking masts, in the full roar of battle,
And we'll believe it.

Ella. It is a blessed one : I would believe it.

Rod. Yes, we'll believe it. Whilst our battle
roars,

Thou'lt think of me in thy lone distant tower,
And be to me a gallant armed mate,
With prayers and wishes striving powerfully.
Give me thy hand : we will not weep and wail :
We will part cheerfully.—God bless thee, Ella !
Nay, hang not on me thus.

Thou lov'st a brave man : be thou valiant then,
As suits a brave man's love.

Ella. O no ! I've fondly fix'd myself upon thee,
Most worthless and unsuited to thy worth.

Like a poor weed on some proud turret's brow,
I wave, and nod, and kiss the air around thee,
But cannot be like thee.

Rod. Heav'n bless thee, little flower ! I prize
thee more

Than all the pride of female stateliness.

Ella. Dost thou ? then I am happy : I am
proud :

I will not wish me other than I am.

Rod. Ah, if we part not instantly, my Ella,
I feel in faith, rude as my nature is,
I soon shall be like thee !—My friends approach :
Let us not meet their gaze—It must be so—
Sweet one, farewell !—Wilt thou still cling to me ?

Ella. O no, I go : they shall not see thee weep,
Though I do bless thee for it.

Rod. (leading her hastily back to the door by which
they entered). Well then, brave lass, upon
thy lovely head

Heaven's favour rest !—Nay, do not speak to me.

[Preventing her as she is endeavouring to speak.
Farewell ! farewell !

[Exit ELLA, and he returns to the front of the
stage, where he stands musing sorrowfully ;
when enters to him JUSTINIANI, and, going up
to him, touches his shoulder.

What dost thou want ? [Turning angrily.

Jus. Thou'rt thoughtful.

Rod. No, I think as others do
With such day's work before them, in good truth,
Not passing merrily.

Jus. From the high tower I've seen th' approach-
ing foe :

It seems a dark and strangely-mixed mass
Of life, wide moving in the misty light
Of early dawn.—I've fought in many a field,
As valiant men and armed warriors fight,
But such a strange assemblage of new modes
Of mingled war as we this day must face,
I never yet encounter'd.

Rod. Well, we shall know the scent and flavour
of it,

When we have tasted it. [press

Jus. We shall be smother'd up with the mean

Of worthless matter, as a noble steed,
Beneath the falling rafters of his shed
Ignobly perishes.

Rod. Fear not, proud soul ; we shall have men
to fight,

And room enough in some nook of the breach
To grapple with them too.

Jus. Good fortune ever shone on thee, Rodrigo :
Thou still hast been a bold careering bark,
Outriding ev'ry storm. If thou shouldst e'er
Again return to our dear native land,
Tell to my countrymen what'e'er thou knowst
Pertaining to my fate this fateful day :
Let me not be forgotten.

Rod. I will, my friend : but better fate than
thine

I look not for, though still I bear myself
As one assured of good.—Thou'rt dark and
gloomy—

Does aught rest on thy mind ?

Jus. (striding away from him gloomily). No,
nothing, nothing ! [A trumpet sounds without.

Rod. Ay, hark ! another of our gallant band
Has join'd us with his followers.

[Another trumpet sounds.
And now another : are they all assembled ?

Enter OTHUS, and several of the imperial friends.

Othus. On their high wooden turrets, and huge
beams

Of warlike engines, raised aloft in air,
Gleams the first light of this high-fated day ;
And, wide expanded, through the farther mists
Moves the dark Turkish host.

Thou'rt a tried soul, Rodrigo, I but new
To such tremendous, strange expectancy :
Now is the hour when the soul knows itself.

[Rising on tiptoe with a conscious smile.

Rod. Ay, Othus, thou dost wear the countenance
Of a true man : give me thine honest hand.

Are all our friends assembled ? [Trumpet sounds.

Othus. This says they are : and here come, last
of all,

Our northern friends.

Enter more of the friends.

Now we are all assembled. Constantine,
He also comes ; and sadly by his side,
In mournful dignity, moves his high dame,
Proudly contending with her woman's heart.

Enter CONSTANTINE and VALERIA, attended.

Con. (returning the general salute of the chiefs).
Good morrow, noble brothers and brave
leaders :

Are we all here convened ?

Othus. Yes, our great chief and brother : of your
friends

There lacks not one.

Con. Then to their love, so help me, Mighty Power,
Who holdst within thy grasp the souls of men!
Neither shall we be lacking. — Now, Valeria.

[Drawing himself up with a proud but tender smile, as if to encourage her to behave nobly.

Val. I understand that smile.

Here with thy gen'rous friends, whose love to thee
Most dearly cell'd within my heart I wear,
And unto whom I have desired much,
Before we part, these grateful thanks to pay —

[Making grateful obeisance to the chiefs.

Here to those noble friends, and to God's keeping,
I leave thee. — Yet, be it permitted me —

For that thy noble head and lib'ral brow
Have ever cheer'd me as my star of day,
Blessings and blessings let me pour upon them!

[Putting her hand upon his head fervently, and kissing his forehead.

For that thy gen'rous breast has been the hold
Of all my treasured wishes and dear thoughts,
This fond embrace.

[Embracing him.

Yea, and for that thou art

My sire, and sov'reign, and most honour'd lord,
This humble homage of my heart receive!

[Kneeling and kissing his hand.

Con. (raising and embracing her with great emotion).

No more, my dearest and most noble love!

Spare me, O spare me! Heaven be thy protection!
Farewell!

Val. Farewell!

[VALERIA is led off by her attendants, whilst CONSTANTINE continues looking sadly after her for some time, then turning to his friends, who gather about him, without saying a word, they go all off the stage together in profound silence.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

An open space near the walls of the city, with half-ruined houses on each side, and a row of arched pillars thrown across the middle of the stage, as if it were the remains of some ruined public building; through which is seen, in the background, a breach in the walls, and the confused fighting of the besieged, enveloped in clouds of smoke and dust. The noise of artillery, the battering of engines, and the cries of the combatants heard as the curtain draws up, and many people discovered on the front of the stage, running about in great hurry and confusion, and some mounted upon the roofs of the houses overlooking the battle.

Voice (calling from the wall). See! see! how, cluster'd on each other's backs,

They mount like swarming bees, or locusts link'd
In bolt'ring heaps! Pour fire upon their heads!

2d voice. Cast down huge beams upon them!

3d voice. Hurl down the loosen'd fragments of
our wall!

4th voice. Ho! more help here! more stones,
more beams! more fire!

Weapons are useless now.

1st voice. See how that giant Turk, like an arch
fiend,

Climbs on yon living mountain of curved backs!
He gains the wall! O hurl him headlong down!

He is hurl'd down. [A great shout from the besieged.

2d voice. Send to the emperor or to Rodrigo:
They on their diff'rent stations hold it bravely;
This is the weakest point. Ho! send for aid!

[Exit several soldiers from the walls, as if running for succour. The noise of artillery, &c. is heard as before, and afterwards a loud crash as of some building falling. Enter many people in great terror from the walls, running off by the front of the stage different ways, and enter at the same time CONSTANTINE and some of his friends, who stop them.

Con. Turn, turn! O turn, my friends! another
push!

Let us still stop the breach, or fall like men.

[Enter JUSTINIANI from the walls with a hasty and disordered step, pale and writhing with pain.

Merciful heav'n! do mine eyes serve me truly?

Justiniani, with pale haggard face,

Retiring from his post!

Where are you going, chief! [Stopping him sternly.

Just. Where nature, urged beyond the pith of
nature,

Compels me. 'Midst yon streams of liquid fires,

And hurling ruins and o'erwhelming mass

Of things unknown, unseen, uncalculable,

All arms and occupation of a soldier

Are lost and turn'd to nought: man's strength is
nought:

The fangs of hell are in my new-torn flesh:

I must on for a space and breathe fresh air.

Con. Go to! this moment is the quiv'ring
ridge

That stands between our success or our ruin: —

The sight of thy turn'd back from their screw'd
pitch

Will turn more hearts than all the pressing foe:

Thou must not go.

Just. I am a mortal man:

The fangs of fiends are in my new-torn flesh:

Nature compels me, and I must have succour.

[Exit hastily, and writhing with pain.

Con. Alas! God pity him! one luckless moment
Of weakness and of anguish brings to him

A wound that cannot be up-bound. Poor nature!

[Enter many fugitives from the walls.

Turn, turn! O soldiers! let not this shame be!

[To the fugitives.

[As he is endeavouring with his friends to rally them and push forward, a terrible shout is heard, and enter a great crowd of fugitives from the walls.

What shout was that?

Fugitive. The Turks have gained the breach, and through it pour
Like an o'erboiling flood.

Con. Then is the city lost—the dark hour come—

And as an emperor my task is closed.

God's will be done!

[Throwing away the imperial purple.

Now is there left for me these sinew'd arms,
And this good sword, the wherewithal to earn
A noble soldier's death.

Come on with me who will, and share the fate
Of a brave comrade.

A fugitive (joined by several others). Yes, we'll
share thy fate,

Comrade or sov'reign, noble Constantine!

We will die by thy side.

[Exit CONSTANTINE, followed by his friends and several of the fugitives, and passing through the pillars to the background, rushes amidst the confusion of the fight. A terrible noise of arms, &c. and presently one of the pillars in the middle of the stage falling down, a wider view of the battle is opened, and the Turks are seen rushing through the breach, and bearing every thing before them.

Re-enter CONSTANTINE wounded, but still fighting bravely, though oppressed with numbers, and falls down near the front of the stage, the enemy passing on and leaving him.

Con. Am I then left?

Oh, is there ne'er a Christian soldier near me
That will cut off my head? Ho! thou Turk there!

[To a Turk who is going to pass him.

Turk. Art thou not dead?

Con. No, one half of me, Turk, is living still,

[Raising himself half up from the ground.

And still a match for thee.

Turk. Ha! sayst thou so? we'll put it to the
proof.

Yet thou'rt a brave man, though thou art a Greek,
I would far rather let thee die in peace.

Con. No, no! have at thee!

[Pushing at the Turk with his sword, who, turning against him as he is half raised from the ground, thrusts him through the body.

I thank thee, friendly foeman, this will do:

Thou hast done me good service.

[well!

Turk. And thou art welcome to it. Fare thee
A good death to thee! for thou art no Greek.

[Exit.

Con. Ay, this will do: this hath the true stern
gripe

Of potent speedy death. My task is closed.

I now put off these weeds of flesh and blood,
And, thanks be unto Him who clothed me in them!
Untarnish'd with disgrace. What cometh after
Full surely cometh well. 'Tis a dark pass. —

[Catching at a dropped garment that has been left by some of the fugitives on the ground near him.

Here is a ready shroud to wrap my head:

This death deals shrewdly with me.

[Covers his face and dies after a considerable struggle.

Enter RODRIGO, OTHUS, and MARTON, with two or three of their followers, fighting bravely with a party of Turks, whom they beat off the stage.

Othus. Now for a space those ruffians stand aloof:
This is a pause that calls upon the mind:

What shall we do?

Rod. How do men act, when they together stand,
On the last perch of the swift-sinking wreck?

Do they not bravely give their parting cheer,
And make their last voice loud and boldly sound
Amidst the hollow roarings of the storm?

E'en so will we: we'll bear our manhood up
To the last push.

Othus. Thou speakest well, brave seaman: thou
dost speak

What the heart owns: we will do even so.

But oh, that our brave leader now were near us,
Living or dead! Doth no one know his fate?

I thought by him to have died.

1st fol. What corpse is this so cover'd? on its
sandal

It wears th' imperial bird in fretted gold.

Othus. Then it is he!

[Tearing off the covering eagerly from the head of CONSTANTINE.

O thou brave heart! thou hast gone to thy rest
With honour. Heav'n be praised that thou hast!
Here round thee our last gathering point shall be:
Here will we fight, nor shall thy honour'd body
Suffer, whilst one of us has strength to fight,
The slightest insult.

Rod. Ay, they shall hack us into raven's meat,
Ere on his gallant corpse there be impress'd
One touch of impious hands!

[A loud noise of shrieking and terror heard without.

Othus. Hear the wild cries of terror and despair,
Mix'd with the din of carnage! Now those
cowards,

Who let this brave man all unaided perish,
Are suffering that which, in his fellest pinch,
The valiant never suffers.

But see, the enemy again returns

With doubled fury!

Rod. Come they? then we are ready for them.

Yonder

Stands a small walled dome, within whose portal
We for a time may face ten thousand foes :
There will we take our stand, and there will we
Do our last deeds of men. Come on, brave mates !
Take up our honour'd treasure ; and, so burden'd,
He that doth grapple with us had as lief
Pull from the lion's hug his bosom'd whelp.

[*The followers take up the body, and OTHUS
and RODRIGO retire, defending it bravely from
a party of Turks, who enter and fall upon
them as they are bearing it off.*

SCENE II.

An apartment in one of the towers of the palace.

*Enter VALERIA in great alarm, followed by LUCIA
and attendants.*

Val. Louder and louder still the dreadful sound
Of battle swells. Is it not nearer us?
This lofty tower the widest view commands ;
Open that lattice quickly.

[*Pointing to a window which LUCIA opens, and
then, rushing on eagerly to look, shrinks back
again.*

I pray thee look thyself, mine eyes are dark,
And I see nothing. Oh, what seest thou?
Tell me, whate'er it be.

Lucia (looking out). Nothing but clouds of smoke
and eddying dust :

A dun and grunly darkness spreads o'er all,
From which arise those horrid sounds, but nought
Distinctive of the sight can I discern.

*Val. (after pacing backward and forward with an
unequal, restless, agitated step).* Oh, will this
state of tossing agony

No termination have ! Send out, I pray thee,
Another messenger.

Lucia. Indeed I have in little space of time
Sent many forth, but none return again.

Val. In little space ! Oh it hath been a term
Of horrible length ! such as rack'd fiends do reckon
Upon their tossing beds of surgy flames,
Told by the lashes of each burning tide
That o'er them breaks. Hark ! the quick step of
one

With tidings fraught ! Dost thou not hear it ?

Lucia. No ;

I hear it not.

Val. Still is it the false coinage of my fears ?

Ah ! hearing, sight, and every sense is now
False and deceitful grown. I'll sit me down,
And think no more, but let the black hour pass
In still and fixed stupor o'er my head.

[*Sits down upon a low seat, and supports her
bended head upon both her hands.*

Lucia (listening). Now I do hear the sound of
real feet

In haste approaching.

Val. (starting up). Some one brings us tidings.
What may they be ? Quick steps should bring us
good.

Enter Messenger.

Say all thou hast to say, and say it quickly.
If it be good, hold up thy blessed hand,
And I will bless the token. No, thou dost not !
'Tis evil then. How is it with my lord ?
What dangers still encompass him ?

Mes. No dangers.

Val. And dost thou say so with that terrible look ?
Is he alive ? Have all deserted him ?

Mes. No, round his body still some brave men
fight,

And will not quit him till they be as he is.

[*VALERIA, uttering a loud shriek, falls back into
the arms of her attendants, and is carried off,
followed by LUCIA and the messenger.*

SCENE III.

A hall in the palace.

*Enter a crowd of frightened women, and seen hurrying
on to some place of greater security.*

1st woman (stopping). No, we are wrong ; we'll
to the eastern tower,
That is the most retired ; that last of all
Will tempt their search.

2d woman. In the deep vaulted caverns of the
palace,

Might we not for a while conceal'd remain,
Till heav'n shall send us means ?

Ommes. Ay, thou art right ; that is the best of all :
We'll to the vaults.

[*As they are all turning and hurrying back
again, enter a domestic officer of the palace,
and stops them.*

Offi. Where do ye run with such wild looks of
fear ?

Think ye the Turks are passing through the city,
Like the short visit of a summer's storm,
That you in holes and rocks may safely hide
Until it be o'erblown ?

1st woman. Oh, no ! we know that they are come
for ever !

Yet for a little while we fain would save us
From fearful things.

Offi. I come to tell you that by Mah'met's orders
The cruel Turks have stopp'd their bloody work,
And peace again is in our walls.

1st woman. Sayst thou ?

And art thou sure of this ? and hast thou seen it ?
Offi. Yes, I have seen it. Like a sudden gleam

Of fierce returning light at the storm's close,
Glancing on horrid sights of waste and sorrow,
Came the swift word of peace, and to the eye
Gave consciousness of that which the wild uproar
And dire confusion of the carnage hid. [wails ?

1st woman. Alas! be there such sights within our
Offi. Yes, maid, such sights of blood! such sights
of nature!

In expectation of their horrid fate,
Widows, and childless parents, and lorn dames,
Sat by their unwept dead with fixed gaze,
In horrible stillness.

But when the voice of grace was heard aloud,
So strongly stirr'd within their roused souls
The love of life, that, even amidst those horrors,
A joy was seen — joy hateful and unlovely.
I saw an aged man rise from a heap
Of grisly dead, whereon, new murder'd, lay
His sons and grandsons, yea, the very babe
Whose cradle he had rock'd with palsied hands,
And shake his grey locks at the sound of life
With animation wild and horrible.
I saw a mother with her murder'd infant
Still in her arms fast lock'd, spring from the
ground —

No, no! I saw it not! I saw it not!
It was a hideous fancy of my mind:
I have not seen it.

But I forget my chiefest errand here.

1st woman. And what is that!

Offi. It is to bid you tell your royal mistress,
It may, perhaps, somewhat assuage her grief,
That Othus and Rodrigo, with some followers,
The last remains of the imperial band,
Fighting, in all the strength of desperation,
Around the body of their fallen chief, [breast;
Have moved to gen'rous thoughts the Sultan's
Who has their valour honour'd with full leave,
In blessed ground, with military pomp,
Becoming his high state and valiant worth,
To lay his dear remains. This with their lives
On honourable terms he freely grants.

1st woman. And do those brave men live?

Offi. They do; but Othus soon I fear will be
With him he mourns. — Delay no more, I pray:
Inform the empress speedily of this.

1st woman. Alas! she is not in a state to hear it:
The phrenzy of her grief repels all comfort. —
But softly! — hush! — methinks I hear her voice.
She's coming hither in the restless wand'rings
Of her untamed mind. — Stand we aside,
And speak not to her yet.

*Enter VALERIA with her hair dishevelled, and in all
the wild disorder of violent sorrow, followed by
ELLA and LUCIA, who seem endeavouring to soothe
her.*

Val. Forbear all words, and follow me no more.
I now am free to wander where I list;

To howl i' the desert with the midnight winds,
And fearless be amidst all fearful things.

The storm has been with me, and I am left
Torn and uprooted, and laid in the dust
With those whom after-blasts rend not again.

I am in the dark gulf where no light is.
I am on the deep bed of sunken floods,
Whose swoln and welt'ring billows rise no more
To bear the tossed wreck back to the strand.

Lucia. Oh, say not so! heav'n doth in its good
time

Send consolation to the sharpest woe.
It still in kindness sends to the tried soul
Its keenest suff'rings. So say holy men;
And therein good men trust.

Val. I hear, I hear thee! in mine ear thy voice
Sounds like the feeble night-fly's humming noise,
To him, who in the warfare of vex'd sleep,
Strives with the phantoms of his inward world.
Yes, there is comfort when the sun is dark,
And time hath run his course, and the still'd sleepers
Lift up their heads at the tremendous crash
Of breaking worlds. — I know all this. — But here,
Upon this living earth, what is there found?
It is a place of groans and hopeless woe.
Let me then tear my hair and wring my hands,
And raise my voice of anguish and despair,
This is my portion now, all else is gone.

Lucia. Nay, think not virtuous innocence for-
saken:

Put in hatched heav'n thy trust, it will sustain thee.

Val. Ah! I did think when virtue bravely stood,
Fronting its valiant breast to the fierce onset
Of worthless power, that it full surely stood:
That ev'ry spiritual and righteous power
Was on its side: and in this faith, ofttimes,
Methought I could into the furnace mouth
Have thrust my hand, and grasp'd the molten flames.
Yet on his head it fell: that noble head,
Upon whose manly gracefulness was fix'd
The gaze of ev'ry eye.

Oh! on his lib'ral front there beam'd a look,
Unto the which all good and gen'rous hearts
Answer return'd. — It was a gentle head,
Bending in pleasant kindness to all;
So that the timid, who approach'd him trembling,
With cheer'd and vaunting steps retired again.
It was a crowned head, yet was it left
Exposed and fenceless in the hour of danger:
What should have been his safety was his bane.
Away, poor mock'ry of a wretched state!

[*Tearing the regal ornaments from her neck,
and scattering them about.*

Be ye strew'd to the winds! But for this let
We had been blest; for he as truly loved,
In simplest tenderness, as the poor hind,
Who takes his humble house-mate by the hand,
And says, "this is my all." — Off, cursed band!
Which round our happiness hath been entwined

Like to a straggl'g cord : upon the earth
Be thou defaced and trampled !

[*Tearing the tiara from her head and stamping upon it, then pacing up and down distractedly.*

Lucia. Alas ! my royal mistress, be entreated !
This furious grief will but enhance its pain :
Oh, bear yourself as more becomes your state !
Val. Yes, I will bear me as becomes my state.
I am a thing of wretchedness and ruin.
That upon which my pride and being grew
Lies in the dust, and be the dust my bed.

[*Throwing herself upon the ground, and pushing away LUCIA and her other attendants, who endeavour to raise her up again.*

Forbear ! forbear ! and let me on the ground
Spread out my wretched hands ! It pleases me
To think that in its bosom is a rest —
Yea, there lie thy unheeded and forgotten,
To whom all tongues give praise, all hearts give
blessing.

Oh, ev'ry heart did bless him though he fell,
And ne'er a saving hand was found — Oh ! oh !

[*Bursting into an agony of grief, and laying her head upon the ground, covered with both her hands.*

Elia (to *LUCIA* and attendants). Do not surround
her thus ! I'll sit and watch her.

I will not speak, but sit and weep by her ;
And she shall feel, e'en through her heavy woe,
That sympathy and kindness are beside her.

Val. (raising her head). There spoke a gentle
voice : is *Elia* near me ?

Elia. Yes, I am near, and shall be ever near you.

Val. Wilt thou ? I do believe, sweet maid, thou
wilt.

Lay thy soft hand on mine. — Yes, it feels kindly.
Had he, thy valiant love, been near his lord —
Ay, they did love each other with that love
Which brave men know — Oh, ev'ry noble stranger,
In admiration of his noble worth,
Did call him lord ; whilst they, his native subjects,
They who had seen him grow within their walls, —
Alas ! where lightly tripp'd his infant steps ;
Where in gay sports his stripling's strength was
tried ;
Where tower'd in graceful pride his manly bloom ;
Even there a lifeless, ghastly form he lies.

Enter another domestic officer, and, seeing VALERIA on the ground, steps back.

Lucia (to the officer). What wouldst thou here ?

Offi. I must, perforce, speak my unwelcome
tidings.

The Sultan is already in the palace,
And follows hard my steps with a fix'd purpose
To see the empress.

Val. (raising herself half from the ground). What
fearful words are these ? in my soul's
anguish

Comes this so quickly on me ? Be it so !
I cleave to th' earth ! what have I now to do ?
I am a stilled thing, abased and crush'd ;
What boots it now who gazes on my woe ?

Enter MAHOMET with OSMIR and his train.

Mah. (to *OSMIR*, after looking at *VALERIA* stead-
fastly). She stirs not, *Osmir*, e'en at my
approach,

She sits upon the ground, unmoved and still.
Thou sorrow-clouded beauty, not less lovely

[*Going up to her.*

For this thy mournful state ! — She heeds me not.
Empress and sov'reign dame, unto those titles
Which thou shalt ever wear, vouchsafe regard.
(To *OSMIR*.) Still she regards me not.
(After a pause.) Widow of Constantine —

Val. (rousing herself quickly). Ay, now thou
callest on me by a name

Which I do hear. There is strength in the sound
To do all possible things !

[*Rising quickly from the ground, and accosting MAHOMET with an air of high assumed state.*

What wouldst thou say to her who proudly wears
That honour'd title ?

Mah. Widow of Constantine ; I come not here
In the stern spirit of a conqueror.

The slaughter of your people, by my order,
Is stopp'd ; and to you bravely fallen lord
I have decreed such fun'ral obsequies
As suit a valiant warrior and a king.

Othus, and brave Rodrigo, and those men
Who to the last their master's corpse defended,
I have with honour graced. — Lacks there aught
still

That, from the dark cloud which so deeply shades
That awful beauty, one approving ray
Might softly draw ? Speak, and it shall be done.

Val. Ask aught from thee !

Mah. Yes, whatso'er thou wilt :

For now too well I feel I have no power
That can oppose thy will.

Val. I give you thanks : I have a thing to ask.

Mah. Name it, and it is granted. [lord,

Val. A place in the quiet tomb with my fall'n
Therein to rest my head. This is my boon.

Mah. Well, and it shall be granted, fair *Valeria*,
When that fair form is fitted for such rest.

But whilst —

[*Approaching her with an air of freer admira-
tion.*

Val. (putting him at a distance haughtily). No
more : — I do not ask it sooner.

Yet that it be a sealed deed between us,
Permit me here to put into your hands
A mark'd memorial. Some few paces off
It is deposited ; I will return
And give it to you instantly.

[*Exit, attended by LUCIA, ELIA, &c.*

Mah. (To OSMIR, looking after her as she goes out).

See, with what awful loveliness she moves!
Did all our bower'd prisons e'er contain
Aught like to that?

Osmir. It does indeed a wondrous mixture seem
Of woman's loveliness with manly state;
And yet, methinks, I feel as though it were
Strange, and perplexing, and unsuitable.
'Tis not in nature.

Mah. Thinkst thou so, good vizir?
Thou'rt right, belike, but it is wondrous graceful.
[A loud shriek of women heard without.
What shrieks are these? Run thou and learn the cause.

[OSMIR going, is prevented by VALERIA, who re-enters with her robe wrapped across her breast, and supported by LUCIA, and ELLA, and her other attendants, who seem in great affliction round her.

Val. (speaking as she enters) Mourn not; the thing is past that was to be.
Conduct me to the Sultan: I have still
Strength to fulfil my task.

Mah. Great Prophet! what is this? (To VALERIA.) What hast thou done?

Val. Brought thee the mark'd memorial of my right.
[Showing a dagger.

And that I now am fitted for that rest,
The honour'd rest which you have granted me,
Being the fix'd condition of your promise,
Here is the witness.

[Opening her robe, and showing the wound in her breast.

Mah. O sad and cruel sight! Is there no aid?

O live, thou wondrous creature, and be aught
Thy soul desires to be!

Val. (after sinking back into a seat, supported by her attendants). I now am what my soul desires to be,

And what one happy moment of strength wound
Beyond the pitch of shrinking nature makes me;
Widow of Constantine, without reproach,
And worthy to partake the honour'd rest
Of the brave lord whose living love I shared,
As shares the noble wife a brave man's love.

Mah. Prophet of God, be there such ties as these!

Enter RODRIGO, and OTHUS wounded and supporting himself feebly upon his sheathed sword.

Val. And here come, in good time, my living friends:

I shall once more those gen'rous men behold,
The sad remains of those who loved their lord.

[Holding out a hand to each of them.
You know, brave brothers, how it is with me;
For such you were to him, and such to me
My heart now truly owns you.

Othus. Yes, we have heard: they told us as we enter'd.

Most noble woman, worthy of thy lord!

[Endeavouring feebly to kneel and kiss her hand, whilst RODRIGO does so on the other side of her.

Val. This day's rough tempest's o'er, my good Rodrigo,

And thou still liv'st to strive in other storms:
Heaven's high blessing and my dying thanks
Rest on thy gen'rous worth!—I would say more,
But now I feel I may not.

Where art thou, Ella? [Putting ELLA's hand in his.

Here do I return
The trust thou gavest me; and if the Sultan
Will yet to me one last request vouchsafe,
He will confirm this gift.

Mah. It is confirm'd.

Val. I thank you, gracious victor.
Heaven bless you both!

[To ELLA and RODRIGO, who both kneel and kiss her hands.

Othus, the dead go to their silent rest,

[To OTHUS, looking fixedly at him.

And are no more remember'd: but thy lord—
He whom thou lovedst—he whom all hearts
loved—

He who so noble and so gentle was—
Well skill'd art thou to paint the deeds of men—
Thou wilt not suffer him to be forgotten?
What means that woeful motion of thy head?
Mine eyes wax dim, or do I truly see thee?
Thy visage has a strange and ghastly look:
How is it with thee?

Othus. As one who standeth at the city's gate,
Through which his earlier friends have pass'd, and
waits

Impatiently, girt in his traveller's robe,
To hear the welcome creaking of its bars.

Val. Ah! art thou wounded then? Alas! alas!
Art thou too of our company? sad travellers
Unto a world unknown!

Othus. Nay, say not sad, though to a world un-
known.

The foster'd nursling, at th' appointed season,
Who leaves his narrow crib and cottage-home
For the fair mansion of his lordly sire,
Goes to a world unknown.

Val. Ay, thou wouldst cheer me, and I will be
cheer'd.

There reigns above who casts His dark shade o'er us,
Mantling us on our way to glorious light.

I have offended, and I should be fearful,
But there is sent in mercy to my heart,
For which I humbly give—O no, I may not!
Death is upon me now.—Ella and Lucia:

Stand closer to me: let me firmly grasp
Something that I have loved!

[Catching hold of them with a convulsive grasp.

It will soon cease :
Farewell unto you all !

[*Dies.*

[*A solemn pause, all standing round and gazing upon the body.*

Othus. And this is the last form that we do wear,
Unto the sad and solemn gaze of those
Who have beheld us in our days of joy.
Honour and deepest reverence be to thee,
Thou honour'd dead !

[*Bowing respectfully to the body.*

Mah. Great God of heav'n ! was this a woman's
spirit

That took its flight ?

Rod. Let ev'ry proudest worship be upon her,
For she is number'd with the gallant dead !
Not in the trophied field, nor sculptured dome ;
No, nor beneath the dark and billowy deep
Lies one, o'er whom the valiant living would
With truer zeal their lofty banners wave,
Or bid the deep-mouth'd cannon nobly tell
How brave men mourn the brave.
How is it, *Othus* ? something in thine eye
Of joyous sadness looks upon me wistfully.

[*To OTHUS, who takes him tenderly by the hand.*

Othus. Dost thou not guess ?—But I would
speak to thee

Of a brave soldier, who, in one short moment
Of nature's weakness, has a wound received
That will unto his life as fatal prove
As fellest foeman's thrust : who in his rest
Will not be mourn'd as brave men mourn the
brave.

Justiniani in his cave of shame —

Rod. And therein let him perish !

He hath disgraced a soldier's honest fame :
He hath disgraced the country of his birth :
He hath — It makes me stamp upon the ground
To think that one, who grasp'd with brother's hand
The noble *Constantine*, should basely turn.
Name not his cursed name !

Othus. Art thou so stern ? In a lone cave he
groans,

On the damp earth, in deepest agony
Of the soul's shrewdest sufferings. I have
By an old soldier been advised of this,
And I would go to him, but that I feel
I needs must go where a more powerful call
Doth summon me.

Rod. (*softened.*) Ah ! must thou then so soon,
my gen'rous *Othus* !

Must thou so soon ? Well, ask whate'er thou wilt :
I give my chafed passion to the winds.
Ah ! goest thou ? Do I the last remain

Of those who loved the noble *Constantine* ?
The last of a brave band ? Alas ! alas !

[*Embracing OTHUS tenderly.*

Osmir (*to MAHOMET, who strides up and down in gloomy agitation*). Most mighty *Mahomet*,
what thus disturbs you ?

May not your slave in humble zeal be told ?
Mah. Away ! away ! thy humble zeal I know ;
Yea, and the humble zeal of such as thou art.
The willing service of a brave man's heart,
That precious pearl, upon the earth exists,
But I have found it not.

[*Turning to OTHUS and RODRIGO.*

Ye valiant men who have so served your prince,
There still is in the world a mighty monarch,
Who, if he might retain you near his throne,
Shall he say near his heart, in such dear zeal ?
Would think his greatness honour'd.

Othus. Great *Sultan*, thou hast conquer'd with
such arms

As power has given to thee, th' imperial city
Of royal *Constantine* ; but their arms,
That might the friends of *Constantine* subdue,
Heav'n has denied thee.

Rod. No, mighty prince ; they who have served
for love

Cannot like flying pennons be transferr'd
From bark to bark.

Mah. (*impatiently.*) I understand you well, and
you are free.

My arms, such as they are, of heav'n are bless'd ;
That is enough.

Othus. That were indeed enough ; but heaven
oftimes

Success bestows where blessing is denied.

A secret spirit whispers to my heart,
That in these walls your weaken'd wretched race,
Slaves of their slaves, in gloomy prison'd pomp,
Shall shed each other's blood, and make these
towers

A place of groans and anguish, not of bliss :
And think not when the good and valiant perish
By worldly power o'erwhelm'd, that heav'n's high
favour

Shines not on them. — Oh, no ! then shines it most.
For then in them it shows th' approving world
The worth of its best work.

And from their fate a glorious lesson springs ;
A lesson of such high ennobling power ;
Connecting us with such exalted things
As all do feel, but none with such true force,
Such joy, such triumph, as a dying man.

[*Falling back into the arms of RODRIGO.*

THE FAMILY LEGEND:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

TO

WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.,

WHOSE FRIENDLY ZEAL

ENCOURAGED ME TO OFFER IT TO THE NOTICE OF

MY INDULGENT COUNTRYMEN,

I INSCRIBE THIS PLAY.

TO THE READER.

THE following play is not offered to the public as it is acted in the Edinburgh Theatre, but is printed from the original copy which I gave to that theatre. It may suffer, perhaps, from my not having adopted some of the stage abridgments or alterations; but, as, at this distance, it was difficult for me to judge what part of these I could avail myself of with real advantage, my friends have thought it better that I should print it in its primitive state.

The story, from which I have taken the plot, was put into my hands in the year 1805, by the Hon. Mrs. Damer, as a legend long preserved in the family of her maternal ancestors, which appeared to her well fitted to produce strong effect on the stage. Upon reading it, I thought so too: it was, besides, a story of my native land, and being at the time in quest of some subject for the drama, I seized upon it eagerly, and was glad to be permitted to make use of it. As my reader may probably wish to know how far in the following scenes I have strictly adhered to my authority, I shall, with his leave, relate the substance of the story, a copy of which I have now upon my table.—In the 15th century, a feud had long subsisted between the Lord of Argyll and the Chieftain of Maclean; the latter was totally subdued by the Campbells, and Maclean* sued for peace, demanding, at the same time, in marriage, the young and beautiful daughter of Argyll. His request was granted, and the lady carried home to the island of Mull. There she had a son; but the Macleans were hostile to this alliance with the Campbells.—They swore to desert their chief if they were not suffered to put his wife to death, with her infant son, who was then at nurse, that the blood of the Campbells might not succeed to the inheritance of Maclean.

* Called in the representation Duart.

† The boat was commanded by her foster-father, who knew

Maclean resisted these threats, fearing the power and vengeance of Argyll; but, at length, fear for his own life, should he refuse the demands of his clan, made him yield to their fury, and he only drew from them a promise that they would not shed her blood. One dark winter night she was forced into a boat, and, notwithstanding her cries and lamentations, left upon a barren rock, midway between the coasts of Mull and Argyll, which, at high-water, is covered with the sea. As she was about to perish, she saw a boat steering its course at some distance; she waved her hand, and uttered a feeble cry. She was now upon the top of the rock, and the water as high as her breast, so that the boatmen mistook her for a large bird. They took her, however, from the rock, and, knowing her to be the daughter of Argyll, carried her to the castle of her father. †

The earl rewarded her deliverers, and desired them to keep the circumstance secret for a time, during which he concealed her till he should hear tidings from Mull.—Maclean solemnly announced her death to Argyll, and soon came himself with his friends, all in mourning, to condole with the earl at his castle. Argyll received him, clad also in black. Maclean was full of lamentations; the earl appeared very sorrowful; a feast was served with great pomp in the hall; every one took his place, while a seat was left empty on the right hand of Argyll; the door opened, and they beheld the Lady of Maclean enter, superbly dressed, to take her place at the table. Maclean stood for a moment aghast, when, the servants and retainers making a lane for him to pass through the hall to the gate of the castle, the earl's son, the Lord of Lorne, followed him, and slew him as he fled. His friends were detained as hostages for the child, who had been preserved by the affection of his nurse.—“So far,” says my copy of the legend, “the story is authentic, as delivered from age to age in ancient Gaelic songs; and it is likewise a tradition from generation to generation in the family of Argyll. The same authorities also add, that this deserving daughter of Argyll was rewarded for her sufferings by wedding, with her father's consent, an amiable young nobleman who adored her, and was mutually beloved. To this man her father had formerly refused her hand, disposing of her, as a bond of union, to unite the warring clans of Argyll and Maclean.”

the cry of his *Dalt*, *i. e.* foster-daughter, and insisted they should pull in to the rock.

Such is the substance of my story, with no circumstance of the smallest consequence omitted; and my reader will perceive I have deviated from it very slightly. In regard to the characters that people it, I was left, except in two instances, entirely to invention; viz. that of Argyll, who, in keeping secret the return of his daughter, &c., gives one the idea of a cautious and crafty man; and, in that of Maclean, who, being said not to have consented at first to give up his wife for fear of the vengeance of his father-in-law, and afterwards to have done so for fear of losing his life, though with a promise drawn from the clan that they should not shed her blood, gives one the idea of a man cowardly and mean, but not savage, a personage as little fitted for the drama as one could well imagine. To make the Chief of Mull, therefore, somewhat interesting and presentable, and yet fit for the purposes of the story, has been the greatest difficulty I have had to contend with: a difficulty, I readily admit, which it required a more skilful hand to overcome. To have made him sacrifice his wife from jealousy, was a common beaten path, which I felt no inclination to enter; and, though it might have been consistent with his conduct in the first part of the story, would not, as I conceive, have been at all so with his conduct in the conclusion of it, when he comes to the castle of Argyll. To have made him rude, unfeeling and cruel, and excited against her by supposing she was actually plotting his ruin at the instigation of her father, would only have presented us with a hard, bare, unshaded character, which takes no hold of our interest or attention. I have, therefore, imagined him a man of personal courage, brave in the field, but weak and timid in council, irresolute and unsteady in action; superstitious, and easily swayed by others, yet anxious to preserve his power as chieftain; attached to his clan, attached to his lady, and of an affectionate and gentle disposition. I have never put him in the course of the play at all in fear of his life. The fear of being deserted by his clan, and losing his dignity as their chief, with the superstitious dread of bringing some terrible calamity upon the Macleans, are represented as the motives for his crime. These qualities, I supposed, might have formed a character, imperfect and reprehensible indeed to a deplorable degree, but neither uninteresting nor detestable. As to his telling a direct lie when the earl questions him so closely about his wife's death, his whole conduct at the castle of Argyll, coming there in mourning as from a funeral, is an enacted lie; and it would have been very inconsistent with such conduct to have made him, when so hardly beset, hold out against this last act of degradation and unworthiness, which exhibits a lesson to every ingenuous mind more powerful than his death.

This character, however, the design of which I am doing what I can to defend, has not, I fear,

been very skilfully executed; for, I understand, it has been pretty generally condemned; and when this is the case, particularly by an audience eminently disposed to be favourable, there must be a fault somewhere, either in design or execution. I must confess, I should wish this fault to be found in the last particular rather than the first: not for the sake of the play itself, which suffers equally in either case, but because there is a taste, that too generally prevails, for having all tragic characters drawn very good or very bad, and having the qualities of the superior personages allotted to them according to established heroic rules, by which all manner of cruelty, arrogance, and tyranny are freely allowed, while the slightest mixture of timidity, or any other of the tamer vices, are by no means to be tolerated. It is a taste, indeed, that arises from a nobleness in our nature; but the general prevalence of which would be the bane of all useful and natural delineation of character. For this reason then, I would fain justify, if I could, the general design of Maclean's character, leaving the execution of it to the mercy of all who may do me the honour to bestow upon it any attention.

Had I not trusted to what Maclean and others, in the course of the play, assert of his personal courage, but brought out some circumstance in the cavern scene, before his spirits were cowed with superstitious dread, that would really have shown it, his character, perhaps, would have appeared less liable to objection. It was my intention in that scene that he should have been supposed to leave the stage with his mind greatly subdued and bewildered, but not yet prevailed upon to give up his wife; leaving the further effects produced upon him by the seer of the isle, which prevailed on him to take the oath demanded by his vassals, to be imagined by the audience; thinking it unsafe to venture such an exhibition upon the stage, lest it should have a ludicrous effect. But this my intention I must have badly fulfilled, since it has been, I believe, almost entirely overlooked. In the cavern scene, I doubt, I have foolishly bestowed more pains on the vassals than the laird. Some time or other, perhaps, if I am encouraged to do it, I will alter these matters; but then the talents of the first actor must be bestowed on Maclean, not on John of Lorne.

I beg pardon for having detained my reader so long with this character; and, to make amends for it, will not allow myself to say any more, either upon the conduct of the piece, or the other characters that belong to it.

A pleasanter part of my task remains behind; to express the deep and grateful sense I have of the very favourable—I must be permitted to say, affectionate reception this piece, which I have a pleasure in calling my Highland Play, has met with in my native land. It has been received there

by an audience, who willingly and cordially felt that I belonged to them; and, I am well assured, had it been marred with more defects than it has, and I readily allow it has many, the favour so warmly bestowed upon it would have been but insensibly diminished. What belongs to me, therefore, is not triumph, but something far better. And could any one at this moment convince me that the work, by its own merit alone, had it come from the hand of a stranger, would have met with the same reception, I should give him little thanks for his pains. He might brighten, indeed, the tints of my imaginary wreath, but he would rob it of all its sweetness. I have truly felt, upon this occasion, the kindness of kin to kin, and I would exchange it for no other feeling. Let my country believe, that, whatever may hereafter happen to shade or enliven my dramatic path, I have already received from her what will enable me to hold on my way with a cheerful heart, and the recollection of it will ever be dear to me.

I cannot take leave of my reader without begging leave to offer my warmest acknowledgments to my friend Mr. Scott, at whose desire, cherched with much friendly encouragement, I offered the Family Legend to the Edinburgh Theatre, and who has done more for its service than I could have done had I been upon the spot myself. They are also due to Mr. Mackenzie for the very kind support he has given it; and Mr. W. Erskine must permit me to mention my obligations to him for the interest he has taken in its success.

I must likewise beg that Mr. Siddons and Mrs. H. Siddons will accept my best thanks, for the great and successful exertions they have made in the two chief characters in the play. To Mr. Siddons I am doubly indebted, both as an able actor, and a diligent and friendly manager, who has taken great pains in adapting and preparing it for the stage.

To Mr. Terry, and the other actors, I offer many thanks.

Hampstead,
March 19. 1810.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MR. TERRY.

'Tis sweet to hear expiring summer's sigh,
Through forests tinged with russet, wail and die;
'Tis sweet and sad the latest notes to hear
Of distant music, dying on the ear;
But far more sadly sweet, on foreign strand,
We list the legends of our native land,
Link'd as they come with every tender tie,
Memorials dear of youth and infancy.

Chief, thy wild tales, romantic Caledon,
Wake keen remembrance in each hardy son;
Whether on India's burning coasts he toil,
Or till Acadia's* winter-fetter'd soil,
He hears with throbbing heart and moisten'd eyes,
And as he hears, what dear illusions rise!
It opens on his soul his native dell,
The woods wild-waving, and the water's swell;
Tradition's theme, the tower that threatens the plain,
The mossy cairn that hides the hero slain;
The cot, beneath whose simple porch was told
By grey-hair'd patriarch, the tales of old,
The infant group that hush'd their sports the while,
And the dear maid who listen'd with a smile,
The wanderer, while the vision warms his brain,
Is denizen of Scotland once again.

Are such keen feelings to the crowd confined,
And sleep they in the poet's gifted mind?
Oh no! for she, within whose mighty page
Each tyrant passion shows his woe and rage,
Has felt the wizard influence they inspire,
And to your own traditions tuned her lyre.
Yourselves shall judge — whoe'er has raised the sail
By Mull's dark coast, has heard this evening's tale.
The plaided boatman, resting on his oar,
Points to the fatal rock amid the roar
Of whitening waves, and tells whate'er to-night
Our humble stage shall offer to your sight;
Proudly prefer'd, that first our efforts give
Scenes glowing from her pen to breathe and live;
More proudly yet, should Caledon approve
The filial token of a daughter's love.

* Acadia, or Nova Scotia.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

MACLEAN, *chief of the clan of that name.*
EARL OF ARGYLL.
JOHN OF LORNE, *son to ARGYLL.*
SIR HUBERT DE GREY, *friend to LORNE.*
BENLORA,
LOCHTARISH, } *the kinsmen and chief vassals of*
GLENFADDEN, } MACLEAN.
MORTON.
DUGALD.

Piper, fishermen, vassals, &c.

WOMEN.

HELEN, *daughter of ARGYLL, and wife of MACLEAN.*
ROSA,
Fisherman's wife.

*Scene in the Island of Mull, and the opposite coast,
&c., and afterwards in ARGYLL'S castle.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Before the gate of MACLEAN's castle, in the Isle of Mull: several Highlanders discovered crossing the stage, carrying loads of fuel; whilst BENLORA is seen on one side, in the background, pacing to and fro, and frequently stopping and muttering to himself.

1st high. This heavy load, I hope, will be the last :

My back is almost broken.

2d high. Sure am I,
Were all the beeves in Mull slain for the feast,
Fuel enough already has been stow'd
To roast them all : and must we still with burdens
Our weary shoulders gall ?

Enter MORTON.

Mor. Ye lazy lubbards !
Grumble ye thus ? — Ye would prefer, I trow,
To sun your easy sides, like household curs,
Each on his dung-hill stretch'd, in drowsy sloth.
Fy on't ! to grumble on a day like this,
When to the clan a rousing feast is giv'n,
In honour of an heir born to the chief —
A brave Maclean, still to maintain the honours
Of this your ancient race !

1st high. A brave Maclean indeed ! — vile mongrel hound !
Come from the south, where all strange mixtures be
Of base and feeble ! sprung of varlet's blood !
What is our race to thee ?

2d high. (to MORTON). Thou'lt chew, I doubt not,
Thy morsel in the hall with right good relish,
Whether Maclean or Campbell be our lord.

Morton. Ungracious surly lubbards ! in, I say,
And bring your burdens quicker. And, besides,
Where are the heath and hare-bells, from the glen,
To deck my lady's chamber ?

2d high. To deck my lady's chamber !
Morton. Heartless hounds !
Is she not kind and gentle ? spares she aught
Her gen'rous stores afford, when you or yours
Are sick, or lack relief ? Hoards she in chests,
When shipwreck'd strangers shiver on our coast,
Or robe or costly mantle ? — All comes forth !
And when the piercing shriek of drowning mariners
Breaks through the night, up-starting from her
couch,

To snatch, with eager haste, the flaming torch,
And from the tower give notice of relief,
Who comes so swiftly as her noble self ?
And yet ye grumble.

1st high. Ay, we needs must own,
That, were she not a Campbell, fit she were
To be a queen, or e'en the thing she is —

Our very chieftain's dame. But, in these towers,
The daughter of Argyll to be our lady !

Morton. Out ! mountain savages ! is this your spite ?
Go to !

2d high. Speakst thou to us ? thou Lowland loon !

Thou wand'ring pedlar's son, or base mechanic !
Com'st thou to lord it here o'er brave Macleans ?
We'll erry loads at leisure, or forbear,
As suits our fancy best, nor wait thy bidding.

[*Except highlanders grumbling, and followed by MORTON.*

[*Manet BENLORA, who now comes forward, and after remaining some time on the front of the stage, wrapt in thought, not observing LOCUTARISH, who enters behind him.*

Heigh ho ! heigh ho, the day !

Loch. How so ? What makes Benlora sigh so deeply ?

Ben. (turning round). And does Lochtarish ask ?
Full well thou knowst,

The battles of our clan I've boldly fought,
And well maintain'd its honour.

Loch. Yes, we know it.

Ben. Who dared, unpunish'd, a Maclean to injure ?
Yea ; he who dared but with a scornful lip
Our name insult, I thought it feeble vengeance
If steed or beast within his walls were left,
Or of his holds one tower unruin'd stood.

Loch. Ay ; who dared then to brave us ?

Ben. Thus dealt Benlora e'en with common foes ;
But in the warfare of our deadly feud,
When rang the earth beneath our bloody strife,
And brave Macleans brave Campbells boldly fronted,
(Fiends as they are, I still must call them brave,)
What sword more deeply drank the hated blood
Than this which now I grasp — but idly grasp !

Loch. There's ne'er a man of us that knows it
not,

That swears not by thy valour.

Ben. Until that fatal day, by ambush ta'en,
And in a dungeon kept, where, two long years,
Nor light of day, nor human voice e'er cheer'd
My loneliness, when did I ever yield,
To e'en the bravest of that hateful name,
One step of ground upon the embattled field —
One step of honour in the banner'd hall ?

Loch. Indeed thou hast our noble champion been ;
Deserving well the trust our chief deceased,
This chieftain's father, did to thee consign.
But when thou wast a captive, none to head us,
But he, our youthful lord, yet green in arms,
We fought not like Macleans ; or else our foe,
By fiends assisted, fought with fiend-like power,
Far — far beyond the Campbells' wonted pitch.
E'en so it did befall : — we lost the day : —
That fatal day ! — Then came this shameful peace.

Ben. Ay, and this wedding ; when, in form of
honour

Conferr'd upon us, Helen of Argyll
Our sov'reign dame was made,—a bosom worm,
Nursed in that viper's nest, to infuse its venom
Through all our after race.

This is my welcome!

From dungeons freed, to find my once-loved home
With such vile change disgraced; to me more
hateful

Than thralldom's murkiest den. But to be loosen'd
From captive's chains to find my hands thus bound!

Loch. It is, indeed, a vile and irksome peace.

Ben. Peace, say they! who will bonds of friend-
ship sign

Between the teeming ocean's finny broods,
And say, "Sport these upon the hither waves,
And leave to those that farther billowy reach?"

A Campbell here to queen it o'er our heads,
The potent dame o'er quell'd and beaten men,
Rousing or soothing us, as proud Argyll
Shall send her secret counsel!—hold, my heart!

This, base degen'rate men!—this, call ye peace?
Forgive my weakness: with dry eyes I laid
My mother in her grave, but now my cheeks

Are, like a child's, with scalding drops disgraced.

Loch. What I shall look upon, ere in the dust
My weary head be laid to rest, heav'n knows,
Since I have lived to see Benlora weep.

Ben. One thing, at least, thou ne'er shalt live to
see—

Benlora crouching, where he has commanded.
Go ye, who will, and crowd the chieftain's hall,
And deal the feast, and nod your grizzled heads
To martial pibrochs, play'd, in better days,
To those who conquer'd, not who woo'd their foes;
My soul abhors it. On the sea-beaten rock,
Remov'd from ev'ry form and sound of man;
In proud communion with the fitful winds
Which speak, with many tongues, the fancied words
Of those who long in silent dust have slept;
While eagles scream, and sullen surges roar—
The bodding sounds of il;—I'll hold my feast,—
My moody revelry.

Loch. Nay, why so fierce?

Thinkst thou we are a tame and mongrel pack?
Dogs of true breed we are, though for a time
Our master-hound forsakes us. Rouse him forth
The noble chace to lead: his deep-toned yell
Full well we know; and for the opening sport
Pant keenly.

Ben. Ha! is there amongst you still
Spirit enough for this?

Loch. Yes, when good opportunity shall favour.
Of this, my friend, I'll speak to thee more fully
When time shall better serve.

Maclean, thou knowst,
Is of a soft, unsteady, yielding nature;
And this, too well, the crafty Campbell knew,
When to our isle he sent this wily witch
To mould, and govern, and besot his wits,

As suits his crafty ends. I know the youth:
This dame or we must hold his will in thralldom:
Which of the two,—But softly: steps approach.
Of this again.

Ben. As early as thou wilt.

Loch. Then be it so: some staunch determined
spirits

This night in Irka's rocky cavern meet;
There must thou join us. Wear thou here the
while

A brow less cloudy, suited to the times.

Enter GLENFADDEN.

See, here comes one who wears a merry face;
Yet, ne'ertheless, a clan's-man staunch he is,
Who hates a Campbell, worse than Icom's monks
The horned fiend.

Ben. Ha! does he so?

[*Turning graciously to GLENFADDEN.*
Glenfadden!

How goes it with thee?—Joyous days are these—
These days of peace.

Glen. These days of foul disgrace!
Com'st thou to cheer the piper in our hall,
And goblets quaff to the young chieftain's health,
From proud Argyll descended?

Ben. [*Smiling grimly.*] Yes, Glenfadden,
If ye will have it so; not else.

Glen. Thy hand—
Thy noble hand!—thou art Benlora still.

[*Shaking BENLORA warmly by the hand, and
then turning to LOCHTARISH.*

Know ye that banish'd Allen is return'd—
Allen of Dura?

Loch. No; I knew it not.
But in good time he comes. A daring knave!
He will be useful. [*After considering.*

Of Maclean we'll crave
His banishment to cancel; marking well
How he receives it. This will serve to show
The present bent and bearing of his mind.

[*After considering again.*
Were it not also well, that to our council
He were invited, at a later hour,
When of our purpose we shall be assured?

Glen. Methinks it were.
Loch. In, then; now is our time.

Ben. I'll follow thee when I awhile have paced
Yon lonely path, and thought upon thy counsel.

[*Exeunt LOCHTARISH and GLENFADDEN into
the castle, and BENLORA by the opposite side.*

SCENE II.

An apartment in the castle.

Enter MORTON and ROSA, speaking as they enter.

Rosa. Speak with my lady privately?

Mor. Ay, please you:

Something I have to say, regards her nearly.
And though I doubt not, madam, your attachment—

Rosa. Good Morton, no apology: thy caution is prudent; trust me not till thou hast proved me. But oh! watch o'er thy lady with an eye Of keen and guarded zeal! she is surrounded—

[*Looking round the room.*]

Does not one hear us?—O those baleful looks That, from beneath dark surly brows, by stealth, Are darted on her by those stern Macleans! Ay; and the gestures of those fearful men, As on the shore in savage groups they meet, Sending their loosen'd tartans to the wind, And tossing high their brawny arms where oft In vehement discourse, I have, of late, At distance mark'd them. Yes; thou shakest thy head:

Thou hast observed them too.

Mor. I have observed them oft. That calm Lochtarish,

Calm as he is, the growing rancour fosters: For, fail the offspring of their chief, his sons Next in succession are. He hath his ends, For which he stirs their ancient hatred up; And all too well his dev'lish pains succeed.

Rosa. Too well indeed! The very bed-rid crones To whom my lady sends, with kindly care, Her cheering cordials,—couldst thou have believed it?

Do mutter spells to fence from things unholy, And grumble, in a hollow smother'd voice, The name of Campbell, as unwillingly They stretch their wither'd hands to take her bounty.

The wizards are in pay to rouse their fears With dismal tales of future ills foreseen, From Campbell and Maclean together join'd, In hateful union.—E'en the very children, Sporting the heath among, when they discover A loathsome toad or adder on their path, Crush it with stones, and, grinding wickedly Their teeth, in puny spite, call it a Campbell. Benlora, too, that savage gloomy man—

Morton. Ay, evil is the day that brings him back, Unjustly by a Campbell hath he been, The peaceful treaty of the clans unheeded, In thralldom kept; from which but now escaped, He like a furious tiger is enchafed, And thinks Argyll was privy to the wrong His vassal put upon him. Well I know His bloody vengeful nature: and Maclean, Weak and unsteady, moved by ev'ry counsel, Brave in the field, but still in purpose timid, Oftimes the instrument in wicked hands Of wrongs he would abhor,—alas, I fear, Will ill defend the lovely spouse he swore To love and cherish.

Rosa.

Heavy steps approach:

Hush! see who comes upon us!—sly Lochtarish, And his dark colleagues.—Wherefore come they hither?

[*Morton retires to the bottom of the stage, and enter LOCHTARISH, BENLORA, and GLENFADDEN.*]

Loch. We thought, fair maid, to find the chieftain here.

Rosa. He is in these apartments.

Loch. Would it greatly Annoy your gentleness to tell his honour, We wait to speak with him upon affairs Of much concernment?

Rosa. My service is not wanted; to your wish, Sec, there he comes unwarn'd, and with him too His noble lady. [*Retiring to the bottom of the stage.*]

Loch. Ha! there they come! see how he hangs upon her

With boyish fondness!

Glen. Ah, the goodly creature!

How fair she is! how winning!—See that form; Those limbs beneath their foldy vestments moving, As though in mountain clouds they robed were, And music of the air their motion measured.

Loch. Ay, shrewd and crafty earl! 'tis not for nought

Thou lither sent'st this jewel of thy race.

A host of Campbells, each a chosen man, Could not enthrall us, as, too soon I fear, This single Campbell will. Shrewd crafty foe!

Ben. Hell lend me aid, if heaven deny its grace, But I will thwart him, crafty though he be!

Loch. But now for your petition: see we now How he receives your suit.

Enter MACLEAN and HELEN.

Ben. (*eyeing her attentively as she enters.*) A potent foe it is: ay, by my faith, A fair and goodly creature!

Mac. Again, good morrow to you, gallant kinsmen:

Come ye to say I can with any favour

The right good liking prove, and high regard I bear to you, who are my chiefest strength,—The pillars of my clan?

Ben. Yes, we are come, Maclean, a boon to beg.

Loch. A boon that, granted, will yourself enrich.

Mac. Myself enrich?

Loch. Yes; thereby wilt thou be One gallant man the richer. Hear us out.

Allen of Dura, from his banishment—

Mac. False reiver! name him not.—Is he return'd?

Dares he again set foot upon this isle?

Ben. Yes, chief; upon this isle set foot he hath: And on nor isle nor mainland doth there step

A braver man than he.—Lady, forgive me: The boldest Campbell never saw his back.

Hel. Nay, good Benlora, ask not my forgiveness:

I love to hear thee praise, with honest warmth,
The valiant of thy name, which now is mine.

Ben. (aside). Ha! good Benlora!—this is queenly pride.

(Aloud.) Madam, you honour us.

Helen. If so, small thanks be to my courtesy,
Sharing myself with pride the honest fame
Of every brave Maclean.—I'll henceforth keep
A proud account of all my gallant friends:
And every valiant Campbell therein noted,
On the opposing leaf, in letters fair,
Shall with a brave Maclean be proudly match'd.

[*BENLORA and GLENFADDEN bow in silence.*]

Loch. Madam, our grateful duty waits upon you.
(Aside to BENLORA.) What thinkst thou of her,
friend?

Ben. (aside to LOCHTARISH). What think I of
her?

Incomparable hypocrite! [courtesy]

Loch. (aloud). But to our suit: for words of
It must not be forgotten.—Chief, vouchsafe:
Benlora here, who from his loathly prison,
Which for your sake two years he hath endured,
Begs earnestly this grace for him we mention'd,
Allen of Dura. [*Aside to BENLORA.*]

Kneel, man; be more pressing.

Ben. (aside to LOCHTARISH). Nay, by my fay!
if crouching pleases thee,

Do it thyself. [*Going up proudly to MACLEAN.*]

Maclean; thy father put into these hands
The government and guidance of thy nonage.
How I the trust fulfill'd, this castle strengthen'd
With walls and added towers, and stored, besides,
With arms and trophies in rough warfare won
From even the bravest of our western clans,
Will testify. What I in recompense
Have for my service earn'd, these galled wrists

[*Pushing up the sleeve from his arm.*]
Do also testify.—Such as I am,

For an old friend I plainly beg this grace:

Say if my boon be granted or denied.

Mac. The man for whom thou pleadst is most
unworthy;

Yet let him safely from my shores depart:
I harm him not.

Ben. (turning from him indignantly). My suit is
then denied.

[*To LOCHTARISH and GLENFADDEN.*]

Go ye to Dura's Allen; near the shore

He harbours in his aged mother's cot;

Bid him upon the ocean drift again

His shatter'd boat, and be a wanderer still.

Helen (coming forward eagerly). His aged mother!

(To MACLEAN.) Oh! and shall he go?

No, no, he shall not! On this day of joy,

Wilt thou to me refuse it?

[*Hanging upon him with looks of entreaty, till,
seeing him relent, she then turns joyfully to
BENLORA.*]

Bid your wanderer
Safe with his aged mother still remain,—
A banish'd man no more.

Mac. This is not well: but be it as thou wilt;
Thou hast prevail'd, my Helen.

Loch. and Glen. (bowing low). We thank thee,
lady.

[*BENLORA bows slightly, in sullen silence.*]

Mac. (to BENLORA). Then let thy friend re-
main; he has my pardon.

[*BENLORA bows again in silence.*]

Clear up thy brow, Benlora; he is pardon'd.

[*Pauses, but BENLORA is still silent.*]

We trust to meet you shortly in the hall;
And there, my friends, shall think our happy feast
More happy for your presence.

[*Going up again, with anxious courtesy, to
BENLORA.*]

Thy past services,

Which great and many are, my brave Benlora,
Shall be remember'd well. Thou hast my honour,
And high regard.

Helen. And mine to boot, good kinsman, if the
value

You put upon them makes them worth the having.

*Ben. (bows sullenly and retires; then muttering
aside to himself as he goes out).* Good kins-
man! good Benlora! gracious words
From this most high and potent dame, vouchsafed
To one so poor and humble as myself. [*Exit.*]

Loch. (aside to GLENFADDEN). But thou for-
gettest—

Glen. (aside to LOCHTARISH). No; I'll stay be-
hind,

And move Maclean to join our nightly meeting.

Midnight the hour when you desire his presence?

Loch. Yes, even so; then will we be prepared.

[*Exit.*]

Glen. (returning to MACLEAN). Chieftain, I would
some words of privacy

Speak with you, should your leisure now permit.

Mac. Come to my closet, then, I'll hear thee
gladly.

[*Exeunt MACLEAN and GLENFADDEN.*]

Helen (to ROSA, who now comes forward). Where
hast thou been, my Rosa, with my boy,
Have they with wild flowers deck'd his eradle
round?

And peeps he through them like a little nestling—

A little heath-cock broken from its shell,

That through the bloom puts forth its tender beak,

As steals some rustling footstep on its nest?

Come, let me go and look upon him. Soon,

Ere two months more go by, he'll look again

In answer to my looks, as though he knew

The wistful face that looks so oft upon him,

And smiles so dearly, is his mother's.

Thinkst thou

He'll soon give heed and notice to my love?

Rosa. I doubt it not : he is a lively infant,
And moves his little limbs with vigour, spreading
His fingers forth, as if in time they would
A good claymore clench bravely.

Helen. A good claymore clench bravely!—O!
to see him

A man!—a valiant youth!—a noble chieftain!
And laying on his plaided shoulder, thus,
A mother's hand, say proudly, "This is mine!"
I shall not then a lonely stranger be
'Mid those who bless me not: I shall not then—
But silent be my tongue. [Weeps.

Rosa. Dear madam, still in hope look forward
cheerly.

[MORTON comes from the bottom of the stage.

And here is Morton, with some tidings for you:
God grant they comfort you!—I must withdraw:
His wary faithfulness mistrusts my love,
But I am not offended. [Offering to retire.

Helen. Nay, remain. [Beckoning her back.

Say what thou hast to say, my worthy Morton,
For Rosa is as faithful as thyself.

Mor. This morning, lady, 'mongst the farther
cliffs,

Dress'd like a fisher peasant, did I see
The Lord of Lorne, your brother.

Helen. Ha! sayst thou,
The Lord of Lorne, my brother?—Thou'rt de-
ceived.

Morton. No, no : in vain his sordid garb concealed
him!

His noble form and stately step I knew
Before he spoke.

Helen. He spoke to thee?

Morton. He did.

Helen. Was he alone?

Morton. He was; but, near at hand,

Another stranger, noble as himself,
And in like garb disguised, amongst the rocks
I mark'd, though he advanced not.

Helen. Alas, alas, my brother! why is this?

He spoke to thee, thou sayst—I mean my brother:
What did he say?

Morton. He earnestly entreats

To see you privately; and bids you say
When this may be. Meantime he lies conceal'd
Where I may call him forth at your command.

Helen. O, why disguised?—Thinkst thou he is
not safe?

Morton. Safe in his hiding-place he is: but yet
The sooner he shall leave this coast, the better.

Helen. To see him thus! O, how I am beset!

Tell him at twilight, in my nurse's chamber,
I will receive him. But be sure thou add,
Himself alone will I receive—alone—

With no companion must he come. Forget not
To say, that I entreat it earnestly.

Morton. I will remember this.

Helen. Go to him quickly then: and, till the hour,

Still do thou hover near him. Watch his haunt,
Lest some rude fisherman or surly hind
Surprise him. Go thou quickly. O, be prudent!
And be not for a moment off the watch.

Morton. Madam, I will obey you: trust me well.
[Exit.

Helen (*much disturbed*). My brother on the coast;
and with him too,
As well I guess, the man I must not see!

Rosa. Mean you the brave Sir Hubert?

Helen. Yes, my Rosa.

My noble brother in his powerful self
So strong in virtue stands, he thinks full surely
The daughter of his sire no weakness hath;
And wists not how a simple heart must struggle
To be what it would be—what it must be—
Ay, and so aid me, heaven! what it shall be.

Rosa. And heaven will aid you, madam, doubt
it not.

Though on this subject still you have repress'd
All communing, yet, ne'ertheless, I well
Have mark'd your noble striving, and revered
Your silent inward warfare, bravely held;
In this more pressing combat firm and valiant,
As is your noble brother in the field.

Helen. I thank thee, gentle Rosa; thou art kind—
I should be franker with thee; but I know not—
Something restrains me here.

[Laying her hand on her heart.

I love and trust thee;

And on thy breast I'll weep when I am sad;

But ask not why I weep. [Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*An apartment in twilight, almost dark; the door of an
inner chamber, standing a little ajar, at the bottom
of the stage.*

*Enter JOHN OF LORNE and SIR HUBERT DE GREY,
disguised as peasants.*

De Grey. Nay, stop, I pray; advance we not
too far?

Lorne. Morton hath bid us in this place to wait.
The nurse's chamber is adjoining to it;
And, till her light within give notice, here
Thou mayst remain; when I am call'd, thou't leave
me.

De Grey. Till thou art call'd! and may I stay
to hear

The sweetness of her voice—her footstep's sound;
Perhaps snatch in the torch's hasty light
One momentary vision of that form—
The form that hath to me of earthly make
No fellow? May it be without transgression?

Lorne. Why shouldst thou not? De Grey, thou
art too fearful;

Here art thou come with no dishonest will ;
And well she knows thine honour. Her commands,
Though we must yield to them, capricious seem ;
Seeing thou art with me, too nicely scrupulous ;
And therefore need no farther be obey'd
Than needs must be. She puts thee not on honour.
Were I so used—

De Grey. 'Spite of thy pride, wouldst thou
Reverse her still the more.—O, no, brave Lorne,
I blame her not. When she, a willing victim,
To spare the blood of two contending clans,
Against my faithful love her suffrage gave,
I bless'd her ; and the deep, but chasten'd sorrow
With which she bade me—Oh ! that word ! fare-
well,

Is treasured in my bosom as its share
Of all that earthly love hath power to give.
It came from Helen, and, from her received,
Shall not be worn with thankless dull repining.

Lorne. A noble heart thou hast : such manly
meekness

Becomes thy gen'rous nature. But for me,
More fierce and wilful, sorely was I chafed
To see thy faithful heart robb'd of its hope,
All for the propping up a hollow peace
Between two warlike clans, who will, as long
As bagpipes sound, and blades flash to the sun,
Delighting in the noble sport of war,
Some fierce opponents find. What deth it boot,
If men in fields must fight, and blood be shed,
What clans are in the ceaseless strife opposed ?

De Grey. Ah, John of Lorne ! too keenly is thy
soul

To war inclined—to wasteful, ruthless war.

Lorne. The warlike minstrel's rousing lay thou
lov'st :

Shall bards i' the hall sing of our fathers' deeds
To lull their sons to sleep ? Vain simple wish !
I love to hear the sound of holy bell,
And peaceful men their praises lift to heaven :
I love to see around their blazing fire
The peasant and his cheerful family set,
Eating their fearless meal. But, when the roar
Of battle rises, and the closing clans,
Dark'ning the sun-gleam'd heath, in dread affray
Are mingled ; blade with blade, and limb with limb,
Nerve-strain'd, in terrible strength ; yea, soul with
soul

Nobly contending ; who would raise aloft
The interdicting hand, and say, " Be still'd ?"
If this in me be sin, may heaven forgive me !
That being am not I.

De Grey. In very deed
This is thy sin ; and of thy manly nature
The only blemish worthy of that name.
More peaceful be, and thou wilt be more noble.

Lorne. Well, here we will not wrangle for the
point.

None in th'embattled field who have beheld

Hubert de Grey in mailed hauberk fight,
Will guess how much that knight in peace delights.
Still burns my heart that such a man as thou
Was for this weak, unsteady, poor Maclean—

De Grey. Nay, with contempt, I pray thee, name
him not.

Her husband, and despised ! O, no, no, no !
All that pertains to her, e'en from that hour,
Honour'd and sacred is. [myself !

Lorne. Thou gen'rous heart ! more noble than
I will not grieve thee.—I'll to Helen go,
With every look and word that might betray
Indignant thoughts, or wound her gentle spirit,
Strictly suppress'd : and to her ear will give
Thy gen'rous greetings, and thy manly words
Of cheering comfort ;—all most faithfully
Shall be remember'd.

De Grey. Ay, and my request.

Lorne. To see the child ?

De Grey. E'en so : to look upon it ;—
Upon the thing that is of her ; this bud—
This seedling of a flower so exquisite.

[*Light is seen in the inner chamber.*

Ha ! light is in the chamber ! moves the door ?
Some one approaches. O ! but for a moment
Let me behind thy friendly tartans be,
And snatch one glance of what that light will give.

[*Conceals himself behind LORNE, who steps
some paces back, setting his hand to his side,
and tilting his plaid over his arms to favour
him ; while the door of the inner chamber
opens, and HELEN appears, bearing a lamp,
which she afterwards sets upon a stone slab as
she advances.*

Her form—her motion—yea, that mantled arm,
Press'd closely to her breast, as she was wont
When chilly winds assail'd.—The face—O, woe is
me !

It was not then so pale.

Lorne (to him, in a low voice). Begone : begone.

De Grey. Blest vision, I have seen thee ! Fare
thee well ! [Exit in haste.

Helen (coming forward, alarmed). What sound is
that of steps that hasten from us ?

Is Morton on the watch.

Lorne. Fear nothing ; faithful Morton is at
hand :

The steps thou heardest were friendly.

Helen (embracing LORNE). My brother ! meet we
thus,—disguised, by stealth ?

Is this like peace ? How is my noble father ?

Hath any ill befallen ?

Lorne. Argyll is well ;

And nothing ill, my sister, hath befallen,
If thou art well and happy.

Helen. Speakest thou truly ?

Why art thou come ? Why thus upon our coast ?
O take it not unkindly that I say,

" Why art thou come ?"

Lorne. Near to the opposite shore,
With no design, but on a lengthen'd chase,
A lusty deer pursuing from the hills
Of Morven, where Sir Hubert and myself
Guests of the social lord two days had been,
We found us ; when a sudden strong desire
To look upon the castle of Maclean,
Seen from the coast, our eager fancy seized,
And that indulged, forthwith we did agree
The frith to cross, and to its chief and dame
A hasty visit make. But as our boat
Lay waiting to receive us, warn'd by one
Whom well I knew (the vassal of a friend
Whose word I could not doubt), that jealous ran-
cour,

Stirr'd up amongst the vassals of Maclean,
Who, in their savage fury, had been heard
To utter threats against thy innocent self,
Made it unsafe in open guise to venture,
Here in this garb we are to learn in secret
The state in which thou art.—How is it then?
Morton's report has added to my fears :
All is not well with thee.

Helen. No, all is well.

Lorne. A cold constrained voice that answer
gave :

All is not well.—Maclean—dares he neglect thee?

Helen. Nay, wrong him not ; kind and affection-
ate

He still remains.

Lorne. But it is said, his vassals with vile names
Have dared to name thee, even in open clan :
And have remain'd unpunish'd. Is it so?

[*Pauses for an answer, but she is silent.*]

All is not well.

Helen. Have I not said it is?

Lorne. Ah! dost thou thus return a brother's
love

With cold reserve?—O speak to me, my Helen!
Speak as a sister should.—Have they insulted
thee?

Has any wrong—my heart within me burns
If I but think upon it.—Answer truly.

Helen. What, am I question'd then? Thinkst
thou to find me

Like the spoil'd heiress of some Lowland lord,
Peevish and dainty ; who, with scorn regarding
The ruder home she is by marriage placed in,
Still holds herself an alien from its interest,
With poor repining, losing every sense
Of what she is, in what she has been? No.—
I love thee, Lorne ; I love my father's house :
The meanest ear that round his threshold barks
Is in my memory as some kindred thing :
Yet take it not unkindly from me, say,
The lady of Maclean no grievance hath
To tell the Lord of Lorne.

Lorne. And has the vassal,
Constrain'd, unblest, and joyless as it was,

Which gave thee to a lord unworthy of thee,
Placed thee beyond the reach of kindred ties—
The warmth of blood to blood—the sure affection
That nature gives to all—a brother's love?
No, by all sacred things! here is thy hold :
Here is thy true, unshaken, native stay :
One that shall fail thee never, though the while,
A faithless, wavering, intervening band
Seems to divide thee from it.

[*Grasping her hand vehemently, as if he would
lead her away.*]

Helen. What dost thou mean? What violent
grasp is this?

Com'st thou to lead me from my husband's house,
Beneath the shade of night, with culprit stealth?

Lorne. No, daughter of Argyll ; when John of
Lorne

Shall come to lead thee from these hated walls
Back to thy native home,—with culprit stealth,
Beneath the shades of night, it shall not be.
With half our western warriors at his back,
He'll proudly come. Thy listening timid chief
Shall hear our martial steps upon his heath,
With heavy measured fall, send, beat by beat,
From the far-smiten earth, a sullen sound,
Like deep-dell'd forests groaning to the strokes
Of lusty woodmen. On the watch-tower's height,
His straining eye shall mark our sheathless swords
From rank to rank their lengthen'd blaze emit,
Like streams of shiv'ring light, in hasty change,
Upon the northern firmament.—By stealth!
No! not by stealth!—believe me, not by stealth
Shalt thou these portals pass.

Helen. Them have I enter'd,

The pledge of peace : and here my place I'll hold
As dame and mistress of the warlike clan
Who yield obedience to their chief, my lord ;
And whatso'er their will to me may bear,
Of good or ill, so will I hold me ever.
Yea, did the Lord of Lorne, dear as he is,
With all the warlike Campbells at his back
Here hostile entrance threaten ; on these walls,
Failing the strength that might defend them better,
I would myself, while by my side in arms
One valiant clan's-man stood, against his powers,
To the last push, with desp'rate opposition,
This castle hold.

Lorne. And wouldst thou so? so firm and
valiant art thou?

Forgive me, noble creature!--Oh! the fate—
The wayward fate that binds thy gen'rous soul
To poor unsteady weakness!

Helen. Speakest thou thus?

Thus pressing still upon the galled spot?
Thou dealst unkindly with me. Yes, my brother,
Unkindly and unwisely. Wherefore hast thou
Brought to this coast the man thou knowest well
I ought not in mysterious guise to see?
And he himself—seeks he again to move

The hapless weakness I have striv'n to conquer ?
I thought him generous.

Lorne. So think him still.
His wishes tend not to disturb thy peace :
Far other are his thoughts. — He bids me tell thee
To cheer thy gentle heart, nor think of him,
As one who will in vain and stubborn grief
His ruin'd bliss lament, — he bids me say
That he will even strive, if it be possible,
Amongst the maidens of his land to seek
Some faint resemblance of the good he lost,
That thou mayst hear of him with less regret,
As one by holy bands link'd to his kind.
He bids me say, should ever child of his
And child of thine — but here his quivering lip
And starting tears spoke what he could not speak.

Helen. O noble, gen'rous heart; and does he offer
Such cheering manly comfort ? Heaven protect,
And guide, and bless him ! On his noble head
Such prosp'rous bliss be pour'd, that hearing of it
Shall, through the gloom of my untoward state,
Like gleams of sunshine break, that from afar
Look o'er the dull dun heath.

Lorne. But one request —
Helen. Ha ! makes he one ?

Lorne. It is to see thy child. [it ?
Helen. To see my child ! Will he indeed regard
Shall it be bless'd by him ?

Enter MORTON in haste.

Morton. Conceal yourself, my lord, or by this
passage [Pointing off the stage.

The nearest postern gain : I hear the sound
Of heavy steps at hand, and voices stern. [thee.

Helen. O fly, my brother ! Morton will conduct
(To MORTON.) Where is Sir Hubert ?

Morton. Safe he is without.
He'en. Heaven keep him so !

(To LORNE.) O leave me ! I, the while,
Will in, and, with mine infant in mine arms,
Meet thee again, ere thou depart. — Fly ! fly !

[Exit; HELEN into the inner chamber, putting
out the lamp as she goes, and LORNE and
MORTON by a side passage.

SCENE II.

*A cave, lighted by flaming brands fixed aloft on its
rugged sides, and shedding a fierce glaring light
down upon the objects below. LOCHTARISH, BEN-
LORA, GLENFADDEN, with several of the chief
vassals of MACLEAN, are discovered in a recess,
formed by projecting rocks, at the bottom of the
stage, engaged in earnest discourse, from which they
move forward slowly, speaking as they advance.*

Loch. And thus ye see, by strong necessity,
We are compell'd to this.
1st vas. Perhaps thou'rt right.

Loch. Sayst thou perhaps ? Dost thou not
plainly see

That ne'er a man amongst us can securely
His lands possess, or say, " My house is mine,"
While, under tutorage of proud Argyll,
This beauteous sorceress our besotted chief
By soft enchantment holds ?

[Laying his hand on the 1st vassal.

My brave Glenore,
What are thy good deserts, that may uphold thee
In favour with a Campbell ? — Duncan's blood,
Slain in his boat, with all its dashing oars
Skirting our shore, while that his vaunting piper
The Campbell's triumph play'd ? Will this speak
for thee ? [Turning to 2d vassal.

And, Thona, what good merit pleadest thou ?
The coal-black steed of Clone, thy moonlight
plunder,

Ta'en from the spiteful laird, will he, good sooth !
Neigh favour on thee ? [To 3d vassal.

And my valiant Fallen,
Bethink thee well if fair-hair'd Flora's cries
Whom from her native bower by force thou tookst,
Will plead for thee. — And say ye still perhaps —
Perhaps there is necessity ? [the act

1st vas. Strong should it be, Lochtarish ; for
Is fell and cruel thou wouldst push us to.

Glen. (to 1st vas.) Ha, man of mercy ! are thy
lily hands [those

From bloody taint unstain'd ? What sights were
Thou look'dst upon in Brunock's burning tower,
When infants through the flames their wailings
sent,

And yet unaided perish'd ?

Loch. (soothingly). Tush, Glenfadden !
Too hasty art thou.

(To the vassals.) Ye will say, belike,
" Our safety — our existence did demand
Utter extinction of that hold of foes."

And well ye may. — A like necessity
Compels us now, and yet ye hesitate.

Glen. Our sighted seers the fun'ral lights have
seen,

Not moving onward in the wonted path
On which by friends the peaceful dead are borne,
But hov'ring o'er the heath like countless stars,
Spent and extinguish'd on the very spot
Where first they twinkled. This too well foreshows
Internment of the slain, whose bloody graves
Of the same mould are made on which they fell.
2d vas. Ha ! so indeed ! some awful tempest
gathers.

1st vas. What sighted man hath seen it ?

Glen. He whose eye
Can see on northern waves the found'ring bark,
With all her shrieking crew, sink to the deep,
While yet, with gentle winds, on dimpling surge
She sails from port in all her gallant trim :
John of the Isle hath seen it.

Omnes (starting back). Then hangs some evil
over us.

Glen. Know ye not
The mermaid hath been heard upon our rocks ?

Omnes (still more alarmed). Ha ! when ?

Glen. Last night, upon the rugged rag
That lifts its dark head through the cloudy smoke
Of dashing billows, near the western cliff.
Sweetly, but sadly, o'er the stilly deep
The passing sound was borne. I need not say
How fatal to our clan that boding sound
Hath ever been.

3d vas. In faith thou makest me quake.

2d vas. Some fearful thing hangs o'er us.

1st vas. If 'tis fated

Our clan before our ancient foe shall fall,
Can we heav'n's will prevent ? Why should we
then

The Campbells' wrath provoke ?

Ben. (stepping up fiercely to *1st vassal*). Heav'n's
will prevent — the Campbells' ire provoke !
Is such base tameness utter'd by the son
Of one, who would into the fiery pit
Of damned fiends have leapt, so that his grasp
Might pull a Campbell with him ?

Bastard blood !

Thy father spoke not thus.

Loch. (soothingly). Nay, brave Benlora,
He means not as thou thinkst.

Ben. If heaven decree
Slaughter and ruin for us, come it then !
But let our enemies, close grappled to us,
In deadly strife, their ruin join with ours.
Let corse to corse, upon the bloody heath,
Maclean and Campbell, stiff'ning side by side,
With all the gnashing ecstasy of hate
Upon their ghastly visages impress'd,
Lie horribly ! — For ev'ry widow's tear
Shed in our clan, let matron Campbells howl !

Loch. Indeed, my friends, although too much in
ire,

Benlora wisely speaks. — Shall we in truth
Wait for our ruin from a crafty foe,
Who here maintains this keenly watchful spy
In gentle kindness masked ?

Glen. Nor need we fear,
As good Lochtarish hath already urged,
Her death will rouse Argyll. It will be deem'd,
As we shall grace it with all good respect
Of funeral pomp, a natural visitation. [book,

Loch. Ay, and besides, we'll swear upon the
And truly swear, if we are call'd upon,
We have not shed her blood.

Ben. I like not this.
If ye her life will take, in open day
Let her a public sacrifice be made.

Let the loud trumpet far and near proclaim
Our bloody feast, and at the rousing sound,
Let every clans-man of the hated name

His vengeful weapon clench. —

I like it not, Lochtarish. What we do,
Let it be boldly done. — Why should we slay her ?
Let her in shame be from the castle sent ;
Which, to her haughty sire, will do, I ween,
Far more despite than taking of her life. —
A feeble woman's life ! — I like it not.

[Turning on his heel angrily, and striding to the
bottom of the stage.

Loch. (aside to *GLEN*.) Go to him, friend, and
soothe him to our purpose.

The fiery fool ! how madly wild he is !

[*GLENFADDEN* goes to the bottom of the stage,
and is seen remonstrating, in dumb-show, with
BENLORA, while *LOCHTARISH* speaks to the
vassals on the front.

Loch. My friends, why on each other look ye
thus

In gloomy silence ? freely speak your thoughts.
Mine have I freely spoken : that advising
Which for the good — nay, I must say existence,
Of this our ancient clan most needful is.

When did Lochtarish ever for himself
A separate 'vantage seek, in which the clan
At large partook not ? Am I doubted now ?

2d vas. No, nothing do we doubt thy public zeal.

Loch. Then is my long experience o' the sudden
To childish folly turn'd ?

Thinkst thou, good Thona,
We should beneath this artful mistress live,
Hush'd in deceitful peace, till John of Lorne,
For whom the office of a treacherous spy
She doth right slyly manauge, with his powers
Shall come upon us ? Once ye would have spurn'd
At thoughts so base ; but now, when forth I stand
To do what vengeance, safety, nay, existence,
All loudly call for ; even as though already
The enemy's baleful influenc' hung o'er you,
Like quell'd and passive men ye silent stand.

1st vas. (roused). Nay, cease, Lochtarish ! quell'd
and passive men

Thou knowst we are not.

Loch. Yet a woman's life,
And that a treacherous woman, moves you thus.
Bold as your threats of dark revenge have been,
A strong decisive deed appals you now.
Our chieftain's feeble undetermined spirit
Infects you all : ye dare not stand by me.

Omnes. We dare not, sayst thou ?

Loch. Dare not, will I say !
Well spoke the jeering Camerons, I trow,
As past their fishing boats our vessel steer'd,
When with push'd lip, and finger pointing thus,
They call'd our crew the Campbell-cow'd Macleans.

Omnes (roused fiercely). The Campbell-cow'd
Macleans !

2d vas. Infernal devils !
Dare they to call us so ?

Loch. Ay, by my truth !

Nor think that from the Camerons alone
Ye will such greeting have, if back ye shrink,
And stand not by me now.

Ommes (eagerly). We'll stand! — We'll stand!

2d vas. Tempt us no more. There's ne'er a man
of us

That will not back thee boldly.

Loch. Ay, indeed?

Now are ye men! Give me your hands to this.

[*They all give him their hands.*]

Now am I satisfied.

[*Looking off the stage.*]

The chief approaches.

Ye know full well the spirit of the man

That we must deal withal; therefore be bold.

Ommes. Mistrust us not.

Enter MACLEAN, who advances to the middle of the stage, while LOCHTARISH, BENLORA, GLENFADDEN, and all the other vassals gather round him with stern determined looks. A pause; MACLEAN eyeing them all round with inquisitive anxiety.

Mac. A goodly meeting at this hour convened.

[*A sullen pause.*]

Benlora; Thona; Allen of Glenore;

And all of you, our first and bravest kinsmen;

What mystery in this sullen silence is?

Hangs any threaten'd evil o'er the clan? [blood

Ben. Yes, chieftain; evil, that doth make the

Within your grey-hair'd warriors' veins to burn,

And their brogue'd feet to spurn the ground that
bears them.

Loch. Evil, that soon will wrap your tower in
flames,

Your ditches fill with blood, and carrion birds

Glut with the butcher'd corpses of your slain.

Glen. Ay; evil, that doth make the hoary locks

Of sighted men around their age-worn scalps

Like quicken'd points of crackling flame to rise;

Their teeth to grind, and strained eye-balls roll

In fitful frenzy, at the horrid things,

In terrible array before them raised.

1st vas. The mermaid hath been heard upon
our rocks:

The fatal song of waves.

Glen. The northern deep

Is heard with distant moanings from our coast,

Uttering the dismal bodeful sounds of death.

2d vas. The funeral lights have shone upon our
heath,

Marking in countless groups the graves of thousands.

Ben. Yea, chief; and sounds like to thy father's
voice

Have from the sacred mould wherein he lies,

At dead of night, by wakeful men been heard

Three times distinctly. [*Turning to GLENFADDEN.*]

Saidst thou not thrice?

Glen. Yes; three times heard distinctly.

Mac. Ye much amaze me, friends. — Such things
have been?

Loch. Yea, chief; and thinkst thou we may
lightly deem

Of coming ills, by signs like these forewarn'd?

Mac. Then an it be, high heav'n have mercy
on us!

Loch. (*in a loud solemn voice*). Thysclv have
mercy on us!

Mac. How is this?

Your words confuse and stun me. — Have I power
To ward this evil off?

Ommes.

Thou hast! thou hast!

Mac. Then God to me show mercy in my need,
As I will do for you and for my clan

Whate'er my slender power enables me.

Ommes. Amen! and swear to it.

Mac. (*starting back*). What words are these,
With such wild fierceness utter'd? name the thing
That ye would have me do.

Ben. (*stepping out from the rest*). Ay, we will
name it.

Helen the Campbell, foster'd in your bosom,

A serpent is, who wears a hidden sting

For thee and all thy name; the oath-bound spy

Of dark Argyll, our foe; the baleful plague

To which ill-omen'd sounds and warnings point,

As that on which existance or extinction —

The name and being of our clan depend; —

A witch of deep seduction. — Cast her forth.

The strange, unnatural union of two bloods,

Adverse and hostile, most abhorred is.

The heart of every warrior of your name

Rises against it. Yea, the grave calls out,

And says it may not be. — Nay, shrink not, chief,

When I again repeat it, — cast her off.

Mac. Art thou a man? and bidst me cast her
off,

Bound as I am by sacred holy ties?

Loch. Bound as thou art by that which thou
regardest

As sacred holy ties; what tie so sacred

As those that to his name and kindred vassals

The noble chieftain bind? If tics there be

To these opposed, although a saint from heav'n

Had bless'd them o'er the cross'd and holy things,

They are annull'd and broken.

Ben.

Ay, Lochtarish;

Sound doctrine hast thou utter'd. Such the creed

Of ancient warriors was, and such the creed

That we their sons will with our swords maintain.

[*Drawing his sword fiercely, whilst the rest
follow his example.*]

Mac. Ye much confound me with your violent
words.

I can in battle strive, as well ye know:

But how to strive with you, ye violent men,

My spirit knows not.

Loch. Decide — decide, Maclean: the choice is
thine

To be our chieftain, leading forth thy bands,

As heretofore thy valiant father did,
Against our ancient foe, or be the husband,
Despised, forsaken, cursed, of her thou prizest
More than thy clan and kindred.

Glen. Make thy choice.

Benlora, wont in better times to lead us
Against the Campbells, with a chieftain's power,
Shall, with the first blast of his warlike horn,
If so he will it, round his standard gather
Thy roused and valiant vassals to a man.

Mac. (greatly startled). Ha! go your thoughts to
this? Desert me so?

My vassals so desert me?

Loch. Ay, by my faith, our very women too:
And in your hall remain, to serve your state,
Nor child nor aged crone.

Mac. (after great agitation). Decide, and east
her off!—How far the thoughts

To which these words ye yoke may go, I guess
not.

(Eagerly.) They reach not to her life?

*[Pauses and looks at them anxiously, but they
are silent.]*

Oh, oh! oh, oh! that stern and dreadful silence!

Loch. We will not shed her blood.

Mac. Then ye will spare her?

Loch. Commit her to our keeping: ask us not
How we shall deal with her.

Mac. Some fearful mystery is in your words,
Which covers eruel things. O woe the day,
That I on this astounding ridge am poised!
On every side a fearful ruin yawns.

*[A voice heard without, uttering wild incoherent
words, mixed with shrieks of horror.]*

What frenzied voice is that?

Enter 4th vassal, as if terribly frightened.

Loch. (to 4th vas.) What brings thee hither?

4th vas. He fixes wildly on the gloomy void
His starting eyeballs, bent on fearful sights,
That make the sinews of his aged limbs
In agony to quiver.

Loch. Who didst thou say?

4th vas. John of the Isle, the sighted awful man.
Go, see yourselves: i' the outer cave he is.
Entranced he stands; arrested on his way
By horrid visions, as he hurried hither
Enquiring for the chief.

[Voice heard without, as before.]

Loch. Hark! hark, again! dread powers are
dealing with him.

Come, chieftain—come and see the awful man.

If heaven or hell hath power to move thy will,
Thou canst not now withstand us.

(Peusing for him to go.) Hearst thou not?

And motionless?

Mac. I am beset and stunn'd,
And every sense bewilder'd. Violent men!
If ye unto this fearful pitch are bent,—

When such necessity is press'd upon me,
What doth avail resistance? Woe the day!
Even lead me where ye will.

*[Exit MACLEAN, exhausted and trembling, lean-
ing on LOCHTARISH, and followed by BENLORA
and GLENFADDEN and vassals; two inferior
vassals alone left upon the stage.]*

1st vas. (looking after MACLEAN). Ay, there he
goes; so spent, and scared, and feeble!

Without a prophet's skill, we may foretell,
John of the Isle, by sly Lochtarish taught,
Will work him soon to be an oath-bound wretch
To this their fell design.—Are all things ready?

2d vas. All is in readiness.

1st vas.

When ebbs the tide?

2d vas. At early dawn, when in the narrow creek
Near to the castle, with our trusty mates,
Our boat must be in waiting to receive her.

1st vas. The time so soon! alas, so young and
fair!

That slow and dismal death! To be at once
Plunged in the closing deep many have suffer'd,
But to sit waiting on a lonely rock
For the approaching tide to throttle her—

But that she is a Campbell, I could weep.

2d vas. Weep, fool! think soon how we'll to war
again

With our old enemy; and, in the field,
Our good claymores dye with their hated blood:
Think upon this, and change thy tears to joy.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

The bed-chamber of MACLEAN.

Enter MACLEAN, followed by HELEN.

Helen. Ah! wherefore art thou so disturb'd?
the night

Is almost spent: the morn will break ere long,
And rest last thou had none. Go to thy bed:
I pray thee, go.

Mac.

I cannot: urge me not.

Helen. Nay, try to rest: I'll sit and watch by
thee.

Mac. Thou'lt sit and watch! O woe betide the
hour!

And who will watch for thee?

Helen.

And why for me?

Can any harm approach? When thou art near,
Or sleeping or awake, I am secure.

Mac. (pacing to and fro distractedly). O God!
O God!

Helen. Those exclamations!

[Going up to him, while he avoids her.]

Turnst thou from me thus?

Have I offended? dost thou doubt my faith?

Hath any jealous thought—I freely own
Love did not make me thine: but, being thine,
To no love-wedded dame, bound in the ties

Of dearest sympathy, will I in duty—
In steady, willing, cheerful duty yield.
Yea, and though here no thrilling rapture be,
I look to spend with thee, by habit foster'd,
The evening of my days in true affection.

Mac. The evening of thy days! alas, alas!
Would heaven had so decreed it!

[*Pulling away his hand from hers.*]

Grasp me not!
It is a fiend thou clingst to. [*A knock at the door.*]
Power of heaven!

Are they already at the chamber door!

Helen. Are those who knock without unwelcome?
—hush!

Withdraw thyself, and I will open to them.

[*Goes to the door.*]

Mac. O go not! go not!

[*Runs after her to draw her back, when a vassal, rushing from behind the bed, lays hold of him.*]

Vas. Art thou not sworn to us? Where is thy faith?

Mac. I know, I know! the bands of hell have bound me.

O fiends! ye've made of me—what words can speak

The hateful wretch I am!

Hark! hark! she cries!

She shrieks and calls on me!

[*HELEN'S cries heard without, first near and distinct, afterwards more and more distant as they bear her away; while the vassal leads MACLEAN forcibly off the stage by the opposite side, he breaks from him, and hastens towards that by which HELEN went out.*]

Vas. Thou art too strong for me. Do as thou wilt;

But if thou bringst her back, even from that mo-
Benlora is our leader, and thyself,
The Campbell's husband, chieftain and Maclean
No more shalt be. We've sworn as well as thou.

[*MACLEAN stops irresolutely, and then suffers the vassal to lead him off by the opposite side.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A small island, composed of a rugged craggy rock, on the front of the stage, and the sea in the back-ground.

Enter two vassals dragging in HELEN, as if just come out of their boat.

Helen. O why is this? Speak, gloomy, ruthless men!

Our voyage ends not here?

1st vas. It does: and now,
Helen the Campbell, fare thee—fare thee well!

2d vas. *Helen* the Campbell, thy last greeting
take

From mortal thing.

Helen. What! leave me on this rock,
This sea-girt rock, to solitude and famine?

1st vas. Next rising tide will bring a sure relief
To all the ills we leave thee.

Helen (starting). I understand you.

[*Raising her clasped hands to heaven.*]

Lord of heaven and earth;

Of storms and tempests, and th' unfathom'd deep;
Is this thy righteous will?

[*Grasping the hands of the men imploringly*]

Ye cannot mean it!

Ye cannot leave a human creature thus
To perish by a slow approaching end,
So awful and so terrible! Instant death
Were merciful to this.

1st vas. If thou prefer it, we can shorten well
Thy term of pain and terror: from this crag,
Full fourteen fathom deep thou mayst be plunged.
In shorter time than three strokes of an oar
Thy pains will cease.

2d vas. Come, that were better for thee.

[*Both of them take her hands, and are going to hurry her to the brink of the rock, when she shrinks back.*]

Helen. O no! the soul recoils from swift destruction!

Pause ye awhile.

[*Considering for a moment.*]

The downward terrible plunge!
The coil of whelming waves!—O fearful nature!

[*Catching hold of a part of the rock near her.*]

To the rough rock I'll cling: it still is something
Of firm and desp'rate hold—Depart and leave me.

[*Waving her hand for the vassals to go, whilst she keeps close hold of the rock with the other.*]

1st vas. Thou still mayst live within a prison
pent,

If life be dear to thee.

Helen (eagerly). If life be dear!—Alas, it is not dear!

Although the passing fearful act of death
So very fearful is.—Say how, even in a prison,
I still may wait my quiet natural end.

1st vas. Whate'er thou art, such has thy conduct
been,

Thy wedded faith, e'en with thy fellest foes,
Sure and undoubted stands:—Sign thou this scroll,
Owning the child, thy son, of bastard birth;
And this made sure, Lochtarish bade me say
Thy life shall yet be spared.

Helen (pushing him away with indignation as he offers her the scroll). Off, off, vile agent of a
wretch so devilish!

Now do I see from whence my ruin comes:
I and my infant foil his wicked hopes.

O harmless babe ! will heav'n abandon thee ?
It will not !—No ; it will not !

[*Assuming firmness and dignity.*
Depart and leave me. In my rising breast
I feel returning strength. Heav'n aids my weak-
ness :

I'll meet its awful will.

[*Waving them off with her hand.*
1st *vas.* Well, in its keeping rest thee : fare thee
well,

Helen the Campbell !

2d *vas.* Be thy suff'rings short !
(*Aside to the other.*) Come, quickly let us go, nor
look behind.

Fell is the service we are put upon :
Would we had never ta'en that cruel oath !

[*Exeunt vassals.*
*Helen (alone, after standing some time gazing round
her, paces backwards and forwards with agi-
tated steps, then, stopping suddenly, bends her
ear to the ground as if she listened earnestly
to something).* It is the sound ; the heaving
hollow swell

That notes the turning tide. — Tremendous agent !
Mine executioner, that, step by step,
Advances to the awful work of death. —
Onward it wears : a little space removed
The dreadful conflict is.

[*Raising her eyes to heaven, and moving her
lips, as in the act of devotion, before she
again speaks aloud.*

Thou art i' the blue eop'd sky—th' expanse im-
measurable ;

I' the dark roll'd clouds, the thunder's awful home :
Thou art i' the wide-shored earth,—the pathless
desert ;

And in the dread immensity of waters, —
I' the fathomless deep 'Thou art.

Awful but excellent ! beneath Thy hand,
With trembling confidence, I bow me low,
And wait Thy will in peace.

[*Sits down on a crag of the rock, with her arms
crossed over her breast in silent resignation ;
then, after a pause of some length, raises her
head hastily.*

Is it a sound of voices in the wind ?
The breeze is on the rock : a gleam of sunshine
Breaks through those farther clouds. It is like hope
Upon a hopeless state.

[*Starting up, and gazing eagerly around her.*
I'll to that highest crag and take my stand :
Some little speck upon the distant wave
May to my eager gaze a vessel grow—
Some onward wearing thing,—some boat—some
raft—

Some drifted plank.—O hope ! thou quit'tst us
never !

[*Exit, disappearing amongst the rugged divisions
of the rock.*

SCENE II.

*A small island, from which the former is seen in the
distance, like a little pointed rock standing out of
the sea.*

*Enter SIR HUBERT DE GREY, followed by two
fishermen.*

De Grey. This little swarded spot, that o'er the
waves,

Cloth'd in its green light, seem'd to beckon to us,
Right pleasant is : until our comrades join,
Here will we rest. I marvel much they stand
So far behind. In truth, such lusty rovers
Put shame upon their skill.

1st *fish.* A cross-set current bore them from the
track,

But see, they now bear on us rapidly.

(*Voices without.*) Holla !

2d *fish.* They call to us.—Holla ! holla !

How fast they wear ! they are at hand already.

De Grey. Right glad I am : the Lord of Lorne,
I fear,

Will wait impatiently : he has already
With rapid oars the nearer mainland gain'd,
Where he appointed us to join him.—Ho !

Make to that point, my lads.
[*Calling off the stage.*

(*To those near him.*) Here, for a little while, upon
the turf

We'll snatch a hasty meal, and, so refresh'd,
Take to our boats again.

*Enter three other Fishermen, as from their boat, on
the other side of the stage.*

Well met, my friends ! I'm glad you're here at last.
How was it that you took that distant track ?

3d *fish.* The current bore us wide of what we
wist ;

And, were it not your honour is impatient
Mainland to make, we had not come so soon.

De Grey. What had detain'd you ?

3d *fish.* As near yon rock we bore, that o'er the
waves

Just shows its jetty point, and will, ere long,
Beneath the tide be hidd'n, we heard the sound
Of feeble lamentation.

De Grey. A human voice ?

3d *fish.* I cannot think it was ;
For on that rock, sea-girt, and at high tide
Sea-cover'd, human thing there cannot be ;
Though, at the first, it sounded in our ears
Like a faint woman's voice.

De Grey. Perceived ye aught ?

3d *fish.* Yes ; something white that moved, and,
as we think,

Some wounded bird that there hath dropp'd its wing,
And cannot make its way.

4th fish. Perhaps some dog,
Whose master, at low water, there hath been,
And left him.
3d fish. Something 'tis in woeful case,
Whate'er it be. Right fain I would have gone
To bear it off.
De Grey (eagerly). And wherefore didst thou
not ?

Return and save it. Be it what it may ;
Something it is, lone and in jeopardy,
Which hath a feeling of its desperate state,
And therefore doth to woe-worn, fearful man.
A kindred nature bear. — Return, good friend : —
Quickly return and save it, ere the tide
Shall wash it from its hold. I to the coast
Will steer the while, and wait your coming there.

3d fish. Right gladly, noble sir.
4th fish. We'll gladly go :
For, by my faith ! at night I had not slept
For thinking of that sound.

De Grey. Heaven speed you then ! whate'er ye
bring to me
Of living kind, I will reward you for it.
Our different tracks we hold ; nor longer here
Will I remain. Soon may we meet :
Good speed you ! [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.

A fisherman's house on the mainland.

Enter JOHN OF LORNE and SIR HUBERT DE GREY.

Lorne. Then wait thou for thy boat ; I and my
men
Will onward to the town, where, as I hope,
My trusty vassals and our steeds are station'd.
But lose not time.

De Grey. Fear not ; I'll follow quickly.
Lorne. I must unto the eastle of Argyll
Without delay proceed ; therefore, whate'er
Of living kind, bird, beast, or ereeping thing,
This boat of thine produces, bring it with thee ;
And, were it eaglet fierce, or wolf, or fox,
On with us shall it travel, mounted bravely,
Our homeward cavaleade to grace. Farewell !

De Grey. Farewell, my friend ! I shall not long
delay
Thy homeward journey.

Lorne (calling off the stage). But ho ! good host
and hostess ! [*To DE GREY.*] Ere I go
I must take leave of honest Duncan here,
And of his rosy wife. — Ay, here they come.

Enter the host and his wife.

[*To host, &c.*] Farewell, my friends, and thanks be
to you both !
Good cheer, and kindly given, of you we've had.

Thy hand, good host. May all the fish o' th' ocean
Come crowding to thy nets ! — And healthy brats,
Fair dame, have thou ! with such round rosy cheeks
As brats of thine befit : and, by your leave,

[*Kissing her.*]
So be they kiss'd by all kind comers too !
Good luck betide you both !

Host. And, sir, to you the same. Whoe'er you be,
A brave man art thou, that I will be sworn.

Wife. Come you this way again, I hope, good sir,
You will not pass our door.

Lorne. Fear not, good hostess ;
It is a pleasant, sunny, open door,
And bids me enter of its own accord ;
I cannot pass it by. — Good luck betide you !

[*Exit, followed to the door by SIR HUBERT.*]

Host. I will be sworn it is some noble chieftain,
Though homely be his garb.

Wife. Ay, so will I ; the Lord of Lorne himself
Could not more courteous be.

Host. Hush ! hush ! be quiet !
We live not now amongst the Campbells, wife.
Should some Maelean o'erhear thee — hush, I say.

[*Eyeing DE GREY, who returns from the door.*]
And this man, too ; right noble is his mien ;
He is no common rambler.

[*To DE GREY.*] By your leave,
If I may be so bold without offending,
Your speech, methinks, smaeks of a southern race ;
I guess at least of Lowland kin ye be.
But think no shame of this ; we'll ne'ertheless
Regard thee : thieves and cowards be not all
Who from the Lowlands come.

Wife. No ; no, in sooth ! I knew a Lowlander,
Some years gone by, who was as true and honest —
Ay, and I do believe well nigh as brave,
As though, with brogued feet, he never else
Had all his days than muir or mountain trodd'n.

De Grey. Thanks for your gentle thoughts ! —
It has indeed
Been my misluek to draw my earliest breath
Where meadows flower, and corn fields wave ' th'
sun.

But let us still be friends ! Heaven gives us not
To choose our birth-place, else these wilds, no doubt,
Would be more thickly peopled.

Host. Ay, true it is, indeed.
Wife. And hard it were
To quarrel with him too for his misfortune.

[*Noise heard without.*]
De Grey. Ha ! 'tis my boat return'd.

Enter 1st Fisherman.

1st fish. Ay, here we are.
De Grey. And aught saved from the rock ?
1st fish. Yes, by my faith ! but neither bird nor
beast.

Look there, my master. [*Pointing to the door.*]

Enter HELEN, extremely exhausted, and almost senseless, wrapped closely up in one of their plaids, and supported by the other two Fishermen.

De Grey. A woman! Heaven in mercy! was it then

A human creature there exposed to perish?

1st fish. (*opening the plaid to show her face.*) Ay, look; and such a creature!

De Grey (*starting back*). Helen of Argyll!

O God! was this the feeble wailing voice?

[*Clasping his arms about her knees, as she stands almost senseless, supported by the fishermen, and bursting into tears.*

Could heart of man so leave thee? thou, of all

That lovely is, most lovely.—Woe is me!

Some aid, I pray you. [*To host and his wife.*

Bear her softly in,

And wrap warm garments round her. Breathes she freely?

Her eyes half open are, but life, alas!

Is almost spent, and holds within her breast

A weak uncertain seat. [*HELEN moves her hand.*

She moves her hand:—

She knows my voice.—O heaven, in mercy save her!

Bear her more gently, pray you:—Softly, softly!

How weak and spent she is!

1st fish. No marvel she is weak: we reach'd her not

Until the swelling waters laved her girdle.

And then to see her—

De Grey. Cease, I pray thee, friend,

And tell me not—

2d fish. Nay, faith, he tells you true:

She stood above the water, with stretched arms

Clung to the dripping rock, like the white pinions—

De Grey. Peace, peace, I say! thy words are agony:—

Give to my mind no image of the thing!

[*Exeunt, bearing HELEN into an inner part of the house.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A small Gothic hall, or ante-room, in ARGYLL's castle, a door at the bottom of the stage, leading to the apartment of the earl, before which is discovered the piper pacing backwards and forwards, playing on his bagpipe.

Enter DUGALD.

Dugald. Now, pray thee, piper, cease! That stunning din

Might do good service by the ears to set

Two angry clans; but for a morning's rouse,

Here at an old man's door, it does, good sooth, Exceed all reasonable use. The Earl Has pass'd a sleepless night: I pray thee now Give o'er, and spare thy pains.

Piper. And spare my pains, sayst thou? I'll do mine office,

As long as breath within my body is.

Dug. Then mercy on us all! if wind thou meanst,

There is within that sturdy trunk of thine,

Old as it is, a still exhaustless store.

A Lapland witch's bag could scarcely match it.

Thou couldst, I doubt not, belly out the sails

Of a three-masted vessel with thy mouth:

But be thy mercy equal to thy might!

I pray thee now give o'er: in faith the earl

Has pass'd a sleepless night.

Piper. Thinkst thou I am a Lowland, day-hired minstrel,

To play or stop at bidding? Is Argyll

The lord and chieftain of our ancient clan,

More certainly, than I to him, as such,

The high hereditary piper am?

A sleepless night, forsooth! He's slept full oft

On the hard heath, with fifty harness'd steeds

Champing their fodder round him;—soudly too.

I'll do mine office, loon, chafe as thou wilt.

[*Continuing to pace up and down, and play as before.*

Dugald. Nay, thou the chafer art, red-crested cock!

The Lord of Lorne has spoilt thee with indulging

Thy wilful humours. Cease thy cursed din!

See; here the earl himself comes forth to chide thee. [*Exit.*

Enter ARGYLL, attended, from the chamber.

Arg. Good morrow, piper! thou hast roused me bravely:

A younger man might gird his tartans on With lightsome heart to martial sounds like these, But I am old.

Piper. O no, my noble chieftain! It is not age subdues you.

Arg. No; what else?

Piper. Alack! the flower and blossom of your house

The wind hath blown away to other towers.

When she was here, and gladsome faces brighten'd

With looking on her, and around your board

Sweet lays were sung, and gallants in the hall

Footed it trimly to our varied measures,

There might, indeed, be found beneath your roof

Those who might reckon years fourscore and odds,

But of old folks, I warrant, ne'er a soul.

No; we were all young then.

Arg. (*sighing deeply*). 'Tis true, indeed,

It was even as thou sayst. Our earthly joys

Fly like the blossoms scatter'd by the wind.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Please you, my lord,
Some score of vassals in the hall attend
To bid good morrow to you, and the hour
Wears late: the chamberlain hath bid me say
He will dismiss them, if it please your honour.

Arg. Nay, many a mile have some of them, I know,

With suit or purpose lurking in their minds,
Ridd'n o'er rough paths to see me; disappointed
Shall none of them return. I'm better now.
I have been rather weary than unwell.

Say, I will see them presently. [*Exit servant.*]

Re-enter DUGALD in haste.

(*To DUGALD.*) Thou comest with a busy face:
what tidings?

Dugald. The Lord of Lorne's arrived, an' please
your honour:

Sir Hubert too, and all their jolly train;
And with them have they brought a lady, closely
In hood and mantle muffled: ne'er a glimpse
May of her face be seen.

Arg. A lady, sayst thou?

Dugald. Yes; closely muffled up.

Arg. (*paces up and down, somewhat disturbed.*)

I like not this. — It cannot surely be —
[*Stopping short, and looking hard at DUGALD.*]

Whence comes he?

Dugald. He a-hunting went, I know,
To Cromack's ancient laird, whose youthful dame
So famed for beauty is; but whence he comes,
I cannot tell, my lord.

Arg. (*paces up and down, as he speaks to himself
in broken sentences, very much disturbed.*) To
Cromack's ancient laird! — If that indeed —

Beshrew me, if it be! — I'd rather lose
Half of my lands, than son of mine such wrong,
Such shameful wrong, should do. This sword I've
drawn

Like robbery to revenge, ne'er to abet it:
And shall I now with hoary locks — No, no! —
My noble Lorne! he cannot be so base.

Enter LORNE, going up to ARGYLL with agitation.

Arg. (*eyeing him suspiciously.*) Well, John, how
is it? Welcome art thou home,
If thou returnst, as well I would believe,
Deserving of a welcome.

Lorne. Doubts my lord

That I am so return'd?

[*Aside to ARGYLL, endeavouring to draw him
apart from his attendants.*]

Your ear, my father.

Let these withdraw: I have a thing to tell you.

Arg. (*looking still more suspiciously upon LORNE,
from seeing the eagerness and agitation with
which he speaks, and turning from him dig-*

nantly.) No, by this honest blade! if wrong
thou'st done,

Thou hast no shelter here. In open day,
Before th' assembled vassals shalt thou tell it;
And he whom thou hast injured be redress'd,
While I have power to bid my Campbells fight
T' the fair and honour'd cause.

Lorne. I pray, my lord —
Will you vouchsafe to hear me?

Arg. Thoughtless boy!
How far unlike the noble Lorne I thought thee! —
Proud as I am, far rather would I see thee
Join'd to the daughter of my meanest vassal,
Than see thy manly, noble worth engaged
In such foul raid as this.

Lorne. Nay, nay! be pacified!

I'd rather take, in faith, the tawny hand
Of homeliest maid, that doth, o' holidays,
Her sun-burnt locks with worsted ribbon bind,
Fairly and freely won, than brightest dame
That e'er in stately bower or regal hall
In graceful beauty shone, gain'd by such wrong —
By such base treachery as you have glanced at.
These are plain words: then treat me like a man,
Who hath been wont the manly truth to speak.

Arg. Ha! now thy countenance and tone again
Are John of Lorne's. That look, and whispering
voice,

So strange appear'd, in truth I liked it not.
Give me thy hand. — Where is the stranger dame?
If she in trouble be —

Lorne (*aside*). Make these withdraw,
And I will lead her hither.

[*Exit, while the earl waves his hand, and Du-
gald and attendants, &c. go out: presently
re-enter LORNE, leading in HELEN, covered
closely up in a mantle.*]

Lorne. This is the dame, who, houseless and de-
serted,
Seeks shelter here, nor fears to be rejected.

Helen (*sinking down, and clasping ARGYLL's
knees*). My father!

Arg. That voice! — O God! — unveil — unveil,
for mercy!

[*Tearing off the mantle that conceals her.*
My child! my Helen!

[*Clasping her to his heart, and holding her there
for some time, unable to speak.*]

My child! my dearest child! — my soul! my pride!
Deserted! — houseless! — com'st thou to me thus?
Here is thy house — thy home: this aged bosom
Thy shelter is, which thou shalt quit no more.
My child! my child!

[*Embracing her again; HELEN and he weeping
upon one another's necks.*]

Houseless! deserted — 'neath the cope of heaven
Breathes there a wretch who could desert thee? —
Speak,

If he hath so abused his precious trust,

If he — it makes me tear these hoary locks
To think what I have done! — Oh thoughtless
father!

Thoughtless and selfish too!

[*Tearing his hair, beating his forehead with all
the violent gestures of rage and grief.*

Helen. Oh, oh! forbear! It was not you, my
father;

I gave myself away: I did it willingly:
We acted both for good; and now your love
Repay me richly — stands to me instead
Of many blessings. — Noble Lorne, besides —
O, he hath been to me so kind — so tender!

[*Taking her brother's hand, and pressing it to
her breast; then joining her father's to it, and
pressing them both ardently to her lips.*

Say not I am deserted: heaven hath chid me —
Hath chid me sorely: but hath bless'd me too, —
O, dearly bless'd me!

Arg. Hath chid thee sorely! — how I burn to
hear it!

What hast thou suffer'd? [chamber,
Lorne. We will not tell thee now. Go to thy
And be awhile composed. We have, my father,
A tale to tell that will demand of thee
Recruited strength to hear. — We'll follow thee.

[*Exit; LORNE supporting his father and
HELEN into the chamber.*

SCENE II.

The garden of the castle.

*Enter ARGYLL, LORNE, and SIR HUBERT DE GREY,
speaking as they enter.*

Lorne. A month! — A week or two! — No, not
an hour

Would I suspend our vengeance. Such atrocity
Makes e'en the little term between our summons,
And the dark crowding round our martial pipes
Of plumed bonnets nodding to the wind,
Most tedious seem; yea, makes the impatient foot
To smite the very earth beneath its tread,
For being fix'd and inert.

Arg. Be less impatient, John: thou canst not doubt
A father's keen resentment of such wrong:
But let us still be wise; this short delay
Will make revenge the surer; to its aim
A just direction give.

De Grey. The earl is right:
We shall but work in the dark, impatient Lorne,
If we too soon begin.

Arg. How far Maclean
Hath to this horrible attempt consented,
Or privy been, we may be certified,
By waiting silently to learn the tale
That he will tell us of his lady's loss,
When he shall send to give us notice of it,
As doubtless soon he will.

De Grey. If he, beset and threaten'd, to those
fiends,

Unknowing of their purpose, hath unwillingly
Committed her, he will himself, belike,
If pride prevent him not, your aid solicit
To set him free from his disgraceful thralldom.

Lorne. And if he should, shrunk be this sinew'd
arm,

If it unsheath a weapon in his cause!
Let ev'ry ragged stripling on his lands
In wanton mock'ry mouth him with contempt;
Benlora head his vassals; and Lochtarish —
That serpent, full of ev'ry devilish wile,
His prison-keeper and his master be!

De Grey. Ay; and the keeper also of his son,
The infant heir.

Lorne (starting). I did not think of this.

Arg. Then let thy headstrong fury pause upon it.
Thanks to Sir Hubert's prudence! thou as yet
Before thy followers hast restrained being;
And who this lady is, whom to the castle,
Like a mysterious stranger, ye have brought,
From them remains conceal'd. — My brave De Grey!
This thy considerate foresight, join'd to all
Thy other service in this woeful matter,
Hath made us much thy debtor.

De Grey. I have indeed, my lord, consider'd
only

What I believed would Helen's wishes be,
Ere she herself could utter them; if this
Hath proved equivalent to wiser foresight,
Let it direct us still; let Helen's wishes
Your measures guide.

Arg. Ah, brave De Grey! would they had ever
done so!

I had not now —

[*Taking SIR HUBERT'S hand with emotion.*

Forgive me, noble youth!

Alas, alas! the father's tenderness
Before the chieftain's policy gave way,
And all this wreck hath been.

Lorne. 'Tis even so.
That cursed peace; that coward's shadeless face
Of smiles and promises, to all things yielding
With weak, unmanly pliancy, so gain'd you —
Even you, the wise Argyll! — it made me mad!
Who hath no point that he maintains against you,
No firmness hath to hold him of your side:
Who cannot sturdily against me stand,
And say, "Encroach no farther," friend of mine
Shall never be.

De Grey. Nay, Lorne, forbear! — forbear!
Thine own impetuous wilfulness did make
The other's pliant mind more specious seem;
And thou thyself didst to that luckless union,
Although unwittingly, assistance lend.
Make now amends for it, and curb thy spirit,
While that the Earl with calmer judgment waits
His time for action.

Lorne. Beshrew me, but thy counsel strangely smacks
Of cautious timid age! In faith, De Grey,
But that I know thy noble nature well,
I could believe thee——

Arg. Peace, unruly spirit!
Bold as thou art, methinks, with locks like these,
Thy father still may say to thee, "Be silent!"

Lorne (checking himself, and bowing very low to ARGYLL). And be obey'd devoutly.—O forgive me!

Those locks are to your brows a kingly fillet
Of strong authority, to which my heart
No rebel is, though rude may be my words.

[*Taking SIR HUBERT'S hand with an assured countenance.*

I ask not thee, De Grey, to pardon me.
Resistance here with gentleness is join'd:
Therefore I've loved thee, and have laid upon thee
The hand of sure possession! claiming still
A friend's endurance of my froward temper,
Which, froward as it is, from thee hath borne
What never human being but thyself
Had dared to goad it with.

De Grey. It is indeed
Thy well-earn'd right thou askest, noble Lorne,
And it is yielded to thee cheerfully.

Arg. My aged limbs are tired with pacing here;
Some one approaches: within that grove
We'll find a shady seat, and there conclude
This well-debated point. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A court within the castle, surrounded with buildings.

Enter DUGALD and a Vassal, two servants at the same time crossing the stage, with covered dishes in their hands.

Vas. I'll wait until the Earl shall be at leisure;
My business presses not. Where do they carry
Those cover'd meats? Have ye within the castle
Some noble prisoner?

Dugald. Would so it were! but these are days of peace.

They bear them to the stranger dame's apartment,
Whom they have told thee of. There, at her door,
An ancient faithful handmaid of the house,
Whatever they bring receives; for none beside
Of all the household is admitted.

Vas. Now, by my fay! my purse and dirk I'd give

To know who this may be.—Some chieftain's lady
Whom John of Lorne——

Dugald. Nay, there, I must believe,
Thou guessest erringly.—I grant, indeed,
He doffs his bonnet to each tacks-man's wife,
And is with every coif amongst them all,
Both young and old, in such high favour held,

Nor maiden, wife, nor beldame of the clan
But to the Earl doth her petition bring
Through intercession of the Lord of Lorne;
But never yet did husband, sire, or brother,
Of wrong from him complain.

Vas. I know it well.

Dugald. But be she who she may,
This stranger here; I doubt not, friend, ere long,
We shall have bickering for her in the field
With some fierce foe or other.

Vas. So I trust:
And by my honest faith! this peace of ours
Right long and tiresome is.—I thought, ere now,
Some of our restless neighbours would have tres-
pass'd

And inroads made: but no; Argyll and Lorne
Have grown a terror to them: all is quiet;
And we ourselves must the aggressors be,
Or still this dull and slothful life endure,
Which makes our men of three-score years and ten

To fret and murmur.

Enter ROSA, with a servant conducting her.

Serv. (to DUGALD). A lady here, would see my
Lord of Lorne.

Dugald. Yes, still to him they come.

[*Looking at ROSA.*
Ha! see I rightly?

Rosa from Mull?

Rosa. Yes, Dugald; here thou seest
A woeful bearer of unwelcome tidings.

Dugald. What, hath thy lady sent thee?

Rosa. Alas, alas! I have no lady now.

Dugald. Ha! is she dead? not many days ago
She was alive and well.—Hast thou so soon
The castle quitted—left thy lady's corse?

Rosa. Thinkst thou I would have left her?—
On the night

When, as they say, she died, I from the castle
By force was ta'en, and to mainland convey'd;
Where in confinement I remain'd, till chance
Gave me the means of breaking from my prison;
And hither am I come, in woeful plight,
The dismal tale to tell.

Dugald. A tale, indeed,
Most dismal, strange, and sudden.

Rosa. How she died
God knows; but much I fear foul play she had.
Where is the Lord of Lorne? for first to him
I wish to speak.

Dugald. Come, I will lead thee to him.—Had
foul play!

Vassal. Fell fiends they are could shed her
blood! If this

Indeed hath been, 'twill make good cause, I wot;
The warlike pipe will sound our summons soon.

[*Exeunt DUGALD and ROSA, &c., as ARGYLL
and SIR HUBERT enter by the opposite side.*

Arg. And wilt thou leave us then, my noble friend ?

May we not still for some few days retain thee ?

De Grey. Where'er I go, I carry in my heart
A warm remembrance of the friendly home
That still within these hospitable walls
I've found ; but longer urge me not to stay.
In Helen's presence now, constrain'd and strange,
With painful caution, chasing from my lips
The ready thought, half-quiver'd into utterance,
For cold corrected words, expressive only
Of culprit consciousness,—I sit ; nor e'en
May look upon her face but as a thing
On which I may not look ; so painful now
The mingled feeling is, since dark despair
With one faint ray of hope hath temper'd been.
I can no more endure it. She herself
Perceives it, and it pains her.—Let me then
Bid you farewell, my lord. When evening comes,
I'll, under favour of the rising moon,
Set forth.

Arg. Indeed ! so soon ? and must it be ?

De Grey. Yes ; to Northumberland without delay

I fain would take my road. My aged father
Looks now impatiently for my return.

Arg. Then I'll no longer urge thee. To thy father,

The noble baron, once, in better days,
My camp-mate and my friend, I must resign thee.
Bear to him every kind and cordial wish
An ancient friend can send, and —

[*A horn heard without.*
Hark ! that horn !

Some messenger of moment is arrived. —
We'll speak of this again. — The moon to-night
Is near the full, and at an early hour —

Enter a Messenger, bearing a letter.

Whose messenger art thou, who in thy hand
That letter bearest with broad and sable seal,
Which seems to bring to me some dismal tidings ?

Mess. From Mull, my lord, I come ; and the
Maclan,

Our chief, commission'd me to give you this,
Which is indeed with dismal tidings fraught.

[*ARGYLL opens the letter, and reads it with affected surprise and sorrow.*

Arg. Heavy, indeed, and sudden is the loss —
The sad calamity that hath befallen.
The will of heaven be done !

[*Putting a handkerchief to his eyes, and leaning, as if for support, upon SIR HUBERT ; then, after a pause, turning to the messenger.*

How didst thou leave the chieftain ? He, I hope,
Permits not too much sorrow to o'ercome
His manhood. Doth he bear his grief composedly ?

Mess. O no, it is most violent ! At the funeral,
Had not the good Lochtarish, by his side,

Supported him, he had with very grief
Sunk to the earth. — And good Lochtarish too
Was in right great affliction.

Arg. Ay, good man ;
I doubt it not. — Ye've had a splendid funeral ?

Mess. O yes, my lord ! that have we had. Good truth !

A grand and stately burial has it been.
Three busy days and nights through all the isle
Have bagpipes play'd, and sparkling beakers
flow'd ;

And never corse, I trow, i' th' earth was laid
With louder lamentations.

Arg. Ay, I doubt not,
Their grief was loud enough. — Pray pass ye in.
(*To attendants at a distance.*) Conduct him there ;
and see that he be treated,
After his tedious journey, as befits
A way-tired stranger.

[*Exeunt all but ARGYLL and SIR HUBERT.*
This doth all hope and all belief exceed.

Maclean will shortly follow this his notice,
[*Giving SIR HUBERT the let'er.*

To make me here a visit of condolence ;
And thus within our power they put themselves
With most assured blindness.

De Grey (after reading it). 'Tis Lochtarish,
In all the arts of dark hypocrisy
So deeply skill'd, who doth o'ershoot his mark,
As such full often do.

Arg. And let him come !
At his own arts we trust to match him well. —
Their force, I guess, is not in readiness ;
Therefore, meantime, to stifle all suspicion,
This specious mummery he hath devised ;
And his most wretched chief, led by his will,
Most wretchedly submits. — Well, let us go
And tell to Lorne the news, lest too unguardedly
He should receive it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

An apartment in the castle.

Enter SIR HUBERT DE GREY, beckoning to ROSA, who appears on the opposite side.

De Grey. Rosa ; I pray thee, spare me of thy
leisure

Some precious moments : something would I say :
Wilt thou now favour me ?

Rosa. Most willingly.

De Grey. As yet thy mistress knows not of the
letter

Sent by Maclean, announcing his design
Of paying to the earl this sudden visit —
This mockery of condolence ?

Rosa. No ; the earl

Forbade me to inform her.

De Grey.

This is well ;

Her mind must be prepared. Meantime I go,
And thou art here to comfort and attend her :
O do it gently, Rosa ! do it wisely !

Rosa. You need not doubt my will. — Go ye so soon ;

And to Northumberland ?

De Grey. So I intended.

And so Argyll and John of Lorne believe :
But since this messenger from Mull arrived,
Another thought has struck me. — Saidst thou not
The child — thy lady's child, ta'en from the castle,
Is to the keeping of Lochtarish' mother
Committed, whose lone house is on the shore ?

Rosa. Yes, whilst in prison pent, so did I hear
My keeper say, and much it troubled me.

De Grey. Canst thou to some good islander com-
mend me,

Within whose house I might upon the watch
Conceal'd remain ? — It is to Mull I go,
And not to England. While Maclean is here,
Attended by his vassals, the occasion
I'll seize to save the infant.

Rosa. Bless thee for it !

Heaven bless thee for the thought ! — I know a
man —

An aged fisherman, who will receive you ;
Uncle to Morton : and if he himself
Still in the island be, there will you find him,
Most willing to assist you.

De Grey. Hush, I pray

I hear thy lady's steps.

Rosa. Near to the castle gate, ere you depart,
I'll be in waiting to inform you farther
Of what may aid your purpose.

De Grey. Do, good Rosa,

And make me much thy debtor. But be secret.

Rosa. You need not doubt me.

*Enter HELEN, and DE GREY goes up to her as if he
would speak, but the words falter on his lips, and
he is silent.*

Helen. Alas ! I see it is thy parting visit ;

Thou com'st to say "farewell !" [thee

De Grey. Yes, Helen : I am come to leave with

A friend's dear benison — a parting wish —

A last — rest ev'ry blessing on thy head !

Be this permitted to me :

[*Kissing her hand with profound respect.*

Fare thee well !

Heaven aid and comfort thee ! Farewell ! farewell !

[*Is about to retire hastily, whilst HELEN follows
to prevent him.*

Helen. O go not from me with that mournful
look !

Alas ! thy gen'rous heart, depress'd and sunk,
Looks on my state too sadly. —

I am not, as thou thinkst, a thing so lost

In woe and wretchedness. — Believe not so !

All whom misfortune with her rudest blasts

Hath buffeted, to gloomy wretchedness
Are not therefore abandon'd. Many souls
From cloister'd cells, from hermits' caves, from holds
Of lonely banishment, and from the dark
And dreary prison-house, do raise their thoughts
With humble cheerfulness to heaven, and feel
A hallow'd quiet, almost akin to joy ;
And may not I, by heaven's kind mercy aided,
Weak as I am, with some good courage bear
What is appointed for me ? — O be cheer'd !
And let not sad and mournful thoughts of me
Depress thee thus. — When thou art far away,
Thou'lt hear, the while, that in my father's house
I spend my peaceful days, and let it cheer thee.
I too shall ev'ry southern stranger question,
Whom chance may to these regions bring, and learn
Thy fame and prosperous state.

De Grey. My fame and prosperous state, while
thou art thus !

If thou in calm retirement liv'st contented,
Lifting thy soul to heaven, what lack I more ?
My sword and spear, changed to a pilgrim's staff,
Will be a prosperous state ; and for my fame, —
A feeble sound that after death remains,
The echo of an unrepeat'd stroke
That fades away to silence, — surely this
Thou dost not covet for me.

Helen. Ah, I do !

Yet, granting here I err, didst thou not promise
To seek in wedded love and active duties
Thy share of cheerful weal ? — and dost thou now
Shrink from thy gen'rous promise ? — No, thou
shalt not.

I hold thee bound — I claim it of thee boldly.

It is my right. If thou, in sad seclusion,

A lonely wanderer art, thou dost extinguish

The ray that should have cheer'd my gloom : thou
makest

What else had been a calm and temper'd sorrow,
A state of wretchedness. — O no ! thou wilt not !

Take to thy gen'rous heart some virtuous maid,

And doubt not thou a kindred heart wilt find.

The cheerful tenderness of woman's nature

To thine is suited, and when join'd to thee,

Will grow in virtue : — Take thou then this ring,

If thou wilt honour so my humble gift,

And put it on her hand ; and be assured

She who shall wear it, — she whose happy fate

Is link'd with thine, will prove a noble mate.

De Grey. O there I am assured ! she whose fate

Is link'd with mine, if fix'd be such decree,

Most rich in every soft and noble trait

Of female virtue is : in this full well

Assured I am. — I would — I thought — forgive —

I speak but raving words : — a hasty spark,

Blown and extinguish'd, makes me waver thus.

Permit me then again. [*Kissing her hand.*

High heaven protect thee !

Farewell !

Helen. Farewell! and heaven's good charge be thou!

[*They part, and both turn away to opposite sides of the stage, when SIR HUBERT, looking round just as he is about to go off, and seeing HELEN also looking after him sorrowfully, eagerly returns.*

De Grey. Ah! are those looks—

[*Going to kneel at her feet, but immediately checking himself with much embarrassment.*

Alas! why come I back?

Something there was—thou gavest me a ring;
I have not dropp'd it?

Rosa (coming forward). No, 'tis on your finger.

De Grey. Ay, true, good Rosa; but my wits are wilder'd;

I knew not what I sought.—

Farewell! farewell!

[*Exit DE GREY hastily, while HELEN and ROSA go off by the opposite side.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

ARGYLL's castle, the vestibule, or grand entrance; a noise of bustle and voices heard without, and servants seen crossing the stage, as the scene opens.

Enter DUGALD, meeting 1st servant.

Dugald. They are arrived, Maclean and all his train;

Run quickly, man, and give our chieftains notice.

1st serv. They know already: from the tower we spied

The mournful cavalcade: the Earl and Lorne
Are down the staircase hastening to receive them.

Dugald. I've seen them light, a sooty-coated train,

With lank and woeful faces, and their eyes
Bent to the ground, as though our castle gate

Had been the scutcheon'd portal of a tomb,
Set open to receive them.

2d serv. Ay, on the pavement fall their heavy steps

Measured and slow, as if her palled coffin
They follow'd still.

Dugald. Hush, man! Here comes the Earl,
With face composed and stern; but look behind him

How John of Lorne doth gnaw his nether lip,
And beat his clenched hand against his thigh,

Like one who tampers with half-bridled ire!

2d serv. Has any one offended him?

Dugald. Be silent,

For they will overhear thee.—Yonder too

[*Pointing to the opposite side of the stage.*

Come the Macleans: let us our stations keep,
And see them meet.

[*Retiring with the other to the bottom of the stage.*

Enter ARGYLL and LORNE, attended, and in deep mourning; while, at the same time, by the opposite side of the stage, enter MACLEAN, BENLORA, LOCHTARISH, and GLENFADDEN, with attendants, also in deep mourning: ARGYLL and MACLEAN go up to one another, and formally embrace.

Arg. Welcome! if such a cheerful word as this
May with our deep affliction suited be.
Lochtarish too, and brave Benlora, ay,
And good Glenfadden also,—be ye all
With due respect received, as claims your worth.

[*Taking them severally by the hand as he names them. MACLEAN then advances to embrace LORNE, who shrinks back from him, but immediately correcting himself, bends his body another way, as if suddenly seized with some violent pain.*

Arg. (to MACLEAN). Regard him not: he hath imprudently

A recent wound exposed to chilling air,
And oft the pain with sudden pang attacks him.

Loch. Ay, what is shrewder? we have felt the like,

And know it well, my lord.

Arg. (bowing to LOCHTARISH, but continuing to speak to MACLEAN). Yet, ne'ertheless, good son-in-law and chieftain,

Believe thou well that with a brother's feelings,
Proportion'd to the dire and dismal case

That hath befallen, he now receives you; also
Receiving these your friends with equal favour.

This is indeed to us a woeful meeting,
Chieftain of Mull.

[*Looking keenly in his face, while the other shuns his eye.*

I see full well the change
Which violent grief upon that harrow'd visage
So deeply hath impress'd.

Mac. (still embarrassed, and shrinking from ARGYLL's observation). Ah! ah! the woeful day!—I cannot speak.

Alas, alas!

Arg. Alas, in truth,

Too much the woeful widower's alter'd looks,
Upon thy face I see.

Loch. (to ARGYLL). You see, my lord, his eyes
with too much weeping [marvel:
Are weak, and shun the light. Nor should we
What must to him the sudden loss have been,
When even to us, who were more distantly
Connected with her rare and matchless virtue,
It brought such keen affliction?

Arg. Yes, good Lochtarish, I did give her to you—
To your right worthy chief, a noble creature,
With every kindly virtue—every grace

That might become a noble chieftain's wife :
And that ye have so well esteem'd — so well
Regarded, cherish'd, and respected her,
As your excessive sorrow now declares,
Receive from me a grateful father's thanks.
Lochtarish, most of all to thy good love
I am beholden.

Loch. Ah ! small was the merit
Such goodness to respect.

Arg. And thou, Benlora ;
A woman, and a stranger, on the brave
Still potent claims maintain ; and little doubt I
They were by thee regarded.

[*BENLORA steps back, frowning sternly, and remains silent.*

And, Glenfadden,

Be not thy merits overlook'd.

Glen. Alas !
You overrate, my lord, such slender service.

Arg. Wrong not, I pray, thy modest worth. —
But here, [*Turning again to MACLEAN.*
Here most of all, from whom her gentle virtues,
(And so indeed it right and fitting was,)
Their best and dearest recompense received,
To thee, most generous chieftain, let me pay
The thanks that are thy due.

Mac. Oh, oh ! alas ! [*eyes*
Arg. Ay, in good sooth ! I see thy grief-worn
Do shun the light.

But grief is ever sparing of its words.
In brief, I thank you all : and for the love
Ye have so dearly shown to me and mine,
I trust, before we part, to recompense you
As suits your merit and my gratitude.

Lorne (*aside to ARGYLL*). Ay, father ; now ye
speak to them shrewd words ;
And now I'm in the mood to back you well.

Arg. (*aside to LORNE*). 'Tis well thou art ; but
check those eager looks ;
Lochtarish eyes thee keenly.

[*Directing a hasty glance to LOCHTARISH, who is whispering to GLENFADDEN, and looking suspiciously at LORNE.*

Lorne (*stepping forward to MACLEAN, &c.*). Chief-
tain, and honour'd gentlemen, I pray

The sullen, stern necessity excuse
Which pain imposed upon me, and receive,
Join'd with my noble father's, such poor thanks
As I may offer to your loving worth.

Arg. Pass on, I pray you ; till the feast be ready,
Rest ye above, where all things are prepared
For your refreshment. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A narrow arched room or closet, adjoining to a gallery.

Enter LOCHTARISH and GLENFADDEN.

Loch. How likest thou this, Glenfadden ? Doth
the face

Argyll assumes, of studied courtesy,
Raise no suspicion ?

Glen. Faith, I know not well ! —
The speech, indeed, with which he welcomed us,
Too wordy, and too artificial seem'd
To be the native growth of what he felt.

Loch. It so to me appear'd : and John of Lorne,
First shrinking from Maclean, with sudden pain,
As he pretended, struck ; then stern and silent ;
Till presently assuming, like his father,
A courtesy minute and over-studied,
He gloz'd us with his thanks : —
Didst thou not mark his keenly flashing eye,
When spoke Argyll of recompensing us
Before we part ?

Glen. I did indeed observe it.

Loch. This hath a meaning.

Glen. Faith, I do suspect
Some rumour must have reach'd their ear ; and yet
Our agents faithful are ; it cannot be.

Loch. Or can, or can it not, beneath this roof
A night I will not sleep. When evening comes
Meet we again. If at this banquet, aught
Shall happen to confirm our fears, forthwith
Let us our safety seek in speedy flight.

Glen. And leave Maclean behind us ?

Loch. Ay, and Benlora too. Affairs the better
At Mull will thrive, when we have rid our hands
Of both these hind'rances, who in our way
Much longer may not be. [*Listening.*

We're interrupted.

Let us into the gallery return,
And join the company with careless face,
Like those who have from curiosity
But stepp'd aside to view the house. — Make haste !
It is Argyll and Lorne.

[*Exeunt, looking at the opposite side, alarmed, at which enter ARGYLL and LORNE.*

Lorne. Are you not now convinced ? his conscious
guilt

Is in his downcast and embarrass'd looks,
And careful shunning of all private converse
When plainly seen you've drawn him from his train,
Too plainly seen : you cannot now, my lord,
Doubt of his share in this atrocious deed.

Arg. Yet, Lorne, I would, ere further we proceed,
Prove it more fully still. The dinner hour
Is now at hand. [*Listening.*

What steps are those,
That in the gallery, close to this door,
Like some lone straggler from the company
Withdrawn, sound quickly pacing to and fro ?
Look out and see.

Lorne (*going to the door, and calling back to ARGYLL in a low voice*). It is Maclean himself.

Arg. Beckon him hither then. — Thank heaven
for this !

Now opportunity is fairly given,

If that constrainedly he cloaks their guilt,
To free him from their toils.

Enter MACLEAN, conducted by LORNE.

Arg. (to MACLEAN). My son, still in restraint
before our vassals

Have we conversed ; but now in privacy—
Start not, I pray thee :—sit thee down, Maclean :
I would have close and private words of thee :
Sit down, I pray ; my aged limbs are tired.

[*ARGYLL and MACLEAN sit down, whilst LORNE stands behind them, with his ear bent eagerly to listen, and his eyes fixed with a side-glance on MACLEAN.*

Chieftain, I need not say to thee, who deeply
Lament'st with us our sad untimely loss,
How keenly I have felt it.—
And now indulge a father in his sorrow,
And say how died my child.—Was her disease
Painful as it was sudden ?

Mac. It was—alas ! I know not how it was.
A fell disease !—Her end was so appointed.

Lorne (behind). Ay, that I doubt not.

Mac. A fearful malady ! though it received
All good assistance.

Lorne (behind). That I doubt not either.

Mac. A cruel ill !—but how it dealt with her,
My grief o'erwhelm'd me so, I could not tell.

Arg. Say—wast thou present ? didst thou see
her die ?

Mac. Oh, oh ! the woeful sight, that I should
see it !

Arg. Thou didst not see it then ?

Mac. Alack ! alack !
O would that I had seen—O woe is me !
Her pain—her agony was short to mine !

Lorne (behind, impatiently). Is this an answer,
chieftain, to the question

Argyll hath plainly ask'd thee—wast thou present
When Helen died ? didst thou behold her death ?

Mac. O yes ; indeed I caught your meaning
lamely ;

I meant—I thought—I know not certainly
The very time and moment of her death,
Although within my arms she breathed her last.

Lorne (rushing forward eagerly). Now are we
answered.

[*ARGYLL, covering his face with his hands, throws himself back in his chair for some time without speaking.*

Mac. (to ARGYLL). I fear, my lord, too much I
have distress'd you.

Arg. Somewhat you have indeed.—And further
now

I will not press your keen and recent sorrow
With questions that so much renew its anguish.

Mac. You did, belike, doubt of my tenderness.

Arg. O no ! I have no doubts. Within your arms
She breathed her last ?

Mac. Within my arms she died.
Arg. (looking hard at MACLEAN, and then turning away). His father was a brave and honest
chief !

Mac. What says my lord ?

Arg. A foolish exclamation,
Of no determined meaning. [*Bell sounds without.*
Dry our tears :

The hall-bell warns us to the ready feast ;
And through the gallery I hear the sound
Of many footsteps hastening to the call.
Chieftain, I follow thee.

[*Exeunt ARGYLL and MACLEAN.*

Lorne (alone, stopping to listen). The castle,
throng'd throughout with moving life,
From every winding stair, and arched aisle,
A mingled echo sends.

Ay ; light of foot, I hear their sounding steps
A-trooping to the feast, who never more
At feast shall sit, or social meal partake.

O wretch ! O fiend of vile hypocrisy !
How fiercely burns my blood within my veins
Till I am match'd with thee ! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The great hall of the castle, with a feast set out, and the company already placed at table, with servants and attendants in waiting, who fill the stage in every part : ARGYLL is seated at the head of the table, with MACLEAN on his left hand, and a chair left empty on his right.

Arg. (to MACLEAN, &c.) Most worthy chief, and
honour'd guests and kinsmen,

I crave your pardon for this short delay :
One of our company is wanting still,
For whom we have reserved this empty place ;
Nor will the chief of Mull unkindly take it.
That on our better hand this chair of honour
Is for a lady kept.

Omnes. A lady !

[*A general murmur of surprise is heard through the hall.*

Arg. Yes ;
Who henceforth of this house the mistress is ;
And were it palace of our Scottish king,
Would so deserve to be.

Omnes. We give you joy, my lord.

[*A confused murmur heard again.*

Mac. We give you joy, my lord : your age is
bless'd.

We little thought, in these our funeral weeds,
A bridal feast to darken.

Lorne. No, belike.

Many who don their coat at break of day,
Know not what shall befal them, therein girt,
Ere evening close. [*Assuming a gay tone.*
The Earl hath set a step-dame o'er my head

To cow my pride—What think you, brave Maclean?
This world so fleeting is and full of change,
Some lose their wives, I trow, and others find them.
Bridegrooms and widowers do, side by side,
Their beakers quaff; and which of them at heart
Most glad or sorry is, the subtle fiend,
Who in men's hollow hearts his council holds,
He wotteth best, though each good man will swear,
His, *lost or found*, all other dames excell'd.

Arg. Curb, Lorne, thy saucy tongue: Maclean himself

Shall judge if she—the lady I have found,
Equal in beauty her whom he hath lost.

In worth I'm sure she does. But hush! she comes.

[*A great commotion through the hall amongst the attendants, &c.*

Ommes. It is the lady.

Arg. (*rising from his seat, and making signs to the attendants nearest the door.*) Ho there! make room, and let the lady pass.

[*The servants, &c. stand apart, ranging themselves on every side to let the lady pass; and enter HELEN, magnificently dressed, with a deep white veil over her face; while LORNE, going forward to meet her, conducts her to her chair on ARGYLL's right hand.*

Arg. (*to the CAMPBELLS.*) Now, fill a cup of welcome to our friends!

Loch. (*to MACLEAN.*) Chieftain, forgettest thou to greet the lady?

Mac. (*turning to ARGYLL.*) Nay, rather give, my lord, might I presume,

Our firstling cup to this fair lady's health,
The noble dame of this right princely house.

And though close veil'd she be, her beauty's lustre
I little question.

[*Fills up a goblet, while LOCHTARISH, BENLORA, &c. follow his example, and standing up, bow to the lady.*

Your health, most noble dame!

[*HELEN, rising also, bows to him, and throws back her veil: the cup falls from his hands; all the company start up from table; screams and exclamations of surprise are heard from all corners of the hall, and confused commotion seen every where. MACLEAN, LOCHTARISH, and GLENFADDEN, stand appalled and motionless; but BENLORA, looking fiercely round him, draws his sword.*

Ben. What! are we here like deer bay'd in a nook?

And think ye so to slay us, crafty foe?

No, by my faith! like such we will not fall,
Arms in our hands, though by a thousand foes
Encompass'd. Cruel, murderous, ruthless men,
Too good a warrant have you now to think us,
But cowards never!

Rouse ye, base Macleans!

And thou, whose subtlety around us thus

With wreckful skill these cursed toils hast wound,
Sinks thy base spirit now? [*To LOCHTARISH.*

Arg. (*holding up his hand.*) Be silence in the hall!

Macleans, ye are my guests; but if the feast
Delight you not, free leave ye have to quit it.
Lorne, see them all, with right due courtesy,
Safely protected to the castle gate.

[*Turning to MACLEAN.*

Here, other name than chieftain or Maclean
He may not give thee; but, without our walls,
If he should call thee murderer, traitor, coward,
Weapon to weapon, let your fierce contention
Be fairly held, and he, who first shall yield,
The liar be.—

Campbells! I charge you there,
Free passage for the chieftain and his train.

[*MACLEAN and LOCHTARISH, &c., without speaking, quit the hall through the crowd of attendants, who divide, and form a line to let them pass. HELEN, who had sunk down almost senseless upon her seat, seeing the hall cleared of the crowd, who go out after the MACLEANS, now starts up, and catches hold of ARGYLL with an imploring look of strong distress.*

Helen. O father! well I know foul are his crimes,

But what—O what, am I, that for my sake
This bloody strife should be?—O think, my lord!
He gave consent and sanction to my death,
But thereon could not look: and at your gate—
E'en on your threshold, must his life be ta'en?
For well I know the wrath of Lorne is deadly.
And gallant Lorne himself, if scath should be,—
O pity! pity!—O for pity stay them!

Arg. Let go thy hold, weak woman: pity now!

Rosa, support her hence.

[*Committing her to ROSA, who now comes forward, and tearing himself away.*

Helen (*endeavouring to run after him, and catch hold of him again.*) O be not stern! beneath the ocean rather

Would I had sunk to rest, than been the cause
Of horrid strife like this! O pity! pity!

[*Exeunt, she running out after him distractedly.*

SCENE IV.

Before the gate of the castle: a confused noise of an approaching crowd heard within, and presently enter, from the gate, MACLEAN, BENLORA, LOCHTARISH, and GLENFADDEN, with their attendants, conducted by LORNE, and followed by a crowd of CAMPBELLS, who range themselves on both sides of the stage.

Lorne (*to MACLEAN.*) Now, chieftain, we the gate have pass'd,—the bound

That did restrain us. Host and guest no more,
But deadly foes we stand, who from this spot
Shall never both with life depart. Now, turn,
And boldly say to him, if so thou darest,
Who calls thee villain, murd'rer, traitor, coward,
That he belies thee. Turn then, chief of Mull!
Here, man to man, my single arm to thine,
I give thee battle; or, refusing this,
Our captive here retain thee to be tried
Before the summon'd vassals of our clans,
As suits thy rank and thine atrocious deeds.
Take thou thy choice.

Mac. Yes, John of Lorne, I turn.
This turf on which we tread my death-bed is;
This hour my latest term; this sky of light
The last that I shall look on. Draw thy sword:
The guilt of many crimes o'erwhelms my spirit
But never will I shame my brave Macleans,
By dying, as their chief, a coward's death.

Ben. What! shalt thou fight alone, and we stand
by
Idly to look upon it? [*Going up fiercely to LORNE.*
Turn me out

The boldest, brawniest Campbell of your bands;
Ay, more than one, as many as you will;
And I the while, albeit these locks be grey,
Leaning my aged back against this tree,
Will show your youngsters how, in other days,
Macleans did fight, when baited round with foes.

Lorne. Be still, Benlora; other sword than
these,

Thy chiefs' and mine, shall not this day be drawn.
If I prevail against him, here with us
Our captives you remain. If I be conquer'd,
Upon the faith and honour of a chieftain,
Ye shall again to Mull in safety go.

Ben. Spoken like a noble chieftain!
Lorne. Ye shall, I say, to Mull in safety go.
But there prepare ye to defend your coast
Against a host of many thousand Campbells.
In which, be well assured, swords as good
As John of Lorne's, to better fortune join'd,
Shall of your crimes a noble vengeance take.

[*LORNE and MACLEAN fight; and, after a
combat of some length, MACLEAN is mortally
wounded, and the CAMPBELLS give a loud shout.*

Mac. It is enough, brave Lorne; this wound is
death:

And better deed thou couldst not do upon me,
Than rid me of a life disgraced and wretched.
But guilty though I be, thou seest full well,
That to the brave opposed, arms in hand,
I am no coward. — Oh! could I as bravely,
In home-raised broils, with violent men have
striv'n,

It had been well: but there, alas! I proved
A poor, irresolute, and nerveless wretch.

[*After a pause, and struggling for breath.*
To live, alas! in good men's memories

Detested and contemn'd: — to be with her
For whom I thought to be — Come, gloomy
grave!

Thou covrest all!

[*After another painful struggle, every one stand-
ing in deep silence round him, and LORNE
bending over him compassionately.*

Pardon of man I ask not,
And merit not. — Brave Lorne, I ask it not;
Though in thy piteous eye a look I see
That might embolden me. — There is above
One who doth know the weakness of our nature, —
Our thoughts and conflicts: — all that e'er have
breathed, [soul
The bann'd and bless'd must pass to Him: — my
Into His hands, in humble penitence,
I do commit. [*Dies.*

Lorne. And may Heaven pardon thee, unhappy
man!

*Enter ARGYLL, and HELEN following him, attended
by ROSA.*

Lorne (to attendants). Alas, prevent her!
[*Endeavouring to keep her back.*

Helen, come not hither:

This is no sight for thee.

Helen (pressing forward, and seeing the body).

Oh! oh! and hast thou dealt with him so
quickly,

Thou fell and ruthless Lorne? — No time allow'd?
[*Kneeling by the body.*

O that within that form sense still were lodged!
To hear my voice, — to know that in my heart
No thought of thee — Let others scan thy deeds,
Pitied and pardon'd art thou here.

[*Her hand on her breast.*

Alas!

So quickly fell on thee th' avenging stroke,
No sound of peace came to thy dying ear,
No look of pity to thy closing eyes!
Pitied and pardon'd art thou in this breast,
But canst not know it now. — Alas! alas!

Arg. (to attendants). Prepare ye speedily to
move the body.

Mean time, our prisoners within the castle
Secure ye well.

[*To other attendants, who lay hold of LOCH-
TARISH and GLENFADDEN, while BENLORA,
drawing his sword, attacks furiously those who
attempt to seize and disarm him, and they,
closing round and endeavouring to overpower
him, he is mortally wounded in the scuffle.*

Ben. Ay, bear me now within your prison walls;
Alive indeed, thought ye to bind me? No.
Two years within your dungeons have I lived,
But lived for vengeance: closed that hope, the
earth

Close o'er me too! — Alive to bind Benlora!

[*Falls.*

Lorne (running up to him). Ha! have ye slain him? — Fierce and warlike spirit!
I'm glad that thou hast had a soldier's death,
Arms in thy hands, all savage as thou art.

[Turning to LOCHTARISH and GLENFADDEN.
But thou, the artful, base, contriving villain,
Who hast of an atrocious, devilish act
The mover been, and this thy vile associate,
Prepare ye for the villains' shameful end,
Ye have so dearly earn'd.

[Waving his hand for the attendants to lead them off.

Loch. Be not so hasty, *Lorne*. — Thinkst thou indeed

Ye have us here within your grasp, and nought
Of hostage or security retain'd
For our protection?

Lorne. What dost thou mean?

Loch. Deal with us as ye will:
But if within a week, return'd to Mull,
In safety I appear not, with his blood,
The helpless heir, thy sister's infant son,
Who in my mother's house our pledge is kept,
Must pay the forfeit.

Helen (starting up from the body in an agony of alarm). O horrible! ye will not murder him?

Murder a harmless infant!

Loch. My aged mother, lady, loves her son
As thou dost thine; and she has sworn to do it.

Helen. Has sworn to do it! Oh! her ruthless nature

Too well I know.

(To *LORNE* eagerly.) Loose them, and let them go!

Lorne. Let fiends like these escape?

Arg. (to *HELEN*). He does but threaten
To move our fears: they dare not slay the child.

Helen. They dare! they will! — O if thou art my father!

If Nature's hand e'er twined me to thy heart
As this poor child to mine, have pity on me!
Loose them and let them go! — Nay, do it quickly.

O what is vengeance? Spare my infant's life!
Unpitying *Lorne*! — art thou a brother too?
The hapless father's blood is on thy sword,
And wilt thou slay the child? O spare him! spare him!

[Kneeling to ARGYLL and LORNE, who stand irresolute, when enter SIR HUBERT DE GREY, carrying something in his arms, wrapped up in a mantle, and followed by MORTON. On seeing SIR HUBERT, she springs from the ground, and rushes forward to him.

Ha! art thou here? in blessed hour return'd
To join thy prayers with mine, — to move their hearts —

Their flinty hearts; — to bid them spare my child!

De Grey (lifting up the mantle, and showing a sleeping child). The prayer is heard already:
look thou here

Beneath this mantle where he soundly sleeps.

[*HELEN* utters a cry of joy, and holds out her arms for the child, but at the same time sinks to the ground, embracing the knees of SIR HUBERT. ARGYLL and LORNE run up to him, and all their vassals, &c., crowding round close them about on every side, while a general murmur of exultation is heard through the whole. LOCHTARISH and GLENFADDEN, remaining on the side of the stage with those who guard them, are struck with astonishment and consternation.

Arg. (to those who guard LOCHTARISH, &c. stepping forward from the crowd). Lead to the grated keep your prisoners,

There to abide their doom. Upon the guilty
Our vengeance falls, and only on the guilty.

To all their clan beside, in which I know

Full many a gallant heart included is,

I still extend a hand of amity.

If they reject it, fair and open war

Between us be: and trust we still to find them

The noble, brave Macleans, the valiant foes,

That, ere the dark ambition of a villain,

For wicked ends, their gallant minds had warp'd,

We heretofore had found them.

O that men

In blood so near, in country, and in valour,
Should spend in petty broils their manly strength,

That might, united for the public weal,

On foreign foes such noble service do!

O that the day were come when gazing southron,

Whilst these our mountain warriors, marshall'd forth

To meet in foreign climes their country's foes,

Along their crowded cities slowly march,

To sound of warlike pipe, their plaided bands,

Shall say, with eager fingers pointing thus, [brows:

"Behold those men! — their sunn'd but thoughtful

Their sinewy limbs; their broad and portly chests,

Lapp'd in their native vestments, rude but grace-

ful! —

Those be our hardy brothers of the north; —

The bold and gen'rous race, who have, beneath

The frozen circle and the burning line,

The rights and freedom of our native land

Undauntedly maintain'd."

That day will come,

When in the grave this hoary head of mine,

And many after heads, in death are laid;

And happier men, our sons, shall live to see it.

O may they prize it too with grateful hearts;

And, looking back on these our stormy days

Of other years, pity, admire, and pardon

The fierce, contentious, ill-directed valour

Of gallant fathers, born in darker times!

[The curtain drops.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY HENRY MACKENZIE, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MRS. H. SIDDONS, IN HER
ORDINARY DRESS.

WELL ! here I am, those scenes of suff'ring o'er,
Safe among you, "a widow'd thing" no more ;
And though some squeamish critics still contend
That not so soon the tragic tone should end,
Nor flippant Epilogue, with smiling face,
Elbow her serious sister from the place ;
I stand prepared with precedent and custom,
To plead the adverse doctrine—Won't you trust'em ?
I think you will, and now the curtain's down,
Unbend your brows, nor on my prattle frown.

You've seen how, in our country's ruder age,
Our moody lords would let their vassals rage,
And while they drove men's herds, and burnt their
houses,

To some lone isle condemn'd their own poor spouses ;
Their portion—drowning when the tide should serve ;
Their separate aliment—a leave to starve ;
And for the Scottish rights of *Dower* and *Tierce*,
A deep-sea burial, and an empty hearse.

Such was of old the fuss about this matter ;
In our good times, 'tis managed greatly better ;
When modern ladies part with modern lords,
Their business no such tragic tale affords ;
Their "Family Legends," in the *Charter-chest*,
In deeds of ink, not deeds of blood, consist ;
In place of ruffians ambush'd in the dark,
Comes, with his pen, a harmless lawyer's clerk,
Draws a long—bond, my lady packs her things,
And leaves her mate to smooth his ruffled wings.

In the free code of first enlighten'd France,
Marriage was broke for want of *convenance* ;
No fault to find, no grievances to tell,
But, like tight shoes, they did not *fit* quite well.
The lady curtsy'd, with "*Adieu, Monsieur,*"
The husband bow'd, or shrugg'd, "*de tout mon*
cœur !"

"*L'affaire est faite ;*" each partner free to range,
Made life a dance, and every dance a change.

In England's colder soil they scarce contrive
To keep these foreign freedom-plants alive ;
Yet in some gay parterres we've seen, e'en there,
Its blushing fruit this frail exotic bear ;—
Couples make shift to slip the marriage chain,
Cross hands—cast off—and are themselves again.
[*Bell rings.*]

But, soft, I hear the Prompter's summons rung,
That calls me off, and stops my idle tongue ;
A Sage, our fair and virtuous Author's friend,
Shakes his stern head, and bids my nonsense end ;—
Bids me declare, she hopes her parent land
May long this current of the times withstand,
That here, in purity and honour bred,
Shall love and duty wreath the nuptial bed ;
The brave good husband, and his faithful wife,
Revere the sacred charities of life ;
And bid their children, like their sires of old,
Firm, honest, upright, for their country bold,
Here, where "Rome's eagles found unvanquish'd
foes,"

The Gallic vulture fearlessly oppose,
Chase from this favour'd isle, with baffled wing,
Bless'd in its good old laws, old manners, and old
King.

THE MARTYR :

A DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS.

PREFACE*

OF all the principles of human action, Religion is the strongest. It is often, indeed, overcome by others, and even by those which may be considered as very weak antagonists; yet on great emergencies it surmounts them all, and it is master of them all

* First published in the year 1826.—See Preface to three volumes of Dramas, antè, p. 312.

for general and continued operation. In every country and nation, under some form or other, though often dark and distorted, it holds warfare with vice and immorality; either by destroying corrupted selfishness, or by rendering it tributary. And costly and intolerable to the feelings of nature are the tributes it will voluntarily offer,—fasting, scourging, wounds, and humiliation;—the humiliation of all worldly distinction, when the light of reason as well as the robe of dignity are thrown

aside. A great philosophical writer* of our own days, after having mentioned some of the sceptical works of Hume, says, "Should not rather the melancholy histories which he has exhibited of the follies and caprices of superstition direct our attention to those sacred and indelible characters of the human mind, which all these perversions of reason are unable to obliterate—? * * * * *

In truth, the more striking the contradictions and the more ludicrous the ceremonies, to which the pride of human reason has thus been reconciled, the stronger is our evidence that Religion has a foundation in the nature of man. * * * * *

Where are those truths in the whole circle of the sciences, which are so essential to human happiness, as to procure an easy access, not only for themselves, but for whatever opinions may happen to be blended with them? Where are the truths so venerable and commanding, as to impart their own sublimity to every mode of expression by which they are conveyed; and which, in whatever scene they have habitually occupied the thoughts, consecrate every object which it presents to our senses, and the very ground we have been accustomed to tread? To attempt to weaken the authority of such impressions, by a detail of the endless variety of forms which they derive from casual association, is surely an employment unsuitable to the dignity of philosophy. To the vulgar it may be amusing, in this as in other instances, to indulge their wonder at what is new or uncommon; but to the philosopher it belongs to perceive, under all these various disguises, the workings of the same common nature; and in the superstitions of Egypt, no less than in the lofty visions of Plato, to recognise the existence of those moral ties which unite the heart of man to the Author of his being."

Many various circumstances, which it suits not my present purpose to mention, have produced this combination of gloomy, cruel, and absurd superstitions with Religion, even in nations and eras possessing much refinement of literature and perfection of the arts. But Religion, when more happily situated, grows from a principle into an affection,—an exalted, adoring devotion; and is then to be regarded as the greatest and noblest emotion of the heart. Considering it in this light, I have ventured, with diffidence and awe, to make it the subject of the following Drama.

The Martyr whom I have endeavoured to portray, is of a class which I believe to have been very rare, except in the first ages of Christianity. There have been many martyrs in the world. Some have sacrificed their lives for the cause of reformation in

the Church, with the zeal and benevolence of patriotism: some for the maintenance of its ancient doctrines and rites, with the courage of soldiers in the breach of their beleaguered city: some for intricate points of doctrine, with the fire of controvertists, and the honour of men who disdain to compromise what they believed to be the truth, or under impressions of conscience which they durst not disobey; but, from the pure devoted love of God, as the great Creator and benevolent Parent of men, few have suffered but when Christianity was in its simplest and most perfect state, and more immediately contrasted with the mean, cheerless conceptions and popular fables of Paganism.†

We may well imagine that, compared to the heathen deities, those partial patrons of nations and individuals, at discord among themselves, and invested with the passions and frailties of men, the great and only God, Father of all mankind, as revealed in the Christian Faith, must have been an idea most elevating, delightful, and consonant to every thing noble and generous in the human understanding or heart. Even to those who, from the opinions of their greatest philosophers, had soared above vulgar belief to one universal God, removed in his greatness from all care or concern for his creatures, the character of the Almighty God and beneficent Parent joined, who cares for the meanest of His works, must have been most animating and sublime, supposing them to be at the same time unwarped by the toils and pride of learning.

But when the life and character of Jesus Christ, so different from every character that had ever appeared upon earth, was unfolded to them as the Son, and sent of God,—sent from Heaven to declare His will on earth, and with the love of an elder brother, to win us on to the attainment of an exalted state of happiness, which we had forfeited,—sent to suffer and intercede for benighted wanderers, who were outcasts from their Father's house; can we conceive mingled feelings of gratitude, adoration, and love, more fervent, and more powerfully commanding the soul and imagination of man, than those which must then have been excited by this primitive promulgation of the Gospel? Such converts, too, were called from the uncertain hope (if hope it might be termed) of a dreary, listless, inactive existence after death, so little desirable, that their greatest poet makes his chief hero declare he would prefer being the meanest hind who breathes the upper air, to the highest honours of that dismal state.

"Through the thick gloom his friend Achilles knew,
And as he speaks the tears descend in dew:

* Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i. p. 368.

† Wherever Christianity has been preached for the first time to a simple people, as in distant lands of islands, where missionaries have made a deep impression, the willing mar-

tydoms suffered by their converts have been of the same character with those of the early, primitive ages. Modern, as well as ancient, records furnish honourable instances of such noble devotedness.

Com'st thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,
 Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds ;
 Nor fearst the dark and dismal waste to tread,
 Throng'd with pale ghosts, familiar with the dead ?
 To whom with sighs : I pass these dreadful gates
 To seek the Theban, and consult the Fates :
 For still distress'd I roam from coast to coast,
 Lost to my friends, and to my country lost.
 But sure the eye of time beholds no name
 So best as thine in all the rolls of fame ;
 Alive we hail'd thee with our guardian gods,
 And dead, thou rul'st a king in these abodes.
 Talk not of ruling in this dolorous gloom,
 Nor think vain words (he cried) can ease my doom ;
 Rather I'd choose laboriously to bear
 A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,
 A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,
 Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead."*

They were called, I repeat it, from hopes like these to the assurance of a future life, so joyful, active, spiritual, and glorious, that the present faded in the imagination from before it, as a shadow. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart, the joy that is prepared for those who love God." is one of the many expressions of the Christian apostles on this lofty theme ; who counted the greatest happiness of the present life as unworthy to be compared to the rewards of the righteous after death, where, according to their different degrees of worth, unsullied with any feeling of envy, they should shine in their blessedness as one star differeth from another star in glory. A transition from prospects so mean and depressing as the former to hopes so dignified, spiritual, and animating as the latter, might well have a power over the mind which nothing could shake or subdue ; and this transition none but the first race of Christians could experience, at least in so great a degree.

And those enlarged conceptions, those ennobling and invigorating hopes came to them in the pure simplicity of the Gospel as taught by Christ and His apostles. They had no subtle points of faith mixed with them as matters of necessary belief, which the fathers of succeeding times, and too often the pious missionaries of the present, have pressed upon their bewildered converts with greater perseverance and earnestness than the general precepts and hopes of Christianity.† Those ancient converts also had before their eyes a testimony of heroic endurance which till then had been unknown to the world. Who, in preceding times, had given his body to the flames for his belief in any religious

* Pope's *Odyssey*, 11th book.

† Dr. Samuel Clarke, in a sermon on the Powers and Wisdom of the Gospel, hath this passage : " And whereas the best and greatest philosophers were in continual disputes, and in many degrees of uncertainty, concerning the very fundamentals and most important doctrines of truth and reason, amongst those, on the contrary, who embraced the Gospel of Christ, there never was the least room for dispute about any fundamental ; all Christians, at all times and in all places, having ever been baptized into the profession of the same faith, and into an obligation to obey the same commandments. And it being notorious that all the contentions that ever arose in the Christian world have been merely

notions, taught or entertained by the learned or unlearned ? It was a thing hitherto unknown to the heathens ; and it is not very marvellous that abstract doctrines of philosophers, taught to their disciples as such, or popular deities, many in number, and of local, limited power, with moral attributes ascribed to them inferior to those of a virtuous mortal man, should be little calculated to raise those strong excitements in the mind, from which religious persecutions did at first proceed among Christians, who, from intemperate zeal and narrow conceptions, deemed a right belief in every doctrine of the Church necessary to salvation. Diana of the Ephesians could peacefully hold her state in conjunction with any god or goddess of Greece, Scythia, Persia, or Egypt ; but this toleration, which proceeded from any cause rather than the excellence of their religion, was changed into the most bloody and ferocious persecution upon the divulging of a faith which was altogether incompatible with their theologies, and must, therefore, should it prevail, overturn them entirely. Under these circumstances, the most enlightened Pagans, whose toleration has so often been praised, became the first persecutors, and Christians the first martyrs. And then it was that a new spectacle was exhibited to mankind ; then it was that the sublimity of man's immortal soul shone forth in glory which seemed supernatural. Men and women, young and old, suffered for their faith all that flesh and blood can suffer ; yea, joyfully and triumphantly.

In beholding such terrific and interesting spectacles, many were led to inquire into the cause of such superhuman resolution, and became converts and martyrs in their turn ; and it will be found, in the accounts of those ancient persecutions, that many Roman soldiers, and sometimes officers of high rank, were among the earlier Christians who laid down their lives for their religion. It was, indeed, natural that the invincible fortitude of those holy sufferers, fronting death with such noble intrepidity, should attract the admiration and sympathy of the generous and brave, whose pride it was to meet death undauntedly in a less terrific form ; and we may easily imagine also, that a generous and elevated mind, under the immediate pressure of such odious tyranny as some of the Roman emperors exercised on their senators and courtiers, would turn from this humiliating bondage to that promise of a Father's house

about several additions which every sect and party, in direct contradiction to the express command of their Master, have endeavoured presumptuously to annex by their own authority to His doctrines and to His laws. How much, therefore, and how just ground soever has been given by those who call themselves Christians to the reproach of them which are without, yet Christ himself, that is, the Gospel in its native simplicity as delivered by Him, has abundantly to all reasonable persons among the Gentiles manifested itself to be the wisdom of God ; as well as it appeared to be the power of God in signs and wonders to the Jews."—*Clarke's Sermons*, vol. v. Sermon 12th.

in which there are many mansions, and turn to it with most longing and earnest aspirations. The brave man, bred in the camp and the field, encompassed with hardships and dangers, would be little encumbered with learning or philosophy, therefore more open to conviction; and when returned from the scenes of his distant warfare, would more indignantly submit to the capricious will of a voluptuous master. These considerations have led me to the choice of my hero, and have warranted me in representing him as a noble Roman soldier; — one whose mind is filled with adoring awe and admiration of the sublime but parental character of the Deity, which is for the first time unfolded to him by the early teachers of Christianity; — one whose heart is attracted by the beautiful purity, refinement, and benignant tenderness, and by the ineffable generosity of Him who visited earth as His commissioned Son, — attracted powerfully, with that ardour of affectionate admiration which binds a devoted follower to his glorious chief.

But though we may well suppose unlearned soldiers to be the most unprejudiced and ardent of the early Christian proselytes, we have good reason to believe that the most enlightened minds of those days might be strongly moved and attracted by the first view of Christianity in its pure, uncorrupted state. All their previous notions of religion, as has been already said, whether drawn from a popular or philosophical source, were poor and heartless compared to this. Their ideas on the subject, which I have already quoted, having passed through the thoughts and imagination of their greatest poet, could surely contract no meanness nor frigidity there, but must be considered as represented in the most favourable light which their received belief could possibly admit. We must place ourselves in the real situation of those men, previous to their knowledge of the sacred Scripture, and not take it for granted that those elevated conceptions of the Supreme Being and his paternal Providence which modern deists have in fact, though unwilling to own it, received from the Christian revelation, belonged to them. It has been observed by an author, whose name I ought not to have forgotten, that the ideas of the Deity expressed in the writings of philosophers, subsequently to the Christian era, are more clear and sublime than those which are to be found in heathen writers of an earlier period. I therefore represent him also as a Roman, cultivated, contemplative, and refined.

Martyrs of this rank and character were not, I own, mentioned among those belonging to the first persecutions under Nero, but in those which followed, during the first and second century of the Christian era, when the stories which had been propagated of the shocking superstitions and wickedness of the sect began to lose their credit. But I conceive myself warranted to take this liberty, as the supposed

recentness of the promulgation of the Gospel gives (if I may so express it) a greater degree of zest to the story, and by no means alters the principles and feelings which must have actuated the martyrs. The whole of this period was still one of pure Christianity unencumbered with many perplexing and contradictory doctrines which followed, when churchmen had leisure to overlay the sacred Scriptures with a multitude of explanatory dissertations, and with perverse, presumptuous ingenuity to explain the plain passages by the obscure, instead of the obscure by the plain.

In this representation of religious devotion in its early primitive state, it has been my desire to keep clear from all fanatical excess which in after-times too often expressed itself in the wildest incoherent rhapsodies: the language of a natural delirium, proceeding from a vain endeavour to protract, by forced excitement, the ecstasy of a few short moments, and to make that a continued state of the mind which was intended, by its beneficent Creator, only for its occasional and transient joy. Of this we may be well assured; for if otherwise indulged, it would have rendered men incapable of the duties of social life; those duties which the blessed founder of our religion did so constantly and so earnestly inculcate. That I am too presumptuous in attempting to represent it at all, is a charge which, if it be brought against me, I ought to bear with meekness; for when it first offered itself to my mind as the subject of a drama, I shrank from it as a thing too sacred to be displayed in such a form. But, in often considering the matter, this impression at last gave way to a strong desire of showing the noblest of all human emotions in a light in which it has but seldom been contemplated; and I trust that through the following pages, whatever defects may be found, and no doubt there are many, want of reverence will not be amongst the number.

I would gladly pass over the lyrical part of the piece without remark, were it not that I fear I may have offended the classical reader, by having put into the mouths of Roman soldiers a hymn in honour of their deities so homely and unpoetical. This too will more likely offend, after the beautiful and splendid effusions on this subject, which have been so much and justly admired in a recent drama. But I wished to make them express what I conceived to be the actual feelings and notions of such men regarding the objects of their worship, not the rich descriptive imaginations of a learned and poetical high priest. Besides, had I possessed talents requisite for the successful imitation of such classical affluence, it would scarcely have accorded with the general tenor of the piece and the simplicity of the hymns of the Christians: I should therefore have injured the general effect, as well as the supposed faithfulness of the particular passage, regarding its description of real characters. At least it appears so to me.

I need scarcely observe to the reader, that the subject of this piece is too sacred, and therefore unfit, for the stage. I have endeavoured, however, to give it so much of dramatic effect as to rouse his imagination in perusing it to a lively representation of the characters, action, and scenes, belonging to the story; and this, if I have succeeded, will remove from it the dryness of a mere dramatic poem. Had I considered it as fit for theatrical exhibition, the reasons that withhold me from publishing my other manuscript plays, would have held good regarding this.

Before I take leave of my reader, I must be permitted to say, that the following drama has been written for a long time, and read by a few of my friends several years ago. When Mr. Milman's beautiful drama on a similar subject was published,

I began to be afraid that, were I to keep it much longer in manuscript, some other poet, in an age so fertile in poetic genius, might offer to the public that which might approach still nearer to the story of my piece, and give it, when published, not only all its own native defects to contend with, but those also arising from the unavoidable flatness of an exhausted subject. I therefore determined to publish it as soon as other duties permitted me, and many have intervened to prevent the accomplishment of my wish. In preparing it for the press, I have felt some degree of scruple in retaining its original title of *The Martyr*, but I could not well give it any other. The public, I hope, and Mr. Milman, I am certain, are sufficiently my friends not to find fault with this circumstance, which has not arisen from presumption.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

NERO, *emperor of Rome.*
 CORDENIUS MARO, *officer of the imperial guard.*
 ORCERES, *a Parthian prince, visiting Rome.*
 SULPICIUS, *a senator.*
 SYLVIUS, *a brave centurion.*
Roman Pontiff.
Christian father or bishop, Christian brother, &c.
A page, in the family of SULPICIUS.

Senators, Christians, soldiers, &c.

WOMEN.

PORTIA, *daughter of SULPICIUS.*
 Christian women.
Scene, Rome.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A private apartment in the house of SULPICIUS.

Enter SULPICIUS and ORCERES by opposite sides.

Sul. So soon return'd!—I read not in thy face
 Aught to encourage or depress my wishes.
 How is it, noble friend?

Or. E'en as it was ere I received my mission.
 Cordenius Maro is on public duty;
 I have not seen him.—When he knows your offer,
 His heart will bound with joy, like eaglet plumed,
 Whose outstretch'd pinions, wheeling round and
 round,
 Shape their first circles in the sunny air.

Sul. And with good cause.

Or. Methinks I see him now!
 A face with blushes mantling to the brow,
 Eyes with bright tears surcharged, and parted lips
 Quiv'ring to utter joy which hath no words.

Sul. His face, indeed, as I have heard thee say,
 Is like a wave which sun and shadow cross;
 Each thought makes there its momentary mark.

Or. And then his towering form, and vaulting
 step,
 As tenderness gives way to exultation!
 O! it had been a feast to look upon him;
 And still shall be.

Sul. Art thou so well convinced
 He loves my little damsel?—She is fair,
 But seems to me too simple, gay, and thoughtless,
 For noble Maro. Heiress as she is
 To all my wealth, had I suspected sooner,
 That he had smother'd wishes in his breast
 As too presumptuous, or that she in secret
 Preferr'd his silent homage to the praise
 Of any other man, I had most frankly
 Removed all hindrance to so fair a suit.
 For, in these changeling and degenerate days,
 I scarcely know a man of nobler worth.

Or. Thou scarcely knowst! Say certainly thou
 dost not.

He is, to honest right, as simply true
 As shepherd child on desert pasture bred,
 Where falsehood and deceit have never been;
 And to maintain them, ardent, skilful, potent,
 As the shrewd leader of unruly tribes.
 A simple heart and subtle spirit join'd
 Make such an union, as in Nero's court
 May pass for curious and unnatural.

Sul. But is the public duty very urgent
 That so untowardly delays our happiness?

Or. The punishment of those poor Nazarenes,

Who, in defiance of imperial power,
To their forbidden faith and rights adhere
With obstinacy most astonishing.

Sul. A stubborn contumacy, unaccountable!

Or. There's sorcery in it, or some stronger power.
But be it what it may, or good, or ill,
They look on death in its most dreadful form,
As martial heroes on a wreath of triumph.
The fires are kindled in the place of death,
And bells toll dismally. The life of Rome
In one vast clust'ring mass hangs round the spot,
And no one to his neighbour utters word,
But in an alter'd voice, with breath restrain'd,
Like those who speak at midnight near the dead.
Cordenius heads the band that guards the pile;
So station'd, who could speak to him of pleasure?
My words had come like sounds of evil omen.

Sul. Cease; here comes Portia, with a careless face:

She knows not yet the happiness that waits her.

Or. Who brings she with her thus, as if compell'd

By playful force?

Sul. 'Tis her Numidian page; a cunning imp,
Who must be woo'd to do the thing he's proud of.

Enter PORTIA, dragging SYPHAX after her, speaking as she enters.

Portia. Come in, deceitful thing!—I know thee well;

With all thy sly affected bashfulness,
Thou'rt bold enough to sing in Cæsar's court,
With the whole senate present.

(To ORCERES.) Prince of Parthia,
I knew not you were here; but yet I guess
The song which this sly creature sings so well,
Will please you also.

Or. How can it fail, fair Portia, so commended?
Sul. What is this boasted lay?

Portia. That tune, my father,
Which you so oft have tried to recollect;
But link'd with other words, of new device,
That please my fancy well.—Come, sing it, boy!

Sul. Nay, sing it, Syphax, be not so abash'd,
If thou art really so.—Begin, begin!
But speak thy words distinctly as thou singst,
That I may have their meaning perfectly.

SONG.

The storm is gath'ring far and wide,
Yon mortal hero must abide.
Power on earth, and power in air,
Falcon's gleam and lightning's glare:
Arrows hurtling through the blast;
Stones from flaming meteor cast;
Floods from burthen'd skies are pouring,
Mingled strife of battle roaring;
Nature's rage and Demon's ire,
Belt him round with turmoil dire:

Noble hero, earthly wight,
Brace thee bravely for the fight!

And so, indeed, thou tak'st thy stand,
Shield on arm and glaive in hand;
Breast encased in burnish'd steel,
Helm on head, and spike on heel;
And, more than meets the outward eye,
The soul's high-temper'd panoply,
Which every limb for action lightens,
The form dilates, the visage brightens:
Thus art thou, lofty, mortal wight,
Full nobly harness'd for the fight!

Or. The picture of some very noble hero
These lines pourtray.

Sul. So it should seem; one of the days of old.

Portia. And why of olden days? There liveth
now

The very man—a man—I mean to say,
There may be found among our Roman youth,
One, who in form and feelings may compare
With him, whose lofty virtues these few lines
So well describe.

Or. Thou meanst the lofty Gorbus.

Portia. Out on the noisy braggart. Arms with-
out

He hath, indeed, well burnish'd and well plumed,
But the poor soul, within, is pluck'd and bare,
Like any homely thing.

Or. Sertorius Galba then?

Portia. O, stranger still!

For if he hath no lack of courage, certes,
He hath much lack of grace. Sertorius Galba!

Or. Perhaps thou meanst Cordenius Maro, lady.
Thy cheeks grow scarlet at the very name,
Indignant that I still should err so strangely.

Portia. No, not indignant, for thou errest not;
Nor do I blush, albeit thou thinkst I do,
To say, there is not of our Romans one,
Whose martial form a truer image gives
Of firm heroic courage.

Sul. Cease, sweet Portia!
He only laughs at thy simplicity.

Or. Simplicity seen through a harmless wile,
Like to the infant urchin, half conceal'd
Behind his smiling dam's transparent veil,
The song is not a stranger to mine ear,
Methinks I've heard it passing through those wilds,
Whose groves and caves, if rumour speak the truth,
Are by the Nazarenes or Christians haunted.

Sul. Let it no more be sung within my walls:
A chaunt of their's to bring on pestilence!
Sing it no more. What sounds are those I hear?

Or. The dismal death-drum and the crowd
without.

They are this instant leading past your door
Those wretched Christians to their dreadful doom.

Sul. We'll go and see them pass.

[*Exeunt hastily, SULPICIOUS, ORCERES.*]

Portia (stopping her ears). I cannot look on them, nor hear the sound.
I'll to my chamber.

Page. May not I, I pray,
Look on them as they pass?

Portia. No; go not, child:
'Twill frighten thee; it is a horrid sight.

Page. Yet, an it please you, lady, let me go.

Portia. I say it is a horrid, piteous sight,
Thou wilt be frighten'd at it.

Page. Nay, be it e'er so piteous or so horrid,
I have a longing, strong desire to see it.

Portia. Go then; in this there is no affectation:
There's all the harden'd cruelty of man
Lodged in that tiny form, child as thou art.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

An open square, with buildings.

Enter CORDENIUS MARO, at the head of his soldiers, who draw up on either side; then enters a long procession of public functionaries, &c., conducting martyrs to the place of execution, who, as they pass on, sing together in unison: one, more noble than the others, walking first.

SONG.

A long farewell to sin and sorrow,
To beam of day and evening shade;
High in glory breaks our morrow,
With light that cannot fade.

We leave the hated and the hating,
Existence sad in toil and strife;
The great, the good, the brave are waiting
To hail our opening life.

Earth's faded sounds our ears forsaking,
A moment's silence death shall be;
Then to heaven's jubilee awaking,
Faith ends in victory.

[*Exeunt martyrs, &c. &c. CORDENIUS with his officers and soldiers still remaining; the officers on the front, and CORDENIUS apart from them in a thoughtful posture.*]

1st offi. Brave Varus marches boldly at the head
Of that deluded band.

2d offi. Are these the men who hateful orgies
hold,

In dens and deserts with enchantments wooing
The intercourse of demons?

3d offi. Ay, with rites
Cruel and wild. To crucify a babe,
And, while it yet hangs shrieking on the rood,
Fall down and worship it! device abominable!

1st offi. Dost thou believe it?

3d offi. I can believe or this or any thing
Of the possess'd and mad.

1st offi. What demonry, thinkst thou, possesses
Varus?

2d offi. That is well urged. (*To the other.*) Is
he a maniac?

Alas, that I should see so brave a soldier
Thus, as a malefactor, led to death!

1st offi. Viewing his keen enliven'd countenance
And stately step, one should have rather guess'd
He led victorious soldiers to the charge:
And they, indeed, appear'd to follow him
With noble confidence.

3d offi. 'Tis all vain seeming.
He is a man, who makes a show of valour
To which his deeds have borne slight testimony.

Cor. (advancing indignantly). Thou liest; a better
and a braver soldier
Ne'er fronted foe, nor closed in bloody strife.

[*Turning away angrily to the background.*]

1st offi. Our chief, methinks, is in a fretful mood,
Which is not usual with him.

2d offi. He did not seem to listen to our words,
Yet they have moved him keenly.—
But see, he gives the signal to proceed;
We must advance, and with our closing ranks
The fatal pile encircle.

[*Exeunt in order, whilst a chorus of martyrs is heard at a distance.*]

SCENE III.

An apartment in a private house.

Enter two Christian Women by opposite sides.

1st woman. Hast thou heard any thing?

2d woman. Nought, save the murmur of the mul-
titude,

Sinking at times to deep and awful silence,
From which again a sudden burst will rise
Like mingled exclamations, as of horror
Or admiration. In these neighbouring streets
I have not met a single citizen,
The town appearing uninhabited.

But wherefore art thou here? Thou shouldst have
stay'd

With the unhappy mother of poor Cælus.

1st woman. She sent me hither in her agony
Of fear and fearful hope.

2d woman. Ha! does she hope deliverance from
death?

1st woman. O no! thou wrongst her, friend; it is
not that:

Deliverance is her fear, and death her hope.
A second time she bears a mother's throes
For her young stripling, whose exalted birth
To endless life is at this fearful crisis,
Or earn'd or lost. May heaven forefend the last!
He is a timid youth, and soft of nature:
God grant him strength to bear that fearful proof!

2d woman. Here comes our reverend father.

Enter a Christian Father.

What tidings dost thou bring? are they in bliss?

Father. Yes, daughter, as I trust, they are ere this

In high immortal bliss. Cælus alone——

1st woman. He hath apostatised! O woe is me!

O woe is me for his most wretched mother!

Father. Apostatised! No; stripling as he is, His fortitude, where all were braced and brave, Shone paramount.

For his soft downy cheek and slender form Made them conceive they might subdue his firmness:

Therefore he was reserved till noble Varus And his compeers had in the flames expired, Then did they court and tempt him with fair promise Of all that earthly pleasure or ambition Can offer, to deny his holy faith.

But he, who seem'd before so meek and timid, Now suddenly imbued with holy grace, Like the transition of some watery cloud In passing o'er the moon's refulgent disc, Glow'd with new life; and from his fervid tongue Words of most firm indignant constancy Pour'd eloquently forth; then to the pile Sprang he as lightly as a dauntless warrior

Sealing the breach of honour; or, alas!

As I have seen him 'midst his boyish mates,

Vaulting aloft for very love of motion.

1st woman. High heaven be praised for this!—
thine eyes beheld it?

Father. I saw it not: the friend who witness'd it, Left him yet living 'midst devouring flame;

Therefore I spoke of Cælus doubtfully,

If he as yet belong'd to earth or heaven.

[They cover their faces, and remain silent.]

Enter a Christian Brother.

Brother. Lift up your heads, my sisters! let your voices

In grateful thanks be raised! Those ye lament, Have earthly pangs for heavenly joy exchanged.

The manly Varus, and the youthful Cælus,

The lion and the dove, yoke-fellows link'd,

Have equal bliss and equal honour gain'd.

1st woman. And praised be God, who makes the weakest strong!

I'll to his mother with the blessed tidings. *[Exit.]*

Father. Let us retire and pray. How soon our lives

May have like ending, God alone doth know!

O! may like grace support us in our need!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.

An open space in front of a temple.

Enter CORDELIUS, as returned from the execution with his soldiers, who, upon a signal from him, disperse and leave him alone. He walks a few paces slowly, then stops, and continues for a short time in a thoughtful posture.

Cor. There is some power in this, or good or ill, Surpassing nature. When the soul is roused To desp'rate sacrifice, 'tis ardent passion, Or high exalted virtue that excites it. Can loathsome demony in dauntless bearing Outdo the motives of the lofty brave? It cannot be! There is some power in this Mocking all thought—incomprehensible.

[Remains for a moment silent and thoughtful, while SYLVIVS enters behind him unperceived.]

Delusion! ay, 'tis said the cheated sight Will see unreal things; the cheated ear List to sweet sounds that are not; even the reason Maintain conclusions wild and inconsistent.

We hear of this:—the weak may be deluded;

But is the learn'd, th' enlighten'd noble Varus

The victim of delusion?—Can it be?

I'll not believe it.

Sylvivus (advancing to him). No, believe it not.

Cor. (start'ng). Ha! one so near me!

I have seen thy face before; but where? who art thou?

Sylvivus. E'en that Centurion of the Seventh Legion,

Who, with Cordenius Maro, at the siege Of Fort *Volundum**, mounted first the breach;

And kept the clust'ring enemy in check,

Till our encouraged Romans followed us.

Cor. My old companion then, the valiant Sylvivus, Thou'st done hard service since I saw thee last:

Thy countenance is mark'd with graver lines

Than in those greener days: I knew thee not.

Where goest thou now? I'll bear thee company.

Sylvivus. I thank thee: yet thou mayst not go with me.

The way that I am wending suits not thee,

Though suiting well the noble and the brave.

It were not well, in fiery times like these,

To tempt thy generous mind.

Cor.

What dost thou mean?

Sylvivus (after looking cautiously round to see that nobody is near). Did I not hear thee commune with thyself

Of that most blessed Martyr gone to rest,

Varus Dobella?

Cor. How blessed? My unsettled thoughts were busy

With things mysterious; with those magic powers

* A strong fort in Armenia, taken by Corbulo in Nero's reign.

That work the mind to darkness and destruction ;
With the sad end of the *deluded* Varus.

Sylvius. Not so, not so ! The wisest prince on earth,

With treasured wealth and armies at command,
Ne'er earn'd withal such lofty exaltation
As Varus now enjoys.

Cor. Thy words amaze me, friend ; what is their meaning ?

Sylvius. They cannot be explain'd with hasty speech

In such a place. If thou wouldst really know —
And may such light —

Cor. Why dost thou check thy words,
And look so much disturb'd, like one in doubt ?

Sylvius. What am I doing ? Zeal, perhaps, betrays me.

Yet, wherefore hide salvation from a man
Who is so worthy of it ?

Cor. Why art thou agitated thus ? What moves thee ?

Sylvius. And wouldst thou really know it ?

Cor. Dost thou doubt me ?
I have an earnest, most intense desire.

Sylvius. Sent to thy heart, brave Roman, by a Power

Which I may not resist. [*Bowing his head.*]
But go not with me now in open day.

At fall of eve I'll meet thee in the suburb,
Close to the pleasure-garden of Sulpicius ;
Where in a bushy crevice of the rock
There is an entry to the catacombs,
Known but to few.

Cor. Ha ! to the catacombs !

Syl. A dismal place, I own, but heed not that ;
For there thou'lt learn what, to thy ardent mind,
Will make this world but as a thorny pass
To regions of delight ; man's natural life,
With all its varied turmoil of ambition,
But as the training of a wayward child
To manly excellence ; yea, death itself
But as a painful birth to life unending.
The word eternal has not to thine ears,
As yet, its awful, ample sense convey'd.

Cor. Something possesses thee.

Sylvius. Yes, noble Maro ;
But it is something which can ne'er possess
A mind that is not virtuous. — Let us part ;
It is expedient now. — All good be with thee !

Cor. And good be with thee, also, valiant soldier !

Sylvius (*returning as he is about to go out*). At close of day, and near the pleasure-garden, —
The garden of Sulpicius.

Cor. I know the spot, and will not fail to meet thee. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Catacombs, showing long low-roofed aisles, in different directions, supported by thick pillars of the rough unhewn rock, with rude tombs and heaps of human bones, and the walls in many places lined with human skulls.

Enter CORDENIUS MARO, *speaking to a Christian Father, on whose arm he leans, and followed by SYLVIUS.*

Cor. One day and two bless'd nights, spent in acquiring
Your heavenly lore, so powerful and sublime. —
Oh ! what an alter'd creature they have made me !

Father. Yes, gentle son, I trust that thou art alter'd.

Cor. I am, methinks, like one who, with bent back

And downward gaze — if such an one might be —

Hath only known the boundless azure sky
By the strait circle of reflected beauty,
Seen in the watery gleam of some deep pit :

Till on a sudden roused, he stands erect,
And wondering looks aloft and all around
On the bright sunny firmament : — like one
(Granting again that such an one might be)

Who hath but seen the element of fire
On household hearth or woodman's smoky pile,
And looks at once, 'mid 'stounding thunder-peals,
On Jove's magnificence of lightning. — Pardon,
I pray you pardon me ! I mean *His* lightning,
Who is the Jove of Jove, the great Jehovah.

Father (*smiling*). Be not disturb'd, my son ; the lips will utter,
From lengthen'd habit, what the mind rejects.

Cor. These blessed hours, which I have pass'd with you,

Have to my intellectual being given
New feelings and expansion, like to that
Which once I felt, on viewing by degrees
The wide development of nature's amplitude.

Father. And how was that, my son ?

Cor. I well remember it ; even at this moment
Imagination sees it all again.

'Twas on a lofty mountain of Armenia,
O'er which I led by night my martial cohort,
To shun the fierce heat of a summer's day.
Close round us hung, the vapours of the night
Had form'd a woofy curtain, dim and pale,
Through which the waning moon did faintly mark
Its slender crescent.

Father. Ay, the waned moon through midnight vapours seen,

Fit emblem is of that retrenching light,
Dubious and dim, which to the earliest patriarchs
Was at the first vouchsafed ; a moral guide,

Soon clouded and obscured to their descendants,
Who peopled far and wide, in scatter'd tribes,
The fertile earth.—But this is interruption.
Proceed, my son.

Cor. Well, on the lofty summit
We halted, and the day's returning light
On this exalted station found us. Then
Our brighten'd curtain, wearing into shreds
And rifted masses, through its opening gave
Glimpse after glimpse of slow revealed beauty,
Which held th' arrested senses magic-bound,
In the intensity of charm'd attention.

Father. From such an eminence the op'ning mist
Would to the eye reveal most beauteous visions.

Cor. First, far beneath us, woody peaks appear'd
And knolls with cedars crested; then, beyond,
And lower still, the herdsmen's cluster'd dwellings,
With pasture slopes, and flocks just visible;
Then, further still, soft wavy wastes of forest,
In all the varied tints of sylvan verdure,
Descending to the plain; then, wide and boundless,
The plain itself, with towns and cultured tracts,
And its fair river gleaming in the light,
With all its sweepy windings, seen and lost,
And seen again, till through the pale grey tint
Of distant space, it seem'd a loosen'd cestus
From virgin's tunic blown; and still beyond,
The earth's extended vastness from the sight
Wore like the boundless ocean.
My heart beat rapidly at the fair sight—
This ample earth, man's natural habitation.
But now, when to my mental eye reveal'd,
His moral destiny, so grand and noble,
Lies stretching on even to immensity,
It overwhelms me with a flood of thoughts,
Of happy thoughts.

Father. Thanks be to God that thou dost feel it
so!

Cor. I am most thankful for the words of power
Which from thy gifted lips and sacred scripture
I have received. What feelings they have raised!
O what a range of thought given to the mind!
And to the soul what loftiness of hope!
That future dreamy state of faint existence
Which poets have described and sages taught,
In which the brave and virtuous pined and droop'd
In useless indolence, changed for a state
Of social love, and joy, and active bliss,—
A state of brotherhood,—a state of virtue,
So grand, so purified;—O it is excellent!
My soul is roused within me at the sound,
Like some poor slave, who from a dungeon issues
To range with free-born men his native land.

Father. Thou mayst, indeed, my son, redeem'd
from thralldom,

Become the high compeer of sacred spirits.

Cor. The high compeer of such!—These gushing
tears,
Nature's mysterious tears, will have their way.

Father. To give thy heart relief.

Cor. And yet mysterious. Why do we weep
At contemplation of exalted virtue?
Perhaps in token of the fallen state
In which we are, as thrilling sympathy
Strangely acknowledges some sight and sound,
Connected with a dear and distant home,
Albeit the memory that link hath lost:—
A kind of latent sense of what we were,
Or might have been; a deep mysterious token.

Father. Perhaps thou'rt right, my son; for e'en
the wicked

Will sometimes weep at lofty, generous deeds.
Some broken traces of our noble nature
Were yet preserved; therefore our great Creator
Still loved His work, and thought it worth redemp-
tion:

Therefore His generous Son, our blessed Master,
Did, as the elder brother of that race,
Whose form He took, lay down His life to save us,
But I have read thee, from our sacred book,
His gentle words of love.

Cor. Thou hast! thou hast! they're stirring in
my heart:

Each fibre of my body thrills in answer
To the high call.—

Father. The Spirit of Power, my son, is dealing
with thee.

Cor. (after a pause). One thing amazes me,—
yet it is excellent.

Father. And what amazes thee? Unbosom freely
What passes in thy mind.

Cor. That this religion which dilates our thoughts
Of God Supreme to an infinity
Of awful greatness, yet connects us with him,
As children, loved and cherish'd;—
Adoring awe with tenderness united.

Sylvius (eagerly). Ay, brave Cordenius, that same
thought more moved

My rude unletter'd mind than all the rest.

I struck my hand against my soldier's mail,
And cried, "This faith is worthy of a man!"

Cor. Our best philosophers have raised their
thoughts

To one great universal Lord of all,
Lord even of Jove himself and all the gods;
Yet who durst feel for that high, distant Essence,
A warmer sentiment than deep submission?
But now, adoring love and grateful confidence
Cling to th' infinity of power and goodness,
As the repentant child turns to his sire
With yearning looks, that say, "Am I not thine?"
I am too bold: I should be humbled first
In penitence and sorrow, for the stains
Of many a hateful vice and secret passion.

Father. Check not the generous tenor of thy
thoughts:

O check it not! Love leads to penitence,
And is the noblest, surest path; while fear

Is dark and devious. To thy home return,
And let thy mind well weigh what thou hast heard.
If then thou feel within thee faith assured ;
That faith, which may, e'en through devouring
flames,

Its passage hold to heaven, baptismal rites
Shall give thee entrance to a purer life,
Receive thee, as thy Saviour's valiant soldier,
For His high warfare arm'd.

Cor. I am resolved, and feel that in my heart
There lives that faith ; baptize me ere we part.

Father. So be it then. But yet that holy rite
Must be deferr'd ; for, lo ! our brethren come,
Bearing the ashes of our honour'd saints,
Which must, with hymns of honour, be received.

*Enter Christians, seen advancing slowly along one
of the aisles, and bearing a large veiled urn, which
they set down near the front. They then lift off
the veil and range themselves round it, while one
sings and the rest join in the chorus at the end of
each short verse.*

SONG.

Departed brothers, generous brave,
Who for the faith have died,
Nor its pure source denied,
Your bodies from devouring flames to save,

CHORUS.

Honour on earth, and bliss in heaven,
Be to your saintly valour given !

And we, who, left behind, pursue
A pilgrim's weary way
To realms of glorious day,
Shall rouse our fainting souls with thoughts of you.

Honour on earth, &c.

Your ashes, mingled with the dust,
Shall yet be forms more fair
Than e'er breathed vital air,
When earth again gives up her precious trust.

Honour on earth, &c.

The trump of angels shall proclaim,
With tones far sent and sweet,
Which countless hosts repeat,
The generous martyr's never-fading name.

Honour on earth, and bliss in heaven,
Be to your saintly valour given !

Cor. (to father). And ye believe those, who a
few hours since
Were clothed in flesh and blood, and here, before
us,

Lie thus, e'en to a few dry ashes changed,
Are now exalted spirits, holding life
With blessed powers, and agencies, and all
Who have on earth a virtuous part fulfill'd ?
The dear redeem'd of Godlike love, again

To their primeval destiny restored ?

It is a generous, powerful, noble faith.

Sylvius. Did I not tell thee, as we press'd along,
It well became a Roman and a soldier ?

Father. Nay, worthy Sylvius, somewhat more of
meekness

And less of martial ardour were becoming
In those, whose humble Lord stretch'd forth His
hand,

His saving hand, to e'en the meanest slave
Who bends beneath an earthly master's rod.

This faith is meet for all of human kind.

Cor. Forgive him, father : see, he stands re-
proved ;

His heart is meek, though ardent ;
It is, indeed, a faith for all mankind. [are ;

Father. We feel it such, my son, press'd as we
On every side beset with threatening terrors.

Look on these ghastly walls, these shapeless pillars,
These heaps of human bones, — this court of death ;
E'en here, as in a temple, we adore

The Lord of Life, and sing our song of hope,
That death has lost its sting, the grave its triumph.

Cor. O make me then the partner of your hopes !

[*Taking the hand of SYLVIVUS, and then of
several other Christians.*

Brave men ! high destined souls ! immortal beings !
The blessed faith and sense of what we are

Comes on my heart, like streams of beamy light
Pour'd from some opening cloud. O to conceive
What lies beyond the dim, dividing veil
Of regions bright, of blest and glorious being !

Father. Ay, when it is withdrawn, we shall
behold

What hath hath ne'er conceived, nor tongue could
utter.

Cor. When but a boy, I've gazed upon the sky,
With all its sparks of light, as a grand cope

For the benighted world. But now my fancy
Will greet each twinkling star, as the bright lamp

Of some fair angel on his guardian watch.
And think ye not, that from their lofty stations

Our future glorious home, our Father's house,
May lie within the vast and boundless ken

Of such seraphic powers ?

Father. Thy fancy soars on wide and buoyant
wings ;

Speak on, my son, I would not check thy ardour.

Cor. This solid earth is press'd beneath our feet,
But as a step from which to take our flight ;

What boots it then, if rough or smooth it be,
Serving its end ? — Come, noble Sylvius !

We've been companions in the broil of battle,
Now be we fellow-soldiers in that warfare

Which best becomes the brave.

Sylvius. Cordenius Maro, we shall be companions
When this wide earth with all its fields of blood
Where war hath raged, and all its towers of
strength

Which have begirded been with iron hosts,
Are shrunk to nothing, and the flaming sun
Is in his course extinguish'd.

Cor. Come, lead me, father, to the holy fount,
If I in humble penitence may be
From worldly vileness clear'd.

Father. I gladly will, my son. The Spirit of
Grace

Is dealing with thy spirit : be received,
A ransom'd penitent, to the high fellowship
Of all the good and bless'd in earth and heaven !

Enter a Convert.

Whence com'st thou, Fearon ? Why wast thou
prevented

From joining in our last respectful homage
To those, who have so nobly for the truth
Laid down their lives ?

Convert. I have been watching near the grated
dungeon

Where Ethocles, the Grecian, is immured.

Father. Thou sayst not so ! A heavier loss than
this,

If they have seized on him, the righteous cause
Could not have suffer'd. Art thou sure of it ?
We had not heard of his return from Syria.

Convert. It is too true : he landed ten days since
On the Brundusian coast, and, as he enter'd
The gates of Rome, was seized and dragg'd to
prison.

Father. And we in utter ignorance of this !

Convert. He travell'd late and unaccompanied,
So this was done at nightfall and conceal'd.

But see his writing given me by a guard,
Who has for pity's sake betray'd his trust :

It is address'd to thee. [*Giving him a paper.*]

Father (after reading it). Alas, alas ! it is a brief
account

Of his successful labours in the East :
For with his excellent gifts of eloquence,
Learning, and prudence, he has made more
converts

Than all our zealous brotherhood beside.

What can we do ? He will be sacrificed :

The church in him must bleed, if God so wills.
It is a dreadful blow.

Cor. (to the convert). I pray thee, in what prison
is he kept ?

Convert. In Sylla's tower, that dwelling of de-
spair.

Cor. Guarded by Romans ?

Convert. Yes ; and strongly guarded.

Cor. Yet, he shall be released.

Father (to CORDENIUS). Beware, my son, of rash,
imprudent zeal :

The truth hath suffer'd much from this ; beware :
Risk not thyself : thy life is also precious.

Cor. My whole of life is precious ; but this shred,
This earthly portion of it, what is that,

But as it is employ'd in holy acts ?
Am I Christ's soldier at a poorer rate
Than I have served an earthly master ? No ;
I feel within my glowing breast a power
Which says I am commission'd for this service.
Give me thy blessing — thy baptismal blessing,
And then God's spirit guide me ! Serving God,
I will not count the cost but to discharge it.

Father. His will direct thee then, my gen'rous son !
His blessing be upon thee ! — Lead him, Sylvius,
To the blest fount, where from his former sins
He shall by heavenly grace be purified. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The garden of SULPICIUS.

*Enter SULPICIUS and PORTIA, with flowers in her
hand.*

Portia. Was it not well to rise with early morn
And pay my homage to sweet Flora ? Never
Were flowers by mid-day cull'd, so fair, so fragrant,
With blending streaky tints, so fresh and bright.
See : twinkling dew-drops lurk in every bell,
And on the fibred leaves stray far apart,
Like little rounded gems of silver sheen,
While curling tendrils grasp with vigorous hold
The stem that bears them ! All looks young and
fresh.

The very spider through his circled cage
Of wiry woof, amongst the buds suspended,
Scarce seems a loathly thing, but like the small
Imprison'd bird of some capricious nymph.
Is it not so, my father ?

Sul. Yes, morn and youth and freshness sweetly
join,

And are the emblems of dear changeful days.
By night those beauteous things —

Portia. And what of night ?
Why do you check your words ? You are not sad ?

Sul. No, Portia ; only angry with myself
For crossing thy gay stream of youthful thoughts
With those of sullen age. Away with them !

What if those bright-leaved flowers, so soft and
silken,

Are gather'd into dank and wrinkled folds
When evening chills them, or upon the earth,
With broken stems and buds torn and dispersed,
Lie prostrate, of fair form and fragrance reft
When midnight winds pass o'er them ; be it so !
All things but have their term.

In truth, my child, I'm glad that I indulg'd thee
By coming forth at such an early hour
To pay thy worship to so sweet a goddess,
Upon her yearly feast.

Portia. I thank you, father ! On her feast, 'tis said,
That she, from mortal eye conceal'd, vouchsafes
Her presence in such sweet and flowery spots :
And where due offerings on her shrine are laid,
Blesses all seeds and shoots, and things of promise.

Sul. How many places in one little day
She needs must visit then!

Portia. But she moves swift as thought. The
hasty zephyr,

That stirr'd each slender leaf, now as we enter'd,
And made a sudden sound, by stillness follow'd,
Might be the rapid rustling of her robe.

Sul. A pleasing fancy, Portia, for the moment,
Yet wild as pleasing.

Portia. Wherefore call it wild?

Full many a time I've listen'd when alone
In such fair spots as this, and thought I heard
Sweet mingled voices uttering varied tones
Of question and reply, pass on the wind,
And heard soft steps upon the ground; and then
The notion of bright Venus or Diana,
Or goddess-nymphs, would come so vividly
Into my mind, that I am almost certain
Their radiant forms were near me, though conceal'd
By subtle drapery of the ambient air.

And oh, how I have long'd to look upon them!
An ardent strange desire, though mix'd with fear.

Nay do not smile, my father: such fair sights
Were seen — were often seen in ancient days:

The poets tell us so.

But look, the Indian roses I have foster'd
Are in full bloom; and I must gather them.

[*Exit eagerly.*]

Sul. (*alone.*) Go, gentle creature, thou art careless
yet.

Ah! couldst thou so remain, and still with me
Be as in years gone by! — It may not be;
Nor should I wish it: all things have their season:
She may not now remain an old man's treasure,
With all her woman's beauty grown to blossom.

Enter ORCERES.

The Parthian prince at such an early hour?

Or. And who considers hours, whose heart is bent
On what concerns a lover and a friend?

Where is thy daughter?

Sul. Within yon flowery thicket, blithe and care-
less;

For though she loves, 'tis with sweet, maiden fancy,
That, not impatient, looks in cheering hope
To future years.

Or. Ay, 'tis a shelter'd passion,

A cradled love, by admiration foster'd:
A showy, toward nurse for babe so bashful.
Thus in the shell, athwart whose snowy lining
Each changeful tint of the bright rainbow plays,
A little pearl is found, in secret value
Surpassing all the rest.

Sul. But sayst thou nothing
Of what I wish to hear? What of Cordenius?

Or. By my good war-bow and its barbed shafts!
By the best war-horse archer e'er bestrode!
I'm still in ignorance; I have not seen him.

Sul. Thou hast not seen him! this is very strange.

Or. So it indeed appears. — My wayward friend
Has from his home been absent. Yesterday,
There and elsewhere I sought, but found him not.
This morning by the dawn again I sought him,
Thinking to find him surely and alone;
But his domestics, much amazed, have told me,
He is not yet return'd. [man.]

Sul. Hush! through yon thicket I perceive a
Or. Some thief or spy.

Sul. Let us withdraw awhile,
And mark his motions; he observes us not.

Enter CORDENIUS from a thicket in the background.

Cor. (*after looking round him with delight.*) Sweet
light of day, fair sky, and verdant earth,
Enrich'd with every beauteous herb and flower,
And stately trees, that spread their boughs, like
tents,

For shade and shelter, how I hail you now!
Ye are His works, who made such fair abodes
For happy innocence, yet, in the wreck
Of foul perversion, has not cast us off.

[*Stooping to look at the flowers.*]

Ye little painted things, whose varied hues
Charm, e'en to wonderment; that mighty hand
Which dyes the mountain's peak with rosy tints
Sent from the rising sun, and to the barb'd
Destructive lightning gives its ruddy gleam,
Grand and terrific, thus adorns even you!
There is a father's full unstinted love
Display'd o'er all, and thus on all I gaze
With the keen thrill of new-waked ecstasy.
What voice is that so near me and so sweet?

PORTIA *without, singing some notes of prelude, and
then a song.*

SONG.

The lady in her early bower
Is blest as bee in morning flower;
The lady's eye is flashing bright,
Like water in the morning light;
The lady's song is sweet and loud,
Like skylark o'er the morning cloud;
The lady's smiles are smiles that pass
Like morning's breath o'er wavy grass.

She thinks of one, whose harness'd car
In triumph comes from distant war;
She thinks of one whose martial state
Will darken Rome's imperial gate;
She thinks of one, with laurel crown'd,
Who shall with sweeter wreaths be bound.
Voice, eye, and smiles, in mingled play,
The lady's happy thoughts betray.

Cor. Her voice indeed, and this my fav'rite song!
It is that gentle creature, my sweet Portia.
I call her mine, because she is the image
Which hath possess'd my fancy. Such vain thoughts

Must now give place. I will not linger here.
This is the garden of Sulpicius;
How have I miss'd my path? She sings again.
[Sings without, as before.]
She wanders fitfully from lay to lay,
But all of them some air that I have praised
In happy hours gone by.

SONG.

The kind heart speaks with words so kindly sweet,
That kindred hearts the catching tones repeat;
And love, therewith, his soft sigh gently blending,
Makes pleasing harmony. Thus softly sending
Its passing cheer across the stilly main,
While in the sounding water dips the oar,
And glad response bursts from the nearing shore,
Comes to our ears the home-bound seamen's strain,
Who from the lofty deck hail their own land again.

Cor. O gentle, sweet, and cheerful! form'd to be
Whate'er my heart could prize of treasured love!
Dear as thou art, I will not linger here.

Re-enter SULPICIOUS and ORCERES, breaking out upon him, and ORCERES catching hold of his robe as he is going off.

Or. Ha! noble Maro, to a coward turn'd,
Shunning a spot of danger!

Sul. Stay, Cordenius.
The fellest foe thou shalt contend with here,
Is she thou callest so gentle. As for me,
I do not offer thee this hand more freely
Than I will grant all that may make thee happy,
If Portia has that power.

Cor. And dost thou mean, in very earnest mean,
That thou wilt give me Portia—thy dear Portia?
My fancy catches wildly at thy words.

Sul. And truly too, Cordenius. She is thine,
If thou wilt promise me to love her truly.

Cor. [eagerly clasping the knees, and then kissing the hands of SULPICIOUS.] Thanks, thanks!
—thanks from my sworn, o'erflowing heart,
Which has no words.—Friend, father, Portia's
father!

The thought creates in me such sudden joy,
I am bewild'rd with it.

Sul. Calm thy spirits.—
Thou shouldst in meeter form have known it sooner,
Had not the execution of those Christians—
(Pests of the earth, whom on one burning pile,
With all their kind, I would most gladly punish.)
Till now prevented me. Thy friend, Orceres—
Thou owest him thanks—pled for thee powerfully,
And had my leave. But dost thou listen to me?
Thy face wears many colours, and big drops
Burst from thy brow, whilst thy contracted lips
Quiver, like one in pain.

Or. What sudden illness racks thee?
Cor. I may not tell you now: let me depart.

Sul. [holding him.] Thou art my promised son;
I have a right

To know whate'er concerns thee, — pain or pleasure.

Cor. And so thou hast, and I may not deceive thee.
Take, take, Sulpicius.—O such with'ring words!
The sinking, sick'ning heart and parched mouth!
I cannot utter them.

Sul. Why in this agony of perturbation?
Nay, strive not now to speak.

Cor. I must, I must! —
Take back thy proffer'd gift; all earth could give; —
That which it cannot give I must retain.

Sul. What words were these? If it were possible,
I could believe thee touch'd with sorcery,
The cursed art of those vile Nazarenes.
Where hast thou pass'd the night? their haunts are
near.

Or. Nay, nay; repress thine anger; noble Maro
May not be question'd thus.

Sul. He may and shall. And yet I will not urge
him,

If he, with hand press'd on his breast, will say,
That he detests those hateful Nazarenes.

Cor. No; though my life, and what is dearer far,
My Portia's love, depended on the words,
I would not, and I durst not utter them.

Sul. I see it well: thou art ensnared and blinded
By their enchantments. Demoniac power
Will drag thee to thy ruin. Cast it off;
Defy it. Say thou wilt forbear all intercourse
With this detested sect. Art thou a madman?

Cor. If I am mad, that which possesses me
Outvalues all philosophers e'er taught,
Or poets e'er imagined.—Listen to me.
Call ye these Christians vile, because they suffer
Pains nature shrinks from, rather than deny
What seems to them the truth? Call ye them sor-
cerers,

Because their words impart such high conceptions
Of power creative and parental love,
In one great Being join'd, as makes the heart
Bound with ennobling thoughts? Call ye them
curst.

Who daily live in steady strong assurance
Of endless blessedness? O, listen to me!

Re-enter PORTIA, bursting from a thicket close to them.

Portia. O, listen to him, father!

Sul. Let go my robe, fond creature! Listen to
him!

The song of syrens were less fatal. Charms
Of dire delusion, luring on to ruin,
Are mingled with the words that speak their faith;
They, who once hear them, flutter round destruction
With giddy fascination, like the moth,
Which, shorn of half its form, all scorch'd and
shrivell'd,

Still to the torch returns. I will not listen;
No, Portia, nor shalt thou.

Portia. O, say not so!
For if you listen to him, you may save him,
And win him from his errors.

Sul. Vain hope! vain hope! What is man's
natural reason

Opposed to demon subtlety? Cordenius!
Cordenius Maro! I adjure thee, go!
Leave me; why wouldst thou pull destruction on
me?

On one who loved thee so, that though possess'd
Of but one precious pearl, most dearly priz'd,
Prized more than life, yet would have given it to
thee.

I needs must weep: e'en for thyself I weep.

Cor. Weep not, my kind Sulpicius! I will leave
thee,

Albeit the pearl thou wouldst bestow upon me
Is, in my estimation, dearer far
Than life, or power, or fame, or earthly thing.
When these fierce times are past, thou wilt, perhaps,
Think of me with regard, but not with pity,
How fell soe'er my earthly end hath been,
For I shall then be blest. And thou, dear *Portia*,
Wilt thou remember me? That thought, alas!
Dissolves my soul in weakness.—

O, to be spared, if it were possible,
This stroke of agony! Is it not possible,
That I might yet—Almighty God forgive me!
Weak thoughts will lurk in the devoted heart,
But not be cherish'd there. I may not offer
Aught short of all to Thee!—

Farewell, farewell! sweet *Portia*, fare thee well!

[*ORCERES catches hold of him to prevent his
going.*]

Retain me not: I am a Parthian now.
My strength is in retreat. [*Exit.*]

Portia. That noble mind! and must it then be
ruin'd?

O save him, save him, father! Brave *Orceres*,
Wilt thou not save thy friend, the noble *Maro*?

Or. We will, sweet maid, if it be possible.
We'll keep his faith a secret in our breasts;
And he may yet, if not by circumstances
Provoked to speak, conceal it from the world.

Portia. And you, my father?

Sul. I will not betray him.

Portia. Then all may yet be well; for our great
gods,

Whom *Cæsar* and his subject-nations worship,
Will not abandon Rome's best, bravest soldier
To power demoniac. That can never be,
If they indeed regard us.

Or. Were he in Parthia, our great god, the sun,
Or rather he who in that star resides,
Would not permit his power to be so thwarted
For all the demonry that e'er exerted
Its baleful influence on wretched men.

Beshrew me! for a thought gleams through my
brain

It is this God, perhaps, with some new name,
Which these bewilder'd Nazarenes adore.

Sul. With impious rites, most strange and hor-
rible.

Or. If he, my friend, in impious rites hath join'd,
Demons, indeed, have o'er the soul of man
A power to change its nature. Ay, Sulpicius;
And thou and I may, ere a day shall pass,
Be very Nazarenes. We are in ignorance;
We shoot our arrow in the dark, and cry,
"It is to wound a foe." Come, gentle *Portia*;
Be not so sad; the man thou lovest is virtuous,
And brave, and loves thee well; why then despair?

Portia. Alas! I know that he is brave and vir-
tuous,

Therefore, I do despair.

Or. In Nero's court,
Such men are ever on the brink of danger,
But wouldst thou have him other than he is?

Portia. O no! I would not; that were base and
sordid;

Yet shed I tears, even like a wayward child
Who weeps for that which cannot be attain'd,—
Virtue, and constancy, and safety join'd.
I pray thee pardon me, for I am wretched,
And that hath made me foolish and perverse.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*Before the gate of NERO'S palace: guards, with their
officers, discovered on duty.*

*Enter to them another officer, speaking, as he enters,
to the soldiers.*

1st offi. Strike up some sacred strain of Roman
triumph;

The Pontiff comes to meet the summon'd council.
Omit not this respect, else he will deem
We are of those who love the Nazarenes.
Sing loud and clearly.

Enter Pontiff, attended.

SACRED HYMN by the soldiers.

That chief, who bends to Jove the suppliant knee,
Shall first in power and high in honour be;
And who to Mars a soldier's homage yields,
Shall laurel'd glory reap in bloody fields;
Who vine-crown'd Bacchus, bounteous lord, adores,
Shall gather still, unscath'd, his vintage stores;
Who to fair Venus lib'ral offering gives,
Enrich'd with love and sweet affection lives.
Then, be your praises still our sacred theme,
O Venus, Bacchus, Mars, and Jove supreme!

Pontiff. I thank you, soldiers! Rome, indeed,
hath triumph'd,

Bless'd in the high protection of her gods,
The sov'reign warrior-nation of the world ;
And, favour'd by great Jove and mighty Mars,
So may she triumph still, nor meanly stoop
To worship strange and meaner deities,
Adverse to warlike glory. [*Exit, with his train.*]

1st offi. The Pontiff seems disturb'd, his brow is lowering.

2d offi. Reproof and caution, mingled with his thanks,

Though utter'd graciously.

1st offi. He is offended,

Because of late so many valiant soldiers
Have proselytes become to this new worship ;
A worship too, as he insinuates,
Unsuited to the brave.

3d offi. Ay, ay ! the sacred chickens are in danger.

2d offi. Sylvius is suspected, as I hear.

1st offi. Hush ! let us to our duty ; it is time
To change the inner guard.

[*Exeunt, with music, into the gate of the palace.*]

SCENE II.

A council-chamber in the palace : NERO with his councillors discovered ; NERO in the act of speaking.

Nero. Yes, Servius ; formerly we have admitted,
As minor powers, amongst the ancient gods
Of high imperial Rome, the foreign deities
Of friendly nations ; but these Nazarenes
Scorn such association, proudly claiming
For that which is the object of their faith,
Sole, undivided homage : and our altars,
Our stately temples, the majestic forms
Of Mars, Apollo, thund'ring Jove himself,
By sculptor's art divine so nobly wrought,
Are held by these mad zealots in contempt.
Examine, sayst thou ! shall imperial Cæsar
Deign to examine what withstands his power ?
I marvel at thy folly, Servius Sillus.

Enter an Officer.

Offi. The Pontiff, mighty Cæsar, waits without
And craves admittance.

Nero. Let him be admitted.

Enter Pontiff.

Pontiff, thy visage, if I read it well,
Says that some weighty matter brings thee here :
Thou hast our leave to speak.

Pontiff. Imperial Nero, didst thou not condemn,
That eloquent, but pestilential Nazarene,
The Grecian Ethocles, whose specious words
Wrap in delusion all who listen to him,
Spreading his baleful errors o'er the world ?

Nero. Did I condemn him ! E'en this very day,
He in the Amphitheatre meets his doom ;
Having, I trust, no power of words to charm
The enchain'd lion, or the famish'd wolf.

Pontiff. I am inform'd, and I believe it true,
That this bold malefactor is enlarged.

Nero. It is impossible ! Cordenius Maro
Is sworn to guard the prisoner ; or, failing,
(How could he fail ?) to pay with his own life
The forfeit. But behold his fav'rite friend,
The Parthian prince, who will inform us truly.

Enter ORCERES, followed by SULPICIUS.

Orceres, is thy friend Cordenius coming ?
I have commanded him, and at this hour,
To bring his guarded prisoner to the palace,
Here to remain till the appointed time.

Or. I know not ; nor have I beheld Cordenius
Since yesterday ; when, at an early hour,
Sulpicius and myself met him by chance :
But for the prisoner, he is at hand,
E'en at the palace gate ; for as we enter'd
We saw him there, well circled round with guards,
Though in the martial throng we saw not Maro.

Nero (to the pontiff). Said I not so ?

(*To an officer.*) Command them instantly
To bring this wordy Grecian to our presence.

[*Exit officer.*]

Sulpicius, thou hast known this Ethocles ;
Is he a madman or ambitious knave,
Who sought on human folly to erect
A kind of fancied greatness for himself ?

Sul. I know not which, great Nero.

Nero. And didst thou not advise me earnestly
To rid the state of such a pestilence ?

Sul. And so I still advise thee ; for this Greek
Is dang'rous above all, who with their lives,
Have yet paid forfeit for their strange belief.
They come : the prisoner in foreign garb
So closely wrapp'd, I scarcely see his face.

Enter prisoner, attended.

Pontiff. If it in truth be he.

Nero (to the pontiff). Dost thou still doubt ?
(*To the prisoner.*) Stand forth, audacious rebel to
my will !

Dost thou still brave it, false and subtle spirit ?

Cor. (*throwing off his Grecian cloak, and advancing to NERO.*) I am not false, Augustus ;
but if subtle,

Add to my punishment what shall be deem'd
Meet retribution. I have truly sworn,
Or to produce thy thrall, or, therein failing,
To give my life for his ; and here I stand.

Ethocles, by a higher power than thine,
Is yet reserved for great and blessed ends.
Take thou the forfeit ; I have kept my oath.

Nero. I am amazed beyond the power of utterance !
Grows it to such a pitch that Rome's brave captains
Are by this wizard sorcery so charm'd ?

Then it is time, good sooth ! that sweeping ven-
geance

Should rid the earth of every tainted thing

Which that curst sect hath touch'd. Cordenius Maro,
Thou who hast fought our battles, graced our state,
And borne a noble Roman's honour'd name,
What, O what power could tempt thee to this shame?

Cor. I have been tempted by that mighty Power
Who gave to Rome her greatness, to the earth
Form and existence; yea, and to the soul
Of living, active man, sense and perception:
But not to shame, O Cæsar! not to shame!

Nero. What, hast thou not become a Nazarene,
As now I apprehended? Say, thou hast not;
And though thy present act is most audacious,
Yet will I spare thy life.

Cor. If thou wouldst spare my life, and to that grace
Add all the wealth of Rome, and all the power
Of Rome's great lord, I would not for the bribe
Be other than I am, or what I am
Basely deny.

Nero. Thou art a Christian, then? Thou art a maniac!

Cor. I am a man, who, seeing in the flames
Those dauntless Christians suffer, long'd to know
What power could make them brave the fear of death,

Disgrace, and infamy. And I have learnt
That they adore a God,—one God, supreme,
Who, over all men, His created sons,
Rules as a father; and beholding sin,
Growth of corruption, mar this earthly race,
Sent down to earth His sinless heavenly son,
Who left, with generous devoted love,
His state of exaltation and of glory,
To win them back to virtue, yea, to virtue
Which shall be crown'd with never-ending bliss.
I've learnt that they with deep adoring gratitude
Pay homage to that Son, the sent of God,
Who here became a willing sacrifice
To save mankind from sin and punishment,
And earn for them a better life hereafter,
When mortal life is closed. The heart's deep
homage
Becometh well such creatures, so redeem'd.

Nero. Out on that dreaming madness!

Cor. Is it madness
To be the humble follower of Him,
Who left the bliss of heaven to be for us
A man on earth, in spotless virtue living,
As man ne'er lived: such words of comfort speaking,
To rouse, and elevate, and cheer the heart,
As man ne'er spoke; and suff'ring poverty,
Contempt, and wrong, and pain, and death itself,
As man ne'er suffer'd? O, if this be madness,
Which makes each generous impulse of my nature
Warm into ecstasy, each towering hope
Rise to the noblest height of bold conception;
That which is reason call'd, and yet has taught you

To worship different gods in every clime,
As dull and wicked as their worshippers,
Compared to it, is poor, confined, and mean,
As is the Scythian's curtain'd tent, compared
With the wide range of fair, expanded nature.

Nero. Away, away, with all those lofty words!
They but bewilder thee.

Cor. Yet hear them, Nero! O resist them not!
Perhaps they are appointed for thy good,
And for the good of thousands. When these hands
Which have so oft done Rome a soldier's service,
This tongue which speaks to thee, are turn'd to
ashes,

What now appears so wild and fanciful,
May be remember'd with far other feelings.
It is not life that I request of Nero,
Although I said these hands have fought for Rome.
No; in the presence of these senators,
First bind thyself by every sacred oath
To give this body to the flames, then hear me;
O could I speak what might convince Rome's chief,
Her senators, her tribes, her meanest slaves,
Of Christ's most blessed truth, the fatal pile
Would be to me a car of joyful triumph,
Mounted more gladly than the laurel'd hero
Vaults to his envied seat, while Rome's throng'd
streets

Resound his shouted name. Within me stirs
The spirit of truth and power which spoke to me,
And will upon thy mind—

Nero. I charge thee cease!

Or. Nay, Emperor! might I entreat for him?

Cor. (catching hold of ORCERES eagerly). Not for my life.

Or. No; not for that, brave Maro!

(To NERO.) Let me entreat that he may freely
speak.

Fearst thou he should convince thee by his words?
That were a foul affront to thine own reason,
Or to the high divinities of Rome.

Nero. Cease, Prince of Parthia! nor too far
presume

Upon a noble stranger's privilege.

Pontiff. Shall words so bold be to thine ear
august

So freely utter'd with impunity?

Or. Pontiff; I much revere thy sacred office,
But scorn thy paltry words. Not freely speak!

Not with impunity! Is this a threat?
Let Rome's great master, or his angry slaves,
Shed one drop of my blood, and on our plains,
Where heretofore full many a Roman corse,
With Parthian arrows pierced, have vultures fed,
Twice thirty thousand archers in array,
Each with his bow strain'd for the distant mark,
Shall quickly stand, impatient for revenge.
Not with impunity!

Sul. Nay, nay, Orceres! with such haughty words
Thou'lt injure him thou pleadst for. Noble Cæsar!

Permit an aged man, a faithful servant,
To speak his thoughts. This brave deluded youth
Is now, as I sincerely do believe,
Beneath the power of strong and dire enchantment.
Hear not his raving words, but spare his life;
And when its power (for all delusion holds
Its power but for a season) shall be spent,
He will himself entreat your clemency,
And be again the soldier of the state,
Brave and obedient. Do not hear him now:
Command him to retire.

Cor. I thank thee, good Sulpicius, but my life,
For which thou pleadst, take no account of that;
I yield it freely up to any death,
Cruel or merciful, which the decree
Of Cæsar shall inflict, for leave to speak
E'en but a few short moments. Princely Nero!
The strong enchantment which deludes my soul
Is, that I do believe myself the creature,
Subject, and soldier, if I so may speak,
Of an Almighty Father, King, and Lord,
Before whose presence, when my soul shall be
Of flesh and blood disrobed, I shall appear,
There to remain with all the great and good
That e'er have lived on earth, yea, and with spirits,
Higher than earth e'er own'd, in such pure bliss
As human heart conceives not,—if my life,
With its imperfect virtue, find acceptance
From pard'ning love and mercy; but, if otherwise,
That I shall pass into a state of misery
With souls of wicked men and wrathful demons:
That I believe this earth on which we stand
Is but the vestibule to glorious mansions,
Through which a moving crowd for ever press;
And do regard the greatest Prince, who now
Inflicts short torment on this flesh, as one
Who but in passing rudely rends my robe.
And thinkest thou that I, believing this,
Will shrink to do His will whom I adore?
Or thinkest thou this is a senseless charm,
That soon will pass away?

Nero. High words, indeed, if resting on good
proof!

A maniac's fancies may be grand and noble.

Cor. Ay, now thou list'nest, as a man should
listen,

With an inquiring mind. Let me produce
The proofs which have constrain'd me to believe,
From written lore and well-attested facts;—
Let me produce my proofs, and it may be
The Spirit of Truth may touch thy yielding heart,
And save thee from destruction.

Nero. Ha! dost thou think to make of me a
convert?

Away, weak fool! and most audacious rebel!
Give proofs of thy obedience, not thy faith,
If thou wouldst earn thy pardon.

Cor. If thou condemn me in the flames to die,
I will and must obey thee; if to live,

Disgraced by pardon won through treachery
To God, my King supreme, and His bless'd Christ,
I am, indeed, thy disobedient rebel.

Nero. And shall as such most dearly pay the
forfeit.

Out!—take him from my presence till the time
Of public execution!

Cordenius Maro, thou shalt fall this day

By no ignoble foe;—a noble lion

Famish'd and fierce shall be thy adversary.

And dost thou smile and raise thy head at this,
In stately confidence?

Cor. God will deliver me from every adversary.

And thou too smilest.—Yes; he will deliver

That which I call *myself*: For this poor form

Which vests me round, I give it to destruction,

As gladly as the storm-beat traveller,

Who, having reach'd his destined place of shelter,

Drops at the door his mantle's cumbrous weight.

Nero (*going*). Then to thy visionary hopes I
leave thee,

Incorrigible man! Here, in this chamber

Keep him secure till the appointed hour.

[*To the officers, &c.*

Off, good Sulpicius! hang not on me thus!

Sul. O mighty Cæsar! countermand your
orders:

Delay it but a month, a week, a day.

[*EXECUT NERO, SULPICIOUS, senators, &c., SULPICIOUS still keeping close to NERO in the act of supplication.—ORCERES, CORDENIUS, and guards remain, the guards standing respectfully at a distance in the background.*

Or. Noble Cordenius! can thy martial spirit

Thus brook to be a public spectacle,

Fighting with savage beasts, the sport of fools,

Till thou shalt fall, deform'd and horrible,

Mangled and piecemeal torn? It must not be.

Cor. Be not so moved, Orceres; I can bear it:

The God I worship, who hath made me humble,

Hath made me dauntless too. And for the shame

Which, as I guess, disturbs thee most, my Master,

The Lord and Leader I have sworn to follow,

Did as a malefactor end his days,

To save a lost, perverted race: shall I

Feel degradation, then, in following Him?

Or. In this, alas! thou'lt follow Him too surely;

But whither, noble Maro? [house.]

Cor. E'en to my destined home, my Father's

Or. And where is that? O, canst thou tell me
where?

Beyond the ocean, or beneath the earth?

Be there more worlds than this, beyond our ken

In regions vast, above the lofty stars?

Could we through the far stretch of space descry

E'en but the distant verge, though dimly mark'd,

Of any other world, I would believe

That virtuous men deceased have in good truth

A destined place of rest.

Cor. Believe it—O, believe it, brave Orceres!
Or. I'll try to do it. I'll become a Christian,
 Were it but only to defy this tyrant.

Cor. Thou must receive with a far different spirit

The faith of Jesus Christ. Perhaps thou wilt.
 My heart leaps at the thought. When I am dead,
 Remain in Rome no longer. In the East
 Search thou for Ethocles, whom I have rescued;
 And if he shall convert thee, O how richly
 He will repay all I have done for him!—
 But I would now withdraw a little space,
 To pour my thoughts in prayer and thankfulness
 To Him, the great, the good, the wise, the just,
 Who holds man's spirit in His own high keeping,
 And now supports my soul, and will support it,
 Till my appointed task is done. In secret
 The hearts by Jesus taught were bid to pray,
 And, if it be permitted, so will I.

(*To the guards, who advance as he speaks to them.*)

My guards, and, some time past, my fellow-soldiers,

Let me remain alone a little while,
 And fear not my escape. If ye distrust me,
 Watch well the door, and bind my hands with
 chains!

1st *offi.* Yes, brave Cordenius, to another chamber

Thou mayst retire, and we will watch without.
 But be thy person free: we will not bind,
 With felon cord or chain, those valiant hands,
 Which have so often for thy country fought,
 Until we are commanded.

Cor. I thank you all, my friends, and I believe
 That I shall meet and thank you too hereafter;
 For there is something in you God must love.

(*To 1st officer.*) And, loving, will not give to
 reprobation.

Codrus, thou once didst put thy life in hazard,
 And suffer much to save a helpless Greek
 Who sought protection of thee.

(*Turning to the 2d officer.*) Ay, and thou,
 Young Lelius, once a rich and tempting ransom
 Didst freely to a captive wretch remit.

Ye are of those whom Jesus came to save:
 Yes; we shall meet hereafter.

(*To 3d officer.*) And thou, my former enemy,
 weep'st thou?

We're enemies no more; thou art my brother.
 I will retire; my little term of life
 Runs fleetly on; I must not spend it thus.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*A crowded amphitheatre; NERO and the senators
 discovered in the background sitting in state;
 PORTIA, by the side of NERO, in the act of suppli-
 cation.*

*Enter SULPICIOUS on the front, meeting with another
 noble Roman.*

Sul. (eagerly). Is he advancing?
Noble Roman. Yes, and close at hand,
 Surrounded by a group of martial friends.
 Oft have I seen him on a day of battle
 March to the charge with noble portly gait;
 But now he treads the ground with buoyant steps
 Which from its surface spring, as though he press'd
 Substance of renovating power. His form
 Seems stately and enlarged beyond its wont;
 And in his countenance, oft turn'd to heaven,
 There is a look as if some god dwelt in him.

Sul. How do the people greet him?
Noble Roman. Every face
 Gazing upon him, turns, with transit quick,
 Pity to admiration. Warlike veterans
 Are shedding tears like infants. As he pass'd
 The legion he commanded in Armenia,
 They raised a shout as if a victor came,
 Saluting him with long and loud applause,
 None daring to reprove them.

[*Noise without of shouting.*]

Hark! he comes.

*Enter CORDENIUS, followed by ORCERES and
 SYLVIUS, and attended by other friends, with
 guards, &c.*

Sul. (advancing eagerly to meet him). Cordenius,
 O Cordenius, hear a friend,
 A faithful ancient friend; thy Portia's father!
 At Nero's footstool she is pleading for thee,
 And will not plead in vain, if thou wilt testify
 A yielding mind, a willingness to live.

Cor. I am so pleased to die, and am so honour'd
 In dying for the pure and holy truth,
 That nature's instinct seems in me extinguish'd.
 But if the Emperor freely pardon me,
 I shall believe it is the will of God
 That I should yet on earth promote His service,
 And, so believing, am content to live;
 Living or dying, to His will resign'd.

*Enter PORTIA on the front, and catching hold of
 CORDENIUS with eagerness and great agitation.*

Portia. Cordenius, thou art pardon'd! Nero
 spares thee,

If thou wilt only say thou art a Roman,
 In heart and faith, as all thy fathers were,
 Or but forbear to say thou art a Christian.

Cor. Thanks, gentle Portia! life preserved by
 thee,

E'en to be spent in want and contumely,
 Rather than grieve thy kind and tender heart,
 My dearest, gentlest friend! I had accepted:
 But to deny my God, and put dishonour
 Upon the noblest, most exalted faith
 That ever was to human thoughts reveal'd,

Is what I will not—yea, and though a Roman,
A noble Roman, and a soldier too,
I dare not do. Let Nero have this answer.

Portia. No, not this answer, Maro; not this answer!

Cast not life from thee, dear, most dear Cordenius!
Life, too, which I should spend my life in cheer-
ing,

Cast it not from thee like a worthless thing.

Cor. Because it is not worthless but most precious,

And now, when dear to thee, more precious far
Than I have e'er esteem'd it, 'tis an offering
More meet for God's acceptance;
Withheld from Him, not even thyself, sweet maid,
Couldst cheer its course, nor yet couldst thou be happy.

Portia. Nay, but I could!—to see thee still alive,

And by my side, mine own redeemed friend,
Should I not then be happy?

Cor. I should be by thy side, dear love! but thou,

With all thy excellence, couldst have no happiness,
Mated with one, whose living form alone
Could move upon the earth, while far adrift
His mind would dwell by ceaseless meditation,
In other worlds of blessedness or woe;
Lost to the one, and to the other link'd
By horrid sympathy, till his wretch'd nature
Should to a demon's fell and restless spirit
At last be changed.

Portia. Alas, alas! and dost thou then believe
That nought remains for thee but death or misery?

Cor. No, gentle Portia! firmly I believe
That I shall live in endless happiness,
And with the blest hereafter shall behold
Thy blessed self with ecstasy of love,
Exceeding every thought of earth-born passion,
As the fair morning star in lovely brightness
Excels a night-fly, twinkling through the gloom.
Live in this hope, dear Portia! hold it fast;
And may His blessing rest upon thy head,
Who loves the loving and the innocent!
Farewell, in love and hope! farewell, in peace!
Farewell, in quick'ning faith,—in holy joy!

Portia (*claspings his knees*). Nay, let me yet con-
jure thee!

Make me not wretched, I who once was happy,
And happiest of all in loving thee.

Cor. This is my anguish and my suffering!
O, good Sulpicius, bear her to her home.

Sul. (*leading her gently away, while she still clings to him*).
Forebear, my child, thy tears are all
in vain.

Enter a Lictor.

Lictor. Cæsar forbids all further interruption
To his imperial sentence. Let Cordenius

Forthwith prepare him for the fatal fight.

This is mine office, and I must perform it.

[*Begins to disrobe CORDENIUS, while PORTIA shrieks aloud, and is carried off in the arms of her father.*

Disrobe thee, Maro, of those martial weeds.

Cor. Gladly! for Him I serve;—my glorious
Master

Hath braced me with an armour that defies
All hostile things; in which I'll strive more proudly
Than I have ever fought in field or breach
With Rome's or Nero's foes.

Lictor. Cæsar desires thee also to remember,
That no ignoble audience, e'en thy Emperor,
And all the states of Rome, behold thy deeds.

Cor. Tell him my deeds shall witness'd be by
those

Compared to whom the Emperor of Rome,
With all her high estates, are but as insects
Hov'ring at mid-day o'er some tainted marsh.
I know full well that no ignoble audience
Are present, though from mortal eyes conceal'd.
Farewell, my friends! kind, noble friends, farewell!

[*Apart to SYLVIVS, while ORCERES goes off, re-appearing in another part of the theatre.*

Sylvius, farewell! If thou shouldst e'er be call'd
To die a holy martyr for the truth,
God give thee then the joy which now I feel.
But keep thy faith conceal'd, till useful service
Shall call thee to maintain it. God be with thee!
(*Looking round*). Where is Orceres gone? I
thought him near me.

Sylvius. 'Tis but a moment since he left thy side
With eager haste.

Cor. He would not see my death. I'm glad he's
gone.

Say I beguins for him, and say I bless'd him.
—Now I am ready. Earthly friends are gone.
Angels and blessed spirits! to your fellowship
A few short pangs will bring me.

—O, Thou, who didst upon the cross for us
A willing suff'rer die, receive my soul!
Almighty God and Sire, supreme o'er all,
Pardon my sins and take me to Thyself!
Accept the last words of my earthly lips:
High hallelujah to Thy holy name!

[*A lion now appears, issuing from a low door at the end of the stage, and CORDENIUS, advancing to meet it, enters the arena, when ORCERES from a lofty stand amongst the spectators, sends an arrow from his bow, which pierces CORDENIUS through the heart. He then disappears, and re-entering below, catches hold of his hand as SYLVIVS supports him from falling to the ground.*

Or. (*to CORDENIUS*). Have I done well, my
friend?—this is a death

More worthy of a Roman.
I made a vow in secret to my heart,

That thou shouldst ne'er be made a mangled sight
For gazing crowds and Nero's ruthless eye.

Sylvius. That dying look, which almost smiles
upon thee,
Tells thee thou hast done well ; though words no
more

May pass from these clos'd lips, whose last, bless'd
utterance

Was the soul's purest and sublimest impulse.

[*The curtain drops.*]

NOTE TO THE DRAMA.

FOR the better understanding of different allusions in the foregoing drama, I beg to transcribe a few passages from Fox's History of Martyrs, taken from Book I., which contains an account of the ten persecutions of the primitive church.

He says, on the authority of Justin Martyr,—"And whether earthquake, pestilence, or whatever public calamity befell, it was attributed to the Christians ;" (then is added) "over and beside all these, a great occasion that stirred up the emperors against the Christians came by one Publius Tarquinus, the chief prelate of the idolatrous sacrifices, and Mamertinus, the chief governor of the city, in the time of Trajanus, who, partly with money, partly with sinister, pestilential counsaile, partly with infamous accusations, (as wit-

nesseth Naucleus,) incensed the mind of the emperor so much against God's people."

In the account of the third persecution (AN. 100), Eustasius, a great and victorious captain, is mentioned as suffering martyrdom, by order of the Emperor Adrian, who went to meet him on his return from conquest over the barbarians, but, upon Eustasius's refusing on the way to do sacrifice to Apollo for his victory, brought him to Rome and had him put to death.

In the fourth persecution (AN. 162), it is mentioned that many Christian soldiers were found in the army of Marcus Aurelius :—

"As these aforesaid were going to their execution, there was a certain soldier who in their defence took part against those who railed upon them, for the which cause the people crying out against him, he was apprehended, and being constant in his profession, was forthwith beheaded."

In the persecutions of Decius, several soldiers are mentioned as martyrs, some of whom had before concealed their faith ; and in the tenth persecution, Mauritius, the captain of the Theban band, with his soldiers, to the number of 6666 (a number probably greatly exaggerated), are recorded as having been slain as martyrs by the order of Maximian.

Tertullian, in his Apology for the Christians, mentions the slanderous accusations against them, of putting to death children and worshipping an ass's head. And when we consider how fond the ignorant are of excitement, arising from cruel, absurd, and wonderful stories, and how easily a misapprehended and detached expression may be shaped by conjecture into a detailed transaction, such accusations were very probable and might be naturally expected ; particularly when the unoffending meekness of their behaviour made supposed hidden atrocities more necessary for the justification of their persecutors.

[*The following was prefixed to the Second Volume of "Dramas."*]

TO THE READER.

THAT the largeness of our two regular, long-established Theatres, so unfavourable for seeing and hearing clearly and accurately, have changed in a great measure the character of the pieces generally exhibited within their walls, is a fact on which it would be useless now to dwell. How far the smaller Theatres of later establishment, some of which are of a proper size for the production of plays that depend for success on being thoroughly understood by the audience, will in time introduce a better state of things, it would be hazardous for any one to conjecture. At present, however, from various circumstances, from restrictions, from customs, from acquired tastes, &c., the prospect is not encouraging. But the cause that more, perhaps, than any other depresses the moral and rational effects of the Modern Stage, is an opinion entertained by many grave and excellent people, that dramatic exhibition is unfriendly to the principles and spirit of Christianity.

This deserves to be more seriously examined, because it prevails amongst a most respectable class of the community, many of whom are possessed of good understanding, of learning and imagination, and cannot, without a great breach of charity, be

supposed to be actuated by worldliness or hypocrisy.

— It is in the nature of man to delight in representations of passion and character. Children, savages, learned and unlearned of every nation, have with more avidity received instruction in this form than in any other, whether offered to them as a mimic show before their eyes, or a supposed story, enlivened by dialogue and addressed to the imagination alone. The blessed Founder of our religion, who knew what was in man, did not contradict nor thwart this propensity of our nature, but, with that sweetness and graciousness which peculiarly belonged to His divine character, made use of it for the instruction of the multitude, as His incomparable parables so beautifully testify. The sins and faults which He reproved were not those that are allied to fancy and imagination, the active assistants of all intellectual improvement, but worldliness, uncharitableness, selfish luxury, spiritual pride, and hypocrisy. In those days, the representation of Greek dramas prevailed in large cities through the whole Roman empire ; yet the Apostles only forbade their converts to feast in the temples of idols, and on sacrifices offered to idols, and trusted that the general gentleness and humanity enjoined on them as followers of their blessed Master, would keep them away from spectacles of cruelty and blood. We cannot, therefore,

it appears to me, allege that dramatic representations are contrary either to the precepts or spirit of the Christian religion.

But probably it is not a real conviction, that going to a theatre is in itself unchristian or wrong, which keeps such persons away, but a conscientious persuasion that it ought to be discountenanced, because of the bad tendency of the pieces exhibited there, before the eyes of the innocent and susceptible; and because of the disorderly and worthless company who frequent playhouses, and gather about their passages and neighbourhood. These indeed are weighty and plausible reasons, that deserve to be thoroughly examined. And how far the absence of the grave and moral part of society from such places tends to remedy or increase the evils apprehended, ought also to be seriously considered. We shall begin, then, with the bad tendency of the pieces exhibited.

A manager must suit his plays to the character of the most influential part of his audience. The crowd in the gallery and pit can be very well entertained with a piece that has neither coarseness nor immorality in it; but the more refined and better informed, who generally occupy the boxes, and occasionally the pit, cannot be pleased with one in which there is any thing immoral or indecorous. But, if the refined and well-informed stay away, there is nothing, then, to be taken into the account but how to please such auditors as commonly fill the pit and galleries, and the boxes will very soon be occupied by company, somewhat richer, indeed, but not more scrupulous or intelligent than the others. Now, supposing matters to have come to this pass, what kind of entertainment will be provided for them? Scurrility and broad satire is more easily procured than wit; and delineations of low profligacy require less skill than those of the habits and characters of higher or more virtuous society. Will a manager, then, be at pains to provide delicate fare for those who are as well satisfied with garbage? This is surely not to be expected; and in as far as moral or intellectual improvement has been or may be superseded by intellectual debasement, occasioned by such well-meaning absentees from our theatres, so far does their absenting themselves do mischief.

Let us next examine the other reason, viz. the disorderly and worthless people who frequent playhouses, and gather about their passages and neighbourhood. Young women of respectable families, whatever their rank may be, go to theatres protected and kept out of the way of witnessing any thing improper, or in so transient a manner as to be scarcely apprehended, and soon forgotten. It is, then, the effect which coming in contact with such company may have on young men that must chiefly be attended to. Formerly, when a youth came from the country to London, he went to the theatre in attendance on the ladies of some sober family, to

whose notice he might be recommended. Often some good aunt, cousin, or friend, pointed out to him the beauties and defects of the play, or the remarkable people present amongst the spectators, if any such were there; and near her and her party, he was kept out of the reach of contamination. He most probably attended this friendly party home, and had some slight refreshment with them before he returned to his solitary lodging, and next morning he awoke with a pleased fancy and an easy mind. In those days, too, young men, resident in London, went frequently to the theatre with their mothers or sisters, or other members of their own family; and even if they went alone, the probability of their meeting some of their respectable acquaintance was a salutary check upon the dangerous spirit of adventure. But now this is no longer the case: the simple stripling goes by himself, or with some companion equally thoughtless and imprudent; and the confidence he feels there of not being under the observation of any whom he is likely to meet elsewhere, gives him a freedom to follow every bent of his present inclination, however dangerous.

Nay, there are some excellent persons who carry the matter so far as to wage general war against pleasures derived from imagination. To bring before the mind representations of strong passions, they say, is dangerous and unfavourable to virtue. Most assuredly, if they are brought before the mind as examples, or as things slightly to be blamed, as evils unavoidably incident to human nature, they are dangerous; but if they are exhibited as warnings, and as that which produces, when indulged, great human misery and debasement, they teach us a lesson more powerful than many that proceed from the academical chair or the pulpit. Consistently with this maxim, historians, too, should refrain from animated and descriptive narrations of treasons, insurrections, sieges, and battles; and the praises bestowed upon Livy, and other ancient writers, for having made the events they relate, with their causes, viz. the strong passions of men, so vividly present to the imagination of the reader, instead of being their glory, becomes their reproach. The history of nations ought, upon this principle, to be given in the most calm, concise manner, as a story upon which to fasten maxims, observations, and advice, but by no means to excite or interest: and what would formerly have been called the dullest book must be esteemed the best. What I have ventured to say of history will also apply to novels, and all works of fiction. Even the master-pieces of our painters and sculptors are liable to similar animadversion: in proportion as they excel in the higher departments of art they are dangerous. For what have been the subjects of such works, but the actions of men under the influence of strong passions?

Were the pleasures we derive from works of imagination discouraged and set aside, should we

become more intellectual and more virtuous under their didactic matter-of-fact system? I apprehend not; but rather that the increase of gratifications allied to the inferior part of our nature would, by degrees, prevail over those of a higher derivation.

I readily admit that I cannot be considered as an unbiassed judge upon this subject; but the observations I have presumed to lay before my Reader, must with him stand or fall according to their own justice or importance.

THE SEPARATION:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

GARCIO, *an Italian count.*
 ROVANI, *his friend.*
 GONZALOS, *an old officer.*
 THE MARQUIS OF TORTONA.
 LUDOVICO, *seneschal of the castle.*
 GAUVINO, *chamberlain.*
 PIETRO, } *servants.*
 GOMEZ, }
 Hermit, &c. &c.

WOMEN.

MARGARET, *wife to GARCIO.*
 SOPHERA, *her attendant and friend.*
 Nurse, &c.

Scene, a small state in Italy.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A chamber, with a great screen at the bottom of the stage, behind which part of a bed is seen, and voices heard as the curtain draws up, while PIETRO and GOMEZ are discovered on the front, looking from a half-opened door, as if listening.

Gomez. What said he last? the word died on his tongue.

Pie. So much the better.

Gomez. Makes he confession? Hast thou listen'd long?

He ever wore, e'en in his days of health,
 The scowling eye of an inquiet mind,
 And some black deed disturbs his end. E'en so;
 Thy face confirms it.

Pie. We shall be discover'd.

[*Exeunt, shutting the door softly, while LUDOVICO and GAUVINO come forward from behind the screen.*]

Gau. (*looking earnestly at LUDOVICO, before he speaks*). What thinkst thou of it?

Lud. It is very strange.

Gau. 'Tis but the fever'd ravings of disease:
 Hast thou more serious thoughts?

Lud. I would our good confessor were arrived,
 Whate'er my thoughts may be.

Gau. Ay; then I can divine them. To my judgment,

He speaks like one more forced to utterance
 By agony of mind than the brain's sickness.
 The circumstances of the horrid deed;
 The wondrous fleetness of his gallant steed
 Which bore Count Garcio through the forest
 paths——

Lud. Cease, cease! I would the father were arrived.

Gau. It was his fav'rite steed, and yet he ne'er
 Made mention of its name or of its end,
 But, when we praised its fleetness, frown'd in silence.
 I've wonder'd oft at this, but thought no ill.

Lud. Nor think it now. It is not credible,—
 Making, as then he did, a lover's suit
 To the fair Margaret, Ulrico's sister,—
 That he should murder him.

Gau. He was the heir of all Ulrico's lands.

Lud. True; so he was.

Gau. Ulrico loved him not, and oft opposed
 His suit as most presumptuous. But for this,
 Her brother's sudden end, the lovely maid
 Had ne'er been Garcio's wife. [facts

Lud. All this is true; and yet, perhaps, those
 Have on the mind of this poor dying wretch
 Impress'd dark fancies, which the fever'd brain
 Shapes into actual deed. Ob, it is horrible!
 Canst thou believe one of his noble race
 Could do a deed befitting ruffian hands,
 And only such? Had he thus wickedly
 Devised Ulrico's death, some hired assassin
 Had done the bloody work, not his own hands.

Gau. Well, but what thinkst thou of his strange
 aversion

To this, the goodliest seat our country boasts ?
 Although his countess oft hath urged him to it,
 He hath not since his marriage here resided, —
 Nay, hath not pass'd a night within these walls :
 And, but that he is absent at the wars,
 E'en though the recent earthquake has in ruins
 His other castle laid, and forced us thence,
 This mansion had remain'd untenanted.

Lud. I would the ghostly father were arrived !
 (*Voice heard behind the screen.*) Blood will ac-
 cuse : — am I not cursed for this ?

Lud. He speaks again : I thought that for the
 while

He had been sunk into a state of stupor.
 Go thou and watch by him, Gauvino ; haste !
 For steps approach, and none must be admitted.

[*GAUVINO retires behind the screen ; and LU-
 DOVICO, running to the door, meets SOPHERA,
 and endeavours to prevent her entering.*

Thou mayst not come : he's still ; he is asleep :
 Thou canst not see him. [*Voice heard again.*

Soph. Asleep, sayst thou ? do I not hear his
 voice ?

Nay, let me pass ; I will not be withheld.
 My lady follows me with some good drug
 To chafe his brow, poor wretch ! and give him
 comfort.

Lud. Return, and tell the countess to forbear :
 She must not see him ; foul unwholesome air
 Has made the chambers noxious. Hie thee back,
 And say she must not come.

Soph. And dost thou think this will prevent her ?
 Never,

E'en from the sick-bed of her meanest servant,
 Hath she stood fearfully aloof, when comfort
 Could be administer'd.

I've seen the pain-rack'd wretch smile in his pain
 To see his lady's sweetly pitying face
 Peep past his ragged curtain, like a gleam
 Of kindly sunshine, bidding him good morrow.
 And thinkst thou now, from this poor dying man,
 The oldest faithful follower of his lord,
 To keep her back with such a plea as this ?

Lud. Cease ! urge no more. Return ; she must
 not come :

The sick man is distorted-grown, and changed,
 Fearful to look upon : a lady's gentleness
 May not such sight abide.

Soph. A poor excuse !
 Hast thou forgotten when those wounded soldiers
 Lay near our walls, after a bloody skirmish
 Left on the field from which their comrades fled,
 How she did stand with steady master'd pity,
 'Midst horrid sights from which her women fled
 With looks averted, till each bleeding wretch
 Was bound and comforted ? Distorted, sayst
 thou !

Who goes to chambers of disease and death
 To look on pleasant sights ?

(*Voice again.*) I did not murder him.
Soph. He spoke of murder !

[*LUDOVICO pressing her back as she advances
 eagerly towards the screen, whilst GAUVINO
 comes forward to assist him.*

Lud. Thou shalt as soon pass through my body,
 fool !

Such cursed obstinacy ! art thou mad ?
 If thou regardst thy lady's peace of mind,
 Fly, I conjure thee, and prevent her coming.

Enter Countess behind them.

Countess. And why, good Ludovico ?
Lud. (*who starts on seeing her.*) Gracious
 heaven !

Countess. Why lookst thou so aghast ! Is Bald-
 win dead ?

Lud. He is ; and therefore go not.
 [*She still endeavours to pass.*

No, no ! he is not ; be entreated, madam !
Countess. What cause so strangely moves thee ?

Lud. A powerful cause, that must not be re-
 veal'd.

O, be entreated then !
 (*Voice again.*) Ulrico's blood was shed by
 Garcia's hand,

Yet I must share the curse.
Lud. Run to him quickly ! wherefore didst
 thou leave him ?

[*GAUVINO again retires as before.*
Countess. What words were those he utter'd ?

Lud. Words of despair and frenzy ; heed them
 not,

But quit the chamber. O, for heaven's sake, go !
 [*Exeunt ; LUDOVICO hurrying off the Countess
 and SOPHERA.*

SCENE II.

A small ante-room or passage.

Enter PIETRO and GOMEZ by opposite sides.

Gomez. Is the confessor with poor Baldwin still ?

Pie. He is ; but, as I guess, will leave him pre-
 sently ;

I heard, just now, the chamber-door unlock'd.
 I'll keep my station here, and see him pass.

Gomez. And so will I. Ha ! yonder, see, he
 comes. [*his eyes*

Pietro. His head bends to the ground, and o'er
 His hood is drawn : would I could see his face !
 He is the cousin of our seneschal, —
 I'll speak to him.

Enter a Friar, walking hastily across the stage.

Good father ! give your blessing :
 How is your penitent ?

[*Friar waves him off with his hand, and exit.*

Gomez. He motions with his hand and will not
 speak.

Pie. In so much haste to go! this is not well.
 [Shaking his head.
 No, no! it hath a dark and rueful look.
 Well; God be praised! these hands are free from
 blood. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

The apartment of the Countess; she is discovered pacing to and fro with slow, thoughtful steps, then stops short, and stands in a musing posture some time before she speaks aloud.

Countess. 'Tis often thus; so are we framed by nature.

How oft the fitful wind or sullen bell
 Will utter to the ear distinctive words,
 According with the fancy's wild conceptions!
 So are the brains of sick and frenzied men
 Stored with unreal and strange imaginations.
 (After a short pause.) Am I become a maniac?
 Oh! have words,
 To which the firm conviction of my mind
 So strongly stands opposed, the baleful power
 To fix this misery on me? This is madness!

Enter SOPHERA behind.

Is't thou, Sophera?

Soph. Yes, 'tis only I.

Countess. Is every decent office of respect
 Done to the cause?

Soph. Yes, nought has been omitted.

Countess. 'Tis well; but what detains the good
 confessor?

I wish'd to see him.

Soph. He stay'd but till his wretched penitent
 Had breathed his last, and quickly left the castle.

Countess. He is in haste, methinks; 'tis somewhat
 strange.

Why lookst thou on me with that fearful eye?
 Thinkst thou the ravings of a frenzied mind
 Have power to move me?

Soph. I only thought—I fear'd—you wisely
 judge;

Why should they move you? Well, the dismal
 story

Of that most dismal murder, here committed
 By hands unknown, might to a sickly brain
 Such thoughts create of nothing.

Countess. What sayst thou? here committed!

Soph. Did not your hapless brother in this castle
 Come to his end?

Countess. Yes, but a natural end.

Soph. So grant it were! it is not so reported.

Countess. Ha! what is else reported?

Soph. The peasants round all idle stories credit;
 And say that in his castle, by his servants,
 He was discover'd in the eastern tower
 Murder'd. But, doubtless, 'tis a tale of falsehood,
 Since 'tis to thee unknown.

Countess (sinking back into a chair). It was to
 me unknown.

(After a long pause.) Dear, dear! the friend, the
 brother of my heart,
 The playmate of my early, happy days,
 Could such a fate be thine!
 It makes me weep to think it possible,
 Yet I believe it not.

Soph. You tremble much.

Countess. I'm cold and chill: 'tis weariness of
 body;

Do not regard it; I shall soon be better.

[Trumpet sounds without.

A trumpet! then some martial guest approaches.

O most unwelcome!

Soph. 'Tis Tortona's Marquis.

Countess. He is not in these parts; it cannot be.

Soph. He is upon his march with some gay
 troops

To join the army, and hath made a halt
 Here in our nearest town to rest his men.
 So said his servant, whom I found this morning
 Lurking within the castle; and I guess
 His warlike lord is come.

Countess. I cannot see him.

Go thou; plead my excuse: I am unwell;
 Say what thou wilt, but let me be excused.

Enter ROVANI.

Rovani here!—O, how is this? My lord?

Rov. He is not far behind. I am, fair lady,
 The vanguard of his band; and, as I trust,
 Bearing no dismal tidings.

Countess. O no! they should, indeed, be joyful,
 if—

And, as in truth I trust—my lord is well!

Rov. Yes; by the wars, unhurt and strong in
 health,

Garcio returns! where he has done the service
 Of an undaunted powerful combatant,
 To that of a right skillful leader join'd.
 He is not one of your reserved chiefs,
 Who, pointing with their dainty fingers, thus,
 Say, "Go, my friends, attack yon frowning ranks."
 No, by my faith! with heavy scimitar
 He closes to the bloody work himself,
 And to the carnage of each grizly field
 Brings his full tale of death.

Countess (shrinking back). Is he so ruthless, then?

Rov. Ay, in the field.

But in your hall or bower, where ladies smile,
 Who is more gentle? Thus it often is:
 A lady feels not on her soldier's hand,
 That softly presses her more gentle palm,
 The deaths which it has dealt.

Soph. I'm sure, were but thy rapier like thy
 tongue,

The count must have in thee an able second.

Rov. I may not boast; but doth my circled finger

More rudely press thy snowy arm, fair maid,
Because this graven jewel was the gift
Of a great Moorish princess, whose rude foe
I slew before her eyes?

Soph. Some angry puppy that with snarling
mouth
Snapp'd at her robe or sandal'd heels, belike.

Rov. Nay, by my faith! a foe in worth mine
equal.

Soph. That I will grant thee readily. But say,
How far behind thee is the noble count?

Countess. Ay, is he near?

Rov. Within a few short miles.
The war has ended sooner than we guess'd,
And we have made good speed.

Countess. So near!

Rov. How is it? This affects you strangely.

Countess. Such unexpected news! I should be
glad,

But gladness comes with pain. I will retire,
And for a moment strive to calm this tremor.

(*To SOPHERA.*) Follow me not. [*Exit.*

Rov. (*looking after her as she goes off.*) I have,
ere now, beheld the sudden news

Of a good lord's return from foreign lands
By wedded dame received; but so received,
Never till now. How's this? What is the matter?
How shall a simple bachelor, as I am,
Have thoughts of this bless'd state, if such as she
Cold and capricious prove?

Soph. Blame her not hastily; she is depress'd:
Old Baldwin, whom his master left behind,
That faithful servant, died with us this morning.

Rov. Alas, poor soul! and he is gone at last!
Well, we have brought you thirsty throats enow
To drink his fun'ral wassails. Ay, poor Baldwin!
A hardy knave thou wast in better days.

If I had known of this, heav'n rest his soul!
I had not sounded my approach so cheerly.

Soph. To tell the truth, that martial sound de-
ceived us.

We took you for Tortona's warlike lord,
Who, to refresh his passing troops, we hear,
Has made a halt:—I thought—

Rov. Out with thy thought!
Why dost thou hesitate?—I will explain it.
I've brought you disappointment.

Soph. You mistake me.
Rov. Nay, pardon me; I linger here too long:
But,—ere I go,—how does the infant heir?

I must tell Garcio I have seen his boy,
Soph. With pleasure I'll conduct thee. 'Tis an
urchin

Provoking smiles of love from every face
That looks upon him, be it e'er so stern.

Rov. How then will a fond father feel!—How
oft—

How often and fondly hath he talk'd of him!
Though but a little grasp of shapeless life,

With puling whine, just winking to the light,
As I remember well, when Garcio left him.

Soph. Is Garcio, then, so tender?

Rov. Dost thou doubt it?
The bear doth love his cub, bear though he be:
But Garcio is a man of strong affections.
Come, pray thee, lead. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*A wild alley with a grove behind. Martial music
heard without.*

*Then enter GARCIO with his soldiers on march, and
GONZALOS.*

Gar. Halt, my brave comrades; here we'll rest
awhile

Till sultry noon be past. Those spreading trees
Will give you shade.

(*To GONZALOS.*) Seest thou Rovani coming?

Gon. No, good my lord; but through the trees I
see

Your castle's turrets brighten'd with the sun.

Look there! it is a fair, enliv'ning sight.

Gar. (*turning away, after a hasty look.*) I see, I
see.—But wherefore stays Rovani!

(*To soldiers.*) Go, choose, each as he lists, his spot
of rest;

I'll keep me here.

[*GONZALOS and the soldiers retire to the bottom
of the stage, but still appear partially through
the trees.*

(*After musing some time.*) An infant's life!

What is an infant's life? the chilly blast,

That nips the blossom, o'er the cradle breathes,

And child and dam like blighted sweetness fade.

If this should be! O, dear, uncertain bliss!

Shame on his tardy steps!—Ha! here he comes!

Enter ROVANI, while GARCIO runs up to him eagerly.

They are alive? they're well? And thou hast seen
them?

Rov. Your lady and your son?

Gar. (*impatently.*) Ay, ay!

Rov. They're well.

Gar. Thank heav'n, they are!—But yet thy
words are slow:

Does she not follow thee? Waits she my coming?

Rov. She surely does expect it.

Gar. What voice, what looks are these? O speak
more freely!

If there be mercy in thee, speak more freely!

[*Pauses and looks earnestly at him.*

Something is wrong—I have nor wife nor child!

Rov. They are both well: have I not spoken plain
words?

Gar. Plain words! yes, baldly plain; reserved and heartless.

Thou dost not use me like a fellow soldier, In the same warfare worn.—What hast thou seen? Thou sayst my lady's well: did she receive, With a wife's joy, the news of my return?

Rov. I am not skill'd to say; for dispositions Of various hues are variously affected. The news were sudden and unlook'd for: oft The joy of such is clouded and disturb'd. She did withdraw in secrecy to hide Her strong emotions.

Gar. She was strongly moved?

Rov. I know not how it was. The servants, too, Whisper'd together as I pass'd, and look'd With a strange staring gravity upon me. Dull clowns! who should have cast their caps in air For joy of your return. Baldwin is dead; And if for him they wear those sombre looks, Good piteous souls they are. A courtly damsel, Attending on the countess, did, forsooth! Mistake my trumpet for the glad arrival Of some gay visitor, who was expected; Whose buxom train, no doubt, contains some youth More grateful to her sight than war-worn knight, Such as my paltry self.

Gar. What visitor?

Rov. That very martial lord, The Marquis of Tortona, save his worth! For he conducts his soldiers through these parts, And makes a halt in this fair neighbourhood, Some days or so, for needful recreation. [A pause. What! stay we here to ruminate upon it? Will that avail?—Come, onward to the castle! And, be our welcome there or cold or kind, 'Tis what heav'n sends us.

Gar. Off; disturb me not! Thy heart is light.

Rov. No, Garcio; 'tis not light If thine be heavy. I have told my tale Too well I see it now—but foolishly: [on it: Yet their cold looks provoked me.—Brood not There is one face, at least, within your walls Will smile on you with sweet and guileless smiles: A noble boy,—might call a monarch father, Ay, by my faith! and do him honour, too.

Gar. Does he lisp sounds already?—And so lovely?

I've found tears now, press'd being that I am! Come then; I'll summon strength: what'er betide, Or good or ill, I'll meet it. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

An apartment in the castle.

Enter Countess and SOPHERA.

Countess. He is within the gates; here will I stop, Nor wander further: I'll receive him here.

[*Listening.*] Heaven give me strength! his well-known steps so near me!

Enter GARCIO; he runs eagerly to embrace the Countess, who faints.

Gar. So moved! Can this be joy?

[SOPHERA chafes her hands and temples, while GARCIO gazes on her with keen observation: she recovers.

My gentle love, Who wast my gentle love, come I upon thee Like some unlook'd for,—some unwelcome thing? *Countess.* Is it thy voice, my Garcio, in mine ears Sounding, as it was wont, the voice of love?

Gar. How should it sound to thee? The wars have spared me: The bullet and the sabre's stroke have err'd, To spare this head, where thousands fell around me; For I believed thy saintly prayers did mar Their death-commission'd power. Yes; I believed it.

Countess. And still believe it. Yes, my prayers were raised Most fervently to heav'n: and I will bless it, That thou art safe.

[Takes his hand in hers tenderly, and is about to press it to her breast, when a shuddering seizes her, and she lets it drop.

Gar. What is the matter? Thou art strangely seized.

Does sudden illness chill thee?

Soph. The countess, good my lord, is much o'ercome.

Her health is weak at present: agitation Strongly affects her. But she'll soon recover.

Gar. Thou answerest for her readily, young lady, And wisely too.

Enter ROVANI, followed by Nurse, carrying a sleeping infant.

Rov. Come on, good nurse; thou needst not be ashamed

To show thy bantling, sleeping or awake. A nobler, comelier, curly-pated urchin Ne'er changed the face of stern and warlike sire To tearful tenderness. Look here, my lord.

Gar. [turning eagerly round]. The child! my child!

[Lifting the mantle that covers it, and gazing on the infant.

Rov. Ay, there are cheeks and lips like roses glowing;

And, see, half-open'd eyelids show within The dewy azure of his sleeping eyes, Like loopholes in a cloud. Awake, sweet imp!

Gar. Nay, wake him not; his sleep is beautiful. Let me support—Come to my stirring heart, And here is cradled, thing of wondrous joy!

[Taking the child.

Here, in the inmost core of beating life,
I'd lodge thee. Mine thou art! yes, thou art mine!
Here is my treasured being: thou wilt love me.

[Laying his face close to the child's.]

Bless'd softness! little hand and little cheek!
This is a touch so sweet! a blessed touch!
There is love in it; love that will not change!

[Bursting into tears, while the nurse takes the child again.]

Countess (*aside, observing his emotion*). O heaven,
he weeps! — the tears of strong affection!

Away, base doubts!

[Running to him, and clasping her arms round him.]

Garcio, dear Garcio! husband of my heart,
And father of my boy! is there within thee
Such soft and strong affection? O, there is!
And with it every good and generous feeling.
Forgive me, O forgive me!

Gar. How, my love?

How wakes this sudden burst of tenderness?
Dost thou at last feel for thy wretched husband
The love of other days? — I've thought of thee —
I've thought of this our meeting, but, alas!
Not so my fancy shaped it.

Countess. O, forgive me!

My mind was weak and brooded on dark thoughts.
We'll cast them from us. — Yes, thy child, thy boy!
Look on him still; they say that in his face
There are some traits of thine. Observe his mouth;
That smile —

Gar. Nay, that sweet smile I could not give him;
No, nor those lips. He much resembles thee.

Countess. Thinkest thou so? Then haply thou
perceiv'st

Another likeness some have sadly traced;
Dost thou perceive it?

Gar. No: another likeness?

Countess. In my sad lonely hours, I have ima-
gined,

And sooth'd me with the pleasing, mournful thought,
He bears some faint resemblance to my brother,
My poor Ulrico.

[GARCIO'S countenance becomes stern, and looking again steadfastly on the child, he turns away in silence.]

It does not strike thee, then?

Gar. (*motioning the nurse to retire*). We shall
disturb his slumbers.

Countess (*to him reproachfully*). Sent off without
a kiss of kind endearment?

Gar. We should disturb him.

[Looking after the child as he is carried off.]

Countess. Thine eye pursues him with a mournful
look:

Thou fearest, perhaps, an early fate may snap
His thread of life, like his lamented uncle's.

Gar. No; past and future are but shadowy
visions;

Dark cumbrous things which we must cast aside
To make the present hour endurable.

Who waits without? — A cup of wine, I pray;
I'm tired and faint.

Countess. Indeed, thou seemst unwell:
I fear thou bringst not back thy wonted health.

Gar. I'm well, — I was in health, but this damp
region,

I breathe not in it but with breath suppress'd.
Thou knowst right well I never liked this place:
Why art thou here?

Countess. It is necessity.

Gar. I know: I know; but other homes there
are;

We'll hence to-morrow.

Countess. Ha! so soon, my lord?

Gar. It must be so. I would retire awhile;

Where is my chamber?

Countess. In the western tower.

Gar. No; I'll remain — I will not yet retire.

[Pacing to and fro, and then returning to her.]

I know not how it is; I'm fanciful;

I like a southern chamber.

Countess (*in a faint voice, gazing fearfully upon him*). E'en as you will.

[SOPHERA, who has during the greater part of this scene retired to the bottom of the stage with ROVANI, now comes forward.]

Soph. Please you, my lord, to go, I will conduct
you

Where many fair apartments wait your choice.

Gar. I thank thee, courteous maid.

[Exit SOPHERA, followed by GARCIO; and the Countess, after a thoughtful pause, is about to break into strong exclamations, when, perceiving ROVANI, she checks herself and goes out hastily.]

Rov. (*coming forward, and looking after her*). All
is not well: that step, those looks, those
gestures,

So quickly check'd when she perceived me near,
Betray too visibly a mind disturb'd

And far removed from joy. Garcio is come

Unwelcomely upon her. Yet that burst

Of what appear'd like tenderness and love

When he caress'd his child! — I cannot think

She has in act been false; though much I doubt.

Enter GONZALOS behind him.

Gon. Ha! mutt'ring to thyself! what are thy
thoughts?

Rov. Faith! ill-condition'd, moody, foolish
thoughts,

Such as lone men, whose heart no kind mate cheers,
Alone could harbour. — Heaven forgive me for it!

I think our lady here had been well pleased

If this, her valiant lord, had from the wars

Return'd more leisurely. — Her quondam lover,

The Marquis of Tortona, in the neighbourhood

With his gay troops, bound for some petty fray
By them, in lofty phrase, ycleped war,
Has made a halt, and——

Gon. Fie! thou canst not think
That she could turn her heart from valiant Garcio
To such a fool as he?

Rov. Yet such strange things have happen'd.—
True, indeed,

So vile a change could not at once be made.
But let us now imagine some soft dame,
Whose valiant lord is absent, in her castle
Spending her dull lone days.

[*Changing his voice, and speaking fantastically.*
“Ha! who comes here?”—

“Good madam,” saith her waiting gentlewoman,
“A knight is at your gate.”—“He shall not enter:
It is a fool; go, bid him wend his way.”—

“And will you be so rude?”—“Ay, true indeed;
Then, for good courtesy, since it must be,
E'en bid him enter:—'tis a harmless fool.”—
“Good day, fair dame.”—“The same to you, Sir
Knight.”—

“Might I presume—but how can words express it,
The sunshine of your beauty dazzles so!—
You will not chide me hence? What gentle
goodness!

Dear, precious moments, but so swiftly gone!”—

Then whispers low the waiting gentlewoman,

“Madam, may he return another day?”—

“Well, well, he may, since thou wilt have it so.
It is in truth an amiable fool.”

Gon. Fy, fy, Rovani! art thou not ashamed?

Who would believe, in hearing thee expatiate

On woman's weakness thus, that thou thyself

Art but a poor dependent on her favour

For all the bloom and sparkle of thy being—

A very daily beggar of her smiles!

Rov. I, sayst thou? Where, in what nook of
the earth,

Lives she for whom I sigh?

Gon. Nay, rather ask in what nook of the earth

She liveth not. There's ne'er a moving thing,

That wears upon its form a woman's weed,

Be it or short or tall, or pale or buxom,

Or young or old, but thou dost roll thine eye,

And writhe thy body to fantastic shapes

Of affectation, to attract her notice.

Rov. Nay, spare me, good Gonzalos! I, perhaps,

May, as I speak my jest or merry tale,

With restless eye keep peering to the side

Where beauty listens, too apparently;

But think not this attack on female constancy—

I mean this present individual push—

By any other motive has been prompted,

Than love and true regard for noble Garcio.

After the toils and dangers he has pass'd,

To see him thus received provokes me much.

Gon. Hush! be more prudent; speak thy mind
less freely.

Thy brain is ever full of idle fancies:

Come to the air, and cool thy fev'rish spleen.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Before the gate of the castle.

Enter LUDOVICO, GAUVINO, and some inferior domestics from the gate, while martial music is heard without.

Gau. (to LUDOVICO, after looking off the stage).

'Tis as I guess'd; look, Mr. Seneschal!

They bear the ensigns of Tortona. See!

Their chief himself is marching in the van.

Lud. And, by my fay! a warlike face he wears,
Lofty and grim.

Gau. Ay; full of awful terrors
For quaking drum-boys and poor piping elves.

Lud. Comes he to visit thus our valiant lord,
And show his warlike state? Heaven mend his
wit!

Enter TORTONA, with a few followers, in martial array.

Tor. Be not alarm'd, good sirs: though thus in
arms,

We at your lady's gate are harmless visitors,
Who humbly crave admittance.

[LUDOVICO, as seneschal, steps forward to receive him with courtesy, while GAUVINO mutters to himself.

Gau. Mighty man!

What bless'd forbearance! For our lady's sake,
He will not slay and eat us for a meal!

Tor. (to LUDOVICO). Good Mr. Seneschal, in-
form thy lady

That I, Tortona's Marquis, and her slave,

Most humbly beg permission at her feet—

But here comes opportunity more tempting:

A gentler messenger.

Enter SOPHERA.

Gau. (aside to LUDOVICO). Great condescending
man! superb humility!

Tor. (to SOPHERA). Fair lady! most becoming,
as I guess,

The beauteous dame you serve; do me the favour

[*Speaking in a lower voice, and leading her aside.*

To tell the noble mistress of this castle

That one, devoted dearly to her service,

Who breathes the air in which she breathes, as
gales

Wafted from Paradise, begs in her presence

With all devotion to present himself.

Soph. (in a loud voice). The Marquis of Tortona,
as I guess.

Tor. The same; and let not in your peaceful
halls

Our warlike mien alarm you. In the field
Whate'er our power may be, forget it here.
Within her precincts, Mars himself would off
His nodding helm, and bend in meek submission.

Soph. True, valiant lord; the brave are ever
gentle

In hall and bower. But think not warlike guise
Will so alarm us now; there are within
Whose nodding plumes, indeed, less downy are,
Whose well-hack'd armour wears a dimmer hue,
Who have already taught our timid eyes
To look more boldly on such awful things.

Tor. How, those within? What meanst thou?

Soph. Ha, my lord!

You come not then to wish the gentle countess
Joy of her lord's return.

Tor. Is he return'd? It surely cannot be.

Soph. He is, in truth. This morning he arrived
With many valiant soldiers from the wars,
Where they have seen rough service.

Tor. That war so quickly ended?

Soph. Yes, my lord,

And fortunately too. The Moors submit
To the victorious arms of noble Garcio;
Who, ere he left their coast, did for his prince
A happy peace conclude. Will it not please you
To enter, then, and bid him welcome home?

Tor. I should indeed,—but 'twill intrude upon
him.

He and his lady may, perhaps, desire
Some hours of privacy.—Oblige me, then,
And offer my respect—congratulation—
I do but ill express the joy I feel.
I will no longer trespass.

[*Hurrying away, and then returning.*]

'Tis delicacy makes me thus in haste,
As thou wilt comprehend. Should time permit,
Though much I fear to-morrow's sun will light us
To other scenes, I will return and pay
To the most noble count all courtesy.
Fair maiden, fare thee well!

[*Hurrying away, and returning again; then drawing her further aside and speaking softly in her ear.*]

The count, as I am told, dislikes this castle:
His stay, perhaps, may be of short duration?

Soph. Belike it may.

Tor. Though quitting this vicinity,

My station for a time will not be distant.
Couldst thou in such a case indite to me
A little note of favour? (*Taking her hand.*) Pretty
hand!

A billet penn'd by thee must needs contain
Words of sweet import.—Fingers light and slender!

(*Offering to put on a ring.*) Let this be favour'd.

Soph. Nay, my lord, excuse me.

The pen these fingers use indites no billets
Of such sweet import as you fondly guess:

A housewife's recipe, or homely letter
Of kind inquiry to some absent friend,
Exhausts its power. Unskill'd to earn such gifts,
I may not wear them.—Yonder comes Rovani,
A noble soldier; stay and learn from him
The story of the war. Word-bound he is not:
He'll tell it willingly.

[*ROVANI, who has appeared at the gate, during the latter part of their discourse, observing them suspiciously, now comes forward.*]

Tor. No, no! I am in haste, farewell, farewell!

[*Exit with his followers.*]

Lud. He goes, I trow, less grandly than he came.

Gau. Such hasty steps, indeed, somewhat derange
The order of his high nobility.

Lud. Yet, pompous as he is, I have been told
He is no coward.

Gau. I suspect him much.

Lud. But thou art wrong: although he doth assume

Those foolish airs of martial gallantry,
He is as brave as others.

Rov. (who has placed himself directly in front
of SOPHERA, and has been looking for some
time significantly in her face). So, gentle
maid, your martial visitor

Retreats right speedily. How fortunate,
To meet so opportunely at the gate
A prudent friend, to tell him what, perhaps,
May save his bones, although it damp his pleasure!
Nay, smile not: I commend thee in good earnest.
Thou art a prudent maid, endow'd with virtues
That suit thy station. This is ample praise.

Soph. Ample; and spoken too with meaning
tones.

What face is this thou wearest of sly significance?
Go to! thou dup'st thyself with too much shrewd-
ness;

And canst not see what plainly lies before thee,
Because thou ainst at seeing more. I'll in,
And bear Tortona's greeting to my lord
And to his countess.

Rov. Do; and give it all—

The message and its postscript: words of audience,
And those of gentle whisper following after.
Let nothing be forgotten.

Soph. Nothing shall.

Good day, and heaven curtail thee of thy wits
To make thee wiser!

[*Exit into the gate, and followed by LUDOVICO, &c. &c.*]

Rov. (alone). Ay, ay! a very woman! pleased
and flatter'd

With the stale flatt'ry of a practised coxcomb,
Though plainly sueing for another's favour.
A very, very woman!—As I guess'd,
Some secret intercourse hath been in train,
Although how far in blameful act advanced
I know not.—Now, 'tis cross'd and interrupted.

So will I e'en believe, and fret no more.
 What good have I in living free from wedlock,
 If I for husband's honour thus take thought?
 Beter it were to wear the horns myself,
 Knowing it not, than fret for other men. [Exit.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

An apartment in the castle.

Enter GARCIO and LUDOVICO, speaking as they enter.

Gar. Ha! with a priest! conferring with a priest!
 Have they been long together?

Lud. Full an hour.

Gar. And does she oft such ghostly counsel take?
 Has she of late?

Lud. My lord?

Gar. O, nothing! nothing!
 Stare not as if I meant to question thee:
 I had no more to say. [Motioning him away.

[Exit LUDOVICO.

(Alone.) At such a time retired with her confessor!
 What! hath her lord's return caused in her mind
 Such sudden need of ghostly counsel?—Strange!
 Something hath been amiss: if not in act,
 She is, I fear, in will and fancy tainted.

ROVANI enters behind him unperceived.

Rov. Nay, pure or tainted, leave the fancy free.
 Of her concerns who may cognizance take?
 Although cowl'd priests beneath their jurisdiction
 Pretend to hold her, be not thou so strict.

Gar. Thou knowst, then, that my wife is with
 her priest.

Rov. I knew it not.—She is a pious dame:
 She seems—she is a very pious dame.

Gar. Nay, speak thy mind! thou needst not
 hesitate.

We have been fellow-soldiers nine long years:
 Thou ne'er wast wont to weigh thy words with me.
 What dost thou think? There is some cause for
 this.

Rov. Women are full of strange and fitful humours.

Gar. Not so; it is not that.—Yet, were she false,
 Methinks her shame-flush'd face would turn aside,
 Nor look on me so oft and earnestly
 As I have seen her gaze.—It cannot be!
 In act she is not false.—But if her heart,
 Where every kind and dear affection dwelt,—
 If it be changed—(stamping on the ground) Some
 fiend hath been at work,—
 Some cursed agent hath been tampering with her.

[Pacing to and fro in violent agitation.

Rov. Be not so wretched for a doubtful ill,
 Which, if it be at all—

Gar. A doubtful ill!

Oh, if my head but ached, or fev'rish sleep,
 Or the more potent secret cause forced from me
 One groan or sigh, what tones of kind alarm!
 And the soft pressure of her gentle hand
 In mute affliction, till I smiled again!
 Here, on my bursting heart I feel it still,
 Though cold and changed she be.

(After a gloomy pause.) Perhaps some awful and
 mysterious power

Within these fated precincts doth for me
 Love to aversion turn. [power?

Rov. What dost thou mean by a mysterious
 And but e'en now methought I heard thee name
 A potent secret cause.—Thou hast been wont
 Freely to make me sharer of thy thoughts—
 Of all thy secret wishes.

Gar. So I have:
 Nought for thy good to hear or mine to utter,
 Have I conceal'd from thee.—I hear a noise.

Rov. No; I hear nothing.

Gar. But my ear is quick;—
 Too quick, perhaps, in fancying sounds that are not.

Rov. Ay, thou art right: Sophera moved the
 latch.

Enter SOPHERA.

Gar. (to SOPHERA). Com'st thou to tell me that
 the priest is gone?

Soph. The countess did command me to inform
 you

She is not well, and begs that for the night
 She may in solitude recruit her spirits.
 She wishes you good night and peaceful sleep.
 She bade me say, my lord, her malady
 Is of no ardent kind that should alarm you;
 But, as she hopes, will pass away ere morn.

(Aside to ROVANI, while GARCIO turns away in
 silence.) He takes it deeply.

Rov. (aside to her). No, faith! a soldier is too
 well inured

To disappointment; knowing not at daybreak
 Whether his next night's slumber shall be had
 On silken couch, by some fair princess fann'd,
 Or on the cold damp earth, with dead men's bones
 His wounded head to pillow. No, sweet maid!
 We bear such evils lightly.

Soph. 'Tis well ye do; and so, brave sir, good
 night! [Exit.

Gar. (returning to ROVANI). What thinkst thou
 of this message?

Rov. I know not what to think.

Gar. Thou dost! thou dost! for in thine eyes I
 read

A shameful thought, that must remain unutter'd.
 Ruin, and shame, and misery come upon me!
 Heav'n pours its vengeance on this cursed head!

Rov. Nay, do not thus give way : be well assured
Ere thou give loose to passion.

Gar. Assured ! and how assured ? What can I
do ? —

Become a calm inquisitor of shame ?

Rov. Restrain thyself, and go to thine apartment,
As if to pass the night. But, some hours later,
When all are gone to rest, steal softly forth
Into thy lady's chamber. There thou'lt see
If she indeed be sick, or if she hold
The vigil of a guilt-distracted mind.

Gar. I like thy counsel well : I'll to my chamber.
Good night, my friend. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

The bedchamber of the Countess, who is discovered sitting on a low seat by the side of the bed, with her head and arms thrown upon the bed. She raises her head, and, after a thoughtful pause, starts up eagerly.

Countess. It cannot be ! The roused and angry
deep

Lashes its foaming billows o'er the bark
That bears th' accursed freight, till the scared crew
Into its yawning gulf cast forth the murderer.

On the embattled field, in armour cased,
His manly strength to blasted weakness turns.

Yea, in their peaceful homes, men, as by instinct,
From the dark rolling of his eye will turn

They know not why, so legibly has Nature
Set on his brow the mark of bloody Cain.

And shall I think the prosperous Garcio, — he
Whose countenance allured all eyes, whose smiles,
Whose voice was love, whose frame with strong
affection

I've seen so dearly moved ; who in my arms,
Who in my heart hath lived — No ! let dark priests,
From the wild fancies of a dying man,
Accuse him as they will, I'll not believe it.

(*After another pause.*) Would in this better faith
my mind had strength

To hold itself unshaken ! Doubt is misery.

I'll go to him myself and tell my wretchedness.

O ! if his kindling eye with generous ire

Repel the charge ; — if his blest voice deny it,

Though one raised from the dead swore to its truth,
I'll not believe it.

Enter SOPHERA.

What brings thee here again ? Did I not charge
thee

To go to bed ?

Soph. And so I did intend.

But in my chamber, half prepared for rest,

Op'ning the drawer of an ancient cabinet

To lay some baubles by, I found within —

Countess. What hast thou found ?

Soph. Have I not heard you say, that shortly
after

Your marriage with the count, from your apartment,
A picture of your brother, clad in mail,
A strong resemblance, over which your tears
Had oft been shed, was stol'n away ?

Countess. Thou hast.

How it was stol'n, for value it had none

For any but myself, I often wonder'd.

Thou hast not found it ?

Soph. See ! this I have found.

[*Giving her a picture, which she seizes eagerly.*]

Countess. Indeed, indeed it is !

[*After gazing mournfully on it.*]

Retire, I pray thee, nor, till morning break,

Return again, for I must be alone. [*Exit SOPHERA.*]

(*After gazing again on the picture.*) Alas ! that lip,
that eye, that arching brow ;

That thoughtful look which I have often mark'd,

So like my noble father ! [*Kissing it.*]

This for his dear, dear sake, and this for thine :

Ye sleep i' the dust together. —

Alas ! how sweetly mantled thus thy cheek [*been,*
At sight of those thou lovest ! — What things have
What hours, what years of trouble have gone by,
Since thus in happy careless youth thou wast
Dearest and nearest to my simple heart.

[*Kisses it again, and presses it to her breast,*
while GARCIO, who has entered behind by a
concealed door at the bottom of the stage, comes
silently upon her, and she utters a scream of
surprise.]

Gar. This is thy rest, then, and the quiet sleep
That should restore thy health : thou giv'st these
hours

To the caressing of a minion's image

Which to a faithful husband are denied.

Oh, oh ! they but on morning vapour tread,

Who ground their happiness on woman's faith.

Some reptile too ! [*Stamping on the ground.*]

A paltry, worthless minion !

Countess. Ha ! was it jealousy so much disturb'd
thee ?

If this be so, we shall be happy still.

The love I bear the dead, dear though it be,

Surely does thee no wrong.

Gar. No, artful woman ! give it to my hand.

[*Snatching at the picture.*]

That is the image of a living gallant.

Countess. O would it were !

[*Gives it to him, and he, starting as he looks*
upon it, staggers back some paces, till he is
arrested by the pillar of the bed, against which
he leans in a kind of stupor, letting the picture
fall from his hands.]

Merciful God ! he's guilty ! — am I thus ?

Heav'n lend me strength ! I'll be in doubt no longer.

[*Running up to him, and clasping her hands*
together.]

Garcio, a fearful thing is in my mind,
 And curse me not that I have harbour'd it,
 If that it be not so. — The wretched Baldwin,
 Upon his death-bed, in his frenzied ravings,
 Accused thee as the murderer of my brother :
 O pardon me that such a monstrous tale
 Had any power to move me ! — Look upon me !
 Say that thou didst it not, and I'll believe thee.

[*A pause.*

Thou dost not speak. What fearful look is that ?
 That blanching cheek ! that quiv'ring lip ! — O
 horrible ! [*Catching hold of his clothes.*

Open thy lips ! relieve me from this misery !

Say that thou didst not do it.

[*He remains silent, making a rueful motion of the head.*

O God ! thou didst, thou didst !

[*Holds up her hands to heaven in despair, and then, recoiling from him to a distant part of the chamber, stands gazing on him with horror.*

GARCIO, after great agitation, begins to approach her irresolutely.

I've shared thy love, been in thy bosom cherish'd,
 But come not near me ! touch me not ! the earth
 Yawning beneath my feet will shelter me
 From thine accursed hand.

Gar. O Margaret !

Can gentlest love to such fierce detestation
 Be in an instant changed, for one sad deed,
 The hasty act of a most horrid moment,
 When hell and strong temptation master'd me ?
 And yet why marvel ? for thou canst not more
 Detest that deed than I, the wretched doer.

Countess. Ah, ah ! why didst thou ?

Gar. Listen to my story.

But, oh ! the while, unfasten from my face
 Those looks of horror, else I cannot tell it.

Countess. Speak then, I hear thee.

Gar. Thou knowst too well with what fierce
 pride Ulrico

Refused, on thy behalf, my suit of love ;
 Decming a soldier, though of noble birth,
 E'en his own blood, possessing but his arms
 And some slight wreaths of fame, a match unmeet
 For one whose lords of princely territory
 Did strive to gain : — and here, indeed, I own
 He rightly deem'd ; my suit was most presumptuous.

Countess. Well, pass this o'er ; — I know with
 too much pride

He did oppose thy suit. [vember,

Gar. That night ! It was in dreary, dull No-
 When at the close of day, with faithful Baldwin,
 I reach'd this castle with the vain intent
 To make a last attempt to move his pity.
 I made it, and I fail'd. With much contempt
 And aggravating passion, he dismiss'd me
 To the dark night.

Countess. You left him then ? You left him ?

Gar. O yes ! I left him. In my swelling breast
 My proud blood boil'd. Through the wild wood I
 took

My darkling way. A violent storm arose ;
 The black dense clouds pour'd down their torrents
 on me ;

The roaring winds aloft with the vex'd trees
 Held strong contention, whilst my buffeted breast
 The crushing tangled boughs and torn-up shrubs
 Vainly opposed. Cross lay the wild'ring paths.

I miss'd the road ; and after many turnings,
 Seeing between the trees a steady light,
 As from a window gleam, I hasten'd to it.

It was a lower window, and within,
 The lighted chamber showed me but too well,
 We had unwittingly a circuit made

Back to the very walls from whence we came.

Countess. Ah, fated, fatal error ! most perverse !

Gar. But, oh ! what feelings, thinkst thou, rose
 within me ?

What thoughts, what urging thoughts, what keen
 suggestions

Crowded upon me like a band of fiends,
 When, on a nearer view, within the chamber,
 Upon an open couch, alone and sleeping,

I saw Ulrico ?

Countess. Didst thou slay him sleeping ?

The horrible deed ! — Thou couldst not ! O thou
 couldst not !

Gar. Well mayst thou say it ! I've become,
 sweet Margaret,

Living, though most unworthy as I was,
 Companion of thy virtues, one, whose heart
 Has been to good affections form'd and bent ;
 But then it was not so. — My hapless youth

In bloody, savage, predatory war
 Was rear'd. It was no shock to my rude childhood

To see whole bands of drunk or sleeping men
 In cold blood butcher'd. Could I tell to thee
 The things that I have seen : things, too, in which
 My young hand took its part ; thou wouldst not
 wonder,

That, seeing thus my enemy in my power,
 Love, fortune, honours, all within the purchase
 Of one fell stroke, I raised my arm and gave it.

Countess. Fearful temptation !

Gar. After a fearful pause, I softly enter'd.

The deed was done ; and, hastening from the
 chamber

With breathless speed back to the spot where
 Baldwin

Held my brave steed, I mounted, favour'd now
 By a new-risen moon and waning storm ;

And to the fleetness of that noble creature

I owe it, that though heir to him I slew,

No whisper of suspicion upon me

E'er breathed as perpetrator of the deed.

Countess. And I have been the while thy bosom's
 mate,

Pressing in plighted love the bloody hand
That slew my brother!

Gar. Thou, indeed, hast been
An angel pure, link'd to a fiend. Yet, think not
I have enjoy'd what guilt so deep had earn'd.
Oh no! I've borne about, where'er I went,
A secret wretchedness within my breast
Turning delight to torment. Now thou knowest
Why on my midnight couch thou'st heard me oft
Utter deep groans, when thou, waked from thy
sleep,

Hast thought some nightmare press'd me.
Oh! were the deed undone, not all the diff'rence
Of sublunary bliss that lies between
A world's proud monarch and the loathliest wretch
That gleans subsistence from the fetid dunghill,
Would tempt me to embroe my hands in murder.

[*Speaking these last words loudly and vehemently.*]

Countess. Hush! speak not thus! thou't be o'er-
heard: some list'ner

Is at the door. I thought I heard a noise.

[*Going to the door, opening it, then shutting it softly and returning.*]

No; there is nothing: 'twas my fears deceiv'd me.

Gar. And dost thou fear for me? Are there
within thee

Still some remains of love for one so guilty?

Thou wilt not then, in utter detestation,

Heap curses on my head.

Countess. Guilty as thou hast been, I cannot
curse thee.

O no! I'll nightly from my cloister'd cell

Send up to plying heaven my prayers for thee.

Gar. Thy cloister'd cell! What mean those
threat'ning words?

Countess. Garcio, we must part.

Gar. No; never! Any punishment but this!

We shall not part.

Countess. We must, we must! 'Twere monstrous,
'twere unholy

Longer to live with thee.

Gar. No, Margaret, no! Thinkst thou I will
indeed

Submit to this, e'en curs'd as I am?

No; were I black as hell's black fiends, and thou

Pure as celestial spirits (and so thou art),

Still thou art mine; my sworn, my wedded love,

And still as such I'll hold thee.

Countess. Heav'n bids us part: yea, nature bids
us part.

Gar. Heav'n bids us part! Then let it send its
lightning

To strike me from thy side. Let yawning earth,

Op'ning beneath my feet, divide us. Then,

And not till then, will I from thee be sever'd.

Countess. Let go thy terrible grasp: thou wouldst
not o'er me

A dreaded tyrant rule? Beneath thy power

Thou mayst indeed retain me, crush'd, degraded,
Watching in secret horror every glance
Of thy perturbed eye, like a quell'd slave,
If this suffice thee; but each tie of love—
All sympathy between us now is broken
And lost for ever.

Gar. And canst thou be so ruthless? No, thou
canst not!

Let heav'n in its just vengeance deal with me!

Let pain, remorse, disease, and every ill

Here in this world of nature be my portion!

And in the world of spirits too well I know

The murd'rer's doom abides me.

Is this too little for thy cruelty?

No; by the living God! on my erst head

Light every ill but this! We shall not part.

Countess. Let go thy desp'rate hold, thou des-
p'rate man!

Thou dost constrain me to an oath as dreadful;

And by that awful name—

Gar. Forbear, forbear!

Then it must be; there is no mitigation.

[*Throws himself on the ground, uttering a deep groan, when ROVANI and SOPHERA burst in upon them from opposite sides.*]

Rov. (to the *Countess*). What is the matter?

Hath he on himself

Done some rash act? I heard him loud and
stormy.

Soph. She cannot answer thee: look to the
count,

And I will place her gently on her couch;

For they are both most wretched.

[*SOPHERA supports the Countess, while ROVANI endeavours to raise GARCIO from the ground, and the scene closes.*]

SCENE III.

The inside of a rustic hermitage; the hermit discovered marking a figure on the wall.

Hermit. This day to all the lonely days here
spent;

Making a term of thirty years' repentance

For forty years of sin. Heav'n of its mercy

Accept the sacrifice! Who knocks without?

[*Knocking at the door.*]

'Tis nothing but my fancy. Break of day

Yet scarcely peeps, nor hath a new-waked bird

Chirp'd on my branchy roof. [*Knocking again.*]

Nay, something does.

Lift up the latch, whoe'er thou art; nor loek

Nor bar, nor any hind'rance e'er prevents

Those who would enter here.

Enter ROVANI.

Rov. O pardon, holy hermit, this intrusion

At such untimely hour; for misery

Makes free with times and seasons.

Hermit. Thou sayest well : it will doff ceremony
E'en in a monarch's court. Sit down, I pray :
I am myself a poor repentant sinner,
But, as I trust, a brand saved from the fire.
Then tell thy tale, and give thy sorrows vent :
What can I do for thee ?

Rov. I do not for myself entreat thy pity
But I am come from an unhappy man,
Who, inly torn with agony of mind,
Hath need of ghostly aid.

Hermit. I am no priest.

Rov. I know thou art not, but far better, father,
For that which I entreat thee :
The cowl'd monk, in peaceful cloisters bred,
Who hath for half a cent'ry undisturb'd
Told o'er his beads ; what sympathy hath he
For perturb'd souls, storm-toss'd i' the wicked
world ?

Therefore Count Garcio most desires to see thee,
And will to thee alone unlock his breast.

Hermit. Garcio, the lord of this domain ?

Rov. The same.

Hermit. The blest in love, the rich, the prosp'rous
Garcio ?

Rov. He hath since dead of night traversed his
chamber

Like one distraught, or cast him on the ground
In all the frantic violence of despair.
I have watch'd by him, but from thee alone
He will hear words of counsel or of peace.
Thy voice, perhaps, will calm a stormy spirit
That ne'er has known control.

Hermit. God grant it may !
We'll lose no time, my son ; I follow thee.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

An ante-room ; ROVANI discovered pacing to and fro.

Rov. Their conference is long. The gentle
hermit
Has had, I fear, no easy task. — He comes !

Enter Hermit.

Save thee, good father ! hath thy shriving sped ?
How is thy penitent ?

Hermit. Better, I hope : may heav'n preserve
his mind
In the meek frame in which I left it ! Never,
In all my intercourse with wretched sinners,
Have I with a more keen ungovern'd spirit
Stronger contention held.

Rov. I well believe thee :
For I have scen ere now his spirit strive
In all the restless energy of passion.
Thou hast at last subdued him ?

Hermit. Thank God, I have ! Meek and re-
sign'd to heav'n

He now appears. But go to him, my son ;
He needs thy presence much. Within an hour
He leaves the castle, — leaves his wife and child ;
It is not fit that he should be alone.
Go, good Rovani, and with soothing words
Keep thou his resolution to the bent.

Rov. Ah ! such a resolution ! Heard I right ?
To leave his wife and child ?

Hermit. Question me not, my son ; there is good
cause :

'Tis meet that he should go.

Rov. Forgive me, father !

That solemn voice and sorrowing eye too well
Asserts there is a cause, — a fearful cause.
I will obey thee. [*Going, but returns again.*]

Is there aught further thou wouldst have me do ?
Hermit. He will, perhaps, desire to see his lady ;
But till he be prepared to leave the castle,
And take his last farewell, methinks 'twere better
They should not meet.

Rov. I understand you, father.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

*The apartment of the Countess, who is discovered
sitting on a low seat, her elbows resting on her lap,
and her face covered with her clasped hands. She
raises her head suddenly, listens for a moment, and
then springs from her seat.*

Countess. I am not now deceived.

[*Goes to the door and listens, then returns.*]

I heard his steps, —
Yea, and his voice, — and it was nothing. Ah !
My mind and senses so confused are grown,
That all this wretchedness seems like a dream ;
A dream, alas ! from which there is no waking.
I hear him now : it is a distant step :
I may be yet deceived.

[*Going near the door, and listening again.*]

It is, it is !

Heav'n give me strength ! my trial is at hand !

*Enter GARCIO, who approaches her, and then stopping
short, gazes at her sadly, while she stands with her
eyes fixed on the ground.*

Gar. Marg'ret, I thought — I hoped — I was
persuaded

The farewell yearnings of a broken heart
Would move thee to some pity of my state ;
But that averted face, that downcast eye, —
There is abhorrence in it.

Countess. O no ! I fear'd to look ; 'tis not ab-
horrence.

[*Raises her eyes to him, and shrinks back.*]

Gar. What moves thee thus ?

Countess. Alas! thou'rt greatly alter'd :
So pale thy cheek, thine eyes so quench'd and
sunk!

Hath one short night so changed thee?

Gar. A night spent in the tossings of despair,
When the fierce turmoil of contending passions
To deepest self-abasement and contrition,
Subside;—a night in which I have consented
To tear my bosom up—to rend in twain
Its dearest, only ties—ay, such a night
Works on the mortal frame the scath of years.

Countess. Alas! thy frame will feel, I fear, too
soon

The scath of years. Sorrow and sickness then
Will bow thee down, while cold unkindly strangers
Neglect thy couch, nor give thee needful succour.

Gar. And wherefore grieve for this? So
much the better:

They least befriend the wretched who retard
The hour of his release.—Why should I live
If heav'n accept my penitence? Hath earth
Aught still to raise a wish, or gleam the path
Of one so darken'd round with misery?

Countess. Nay, say not so: thy child, thy boy, to
see him

In strength and stature grown,—would not this
tempt thee

To wish some years of life?

Gar. Others shall rear him; others mark his
change

From the sweet cherub to the playful boy;
Shall, with such pity as an orphan claims,
Share in his harmless sports and catch his love;
While I, if that I live and am by heav'n
Permitted, coming as a way-worn stranger,
At distant intervals, to gaze upon him,
And strain him to my heart, shall from his eye
The cold and cheerless stare of wonderment
Instead of love receive.

Countess. O think not so! he shall be taught to
love thee;

He shall be taught to lisp thy name, and raise
His little hands to heav'n for blessings on thee
As one most dear, though absent.

Gar. I do believe that thou wilt teach him so.
I know that in my lonely state of penitence,
Sever'd from earthly bliss, I to thy mind
Shall be like one whom death hath purified.
O that, indeed, or death or any suff'rings,
By earthly frame or frameless spirit endured,
Could give me such a nature as again
Might be with thine united!
Could I but forward look and trust to this,
Whatever suff'rings of a lengthen'd life
Before me lay, would be to me as nothing;
As the rough billows of some stormy frith,
Upon whose further shore fair regions smile;
As the rent shroudings of a murky cloud,
Through which the mountain traveller, as he bends

His mantled shoulders to the pelting storm,
Sees sunny brightness peer. Could I but think——

Countess. Think it! believe it! with a rooted
faith,

Trust to it surely. Deep as thy repentance,
Aspiring be thy faith!

Gar. Ay, were my faith
Strong as my penitence, 'twere well indeed.
My scourge and bed of earth would then be tem-
per'd

Almost to happiness.

Countess. Thy scourge and bed of earth! alas,
alas!

And meanst thou then to wreak upon thyself
Such cruel punishment? O no, my Garcia!
God doth accept the sorrow of the heart
Before all studied penance. 'Tis not well:
Where'er thou art, live thou with worthy men,
And as becomes thy state.

Gar. No; when from hence a banish'd man I
go,

I'll leave behind me all my crime did purchase.
Deprived of thee, its first and dearest meed,
Shall I retain its base and paltry earnings
To live with strangers more regarded? No;
Poor as I was when first my luckless steps
This fatal threshold pass'd,—I will depart.

Countess. And wilt thou then a houseless wan-
d'rer be?

Shall I, in warm robe wrapp'd, by winter fire
List to the pelting blast, and think the while
Of thy unshelter'd head?—
Or eat my bread in peace, and think that Gar-
cio——

Reduce me not to such keen misery.

[*Bursting into an agony of tears.*]

Gar. And dost thou still feel so much pity for
me?

Retain I yet some portion of thy love?

O, if I do! I am not yet abandon'd
To utter reprobation.

[*Falling at her feet, and embracing her knees.*]
Margaret! wife!

May I still call thee by that name so dear?

Countess (*disentangling herself from his hold, and
removing to some distance*). O, leave me, leave
me! for heav'n's mercy leave me!

Gar. (*following her, and bending one knee to the
ground*). Marg'ret, beloved wife! keenly be-
loved!

Countess. Oh, move me not! forbear, forbear in
pity!

Fearful, and horrible, and dear thou art!

Both heaven and hell are in thee! Leave me then,—
Leave me to do that which is right and holy.

Gar. Yes, what is right and holy thou shalt do;
Stain'd as I am with blood,—with kindred blood,
How could I live with thee? O do not think
I basely seek to move thee from thy purpose.

O, no! Farewell, most dear and honoured Mar-
garet!

Yet, ere I go, couldst thou without abhorrence—
[Pauses.]

Countess. What wouldst thou, Garcio?

Gar. If but that hand beloved were to my lips
Once more in parting press'd, methinks I'd go
With lighten'd misery.—Alas! thou canst not!
Thou canst not to such guilt—

Countess. I can! I will!
And heaven in mercy pardon me this sin,
If sin it be.

[Embraces him, and after weeping on his neck,
breaks suddenly away and exit, while GARCIO
stands gazing after her.]

Gar. Have I not seen my last?—I've seen my
last.

Then wherefore wait I here?—

The world before me lies,—a desert world,
In which a banish'd wand'rer I must be. [A pause.
Wander from hence, and leave her so defenceless
In these unruly times! I cannot do it!

I'll see to go, yet hover near her still,
Like spell-bound spirit near th' embalmed dust
It can no more reanimate. Mine eyes
May see her distant form, mine ears may hear
Her sweet voice through the air, while she believes
Kingdoms or seas divide us.

The hermit is my friend, to him I'll go.
Rest for the present, eager crowding thoughts!
I must not linger here. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

An outer court of the castle; an arched gateway in
front with a stone bench on one side of it.

Enter LUDOVICO, GAUVINO, and PIETRO, and seat
themselves on the bench.

Gau. The ev'ning breeze will cool us better here.

Lud. After the sultry day it is refreshing.

Pie. (to GAUVINO). Well, as I was a-saying to
the seneschal,

I wonder that the count should think of choosing
That noodle Gomez to attend upon him.

Gau. He has some reason for it, be assured.

Lud. How so, good chamberlain?

Gau. Heaven knows! but this fantastical Rovani,
Whom as his deputy he leaves behind,
Already takes upon him, by my faith!
As if his kingdom were to last for ever.

Lud. Thou speakest in spleen; he seems to me
right gracious.

Gau. I say not in the way of tyranny
He takes upon him; 'tis his very graciousness,
His condescending vanity I hate.
A vain, assuming coxcomb! E'en when Garcio
Frown'd like a master o'er us, yet my heart

Acknowledged him as such, and loved him oft
The better for his sternness.

Lud. Didst thou? I'm sure full many a time
and oft

Thou'st grumbled like a fiend, when'er his orders,
Too roughly given, have cross'd thy wiser will.

Gau. Well, well; perhaps I have! yet, ne'er-
theless,

Would he were with us still!

Pie. Ay, would he were!

Lud. Perhaps he'll soon return.

Gau. (significantly). He'll ne'er return.—We'll
see him here no more.

Lud. Why sayst thou so?

Gau. I have my reasons: he hath been too
prosperous.

Pie. And what of that?

Gau. The power that has upheld him,
Will, when his term is up, dire reck'ning take.

Pie. What dost thou mean?

Gau. Nay, if thou canst not guess,
I will not utter more.

Lud. Ha! yonder Gomez comes!

Pie. Gomez, indeed! [All rising to meet him.]

Lud. His lord is then return'd.

Enter GOMEZ.

Omnes. Return'd already, man! Where is thy
master?

Lud. Is he not with thee?

Gomez. I would he were. I left him some leagues
hence;

By his command charged to return again,
And follow him no more. Long I entreated
To be permitted still to share his fate,
But was at last constrain'd to leave him.

Gau.

Ha!

Constrain'd! 'tis very strange. Where didst thou
leave him?

Gomez. In the dark centre of a gloomy forest,
Dismounting, to my care he gave his steed,
And, as I said before, so strictly charged me,
I was constrain'd to leave him.

Gau.

A dark forest?

Lud. Sawst thou where he went?

Gomez. He turn'd away, and I with heavy
cheer—

Gau. (very eagerly). Didst thou not look behind
there in retreating

To see what path he took?

Gomez.

I look'd behind,

But in a moment lost him from my sight.

Gau. (shaking his head). 'Tis marvellous strange!
Was there nor pit, nor cave, nor flood at hand?

Gomez. Not that I noticed. Why dost shake
thy head?

Gau. He'll never more upon this earth be seen.
Whether or cave, or gulf, or flood received him,
He is, ere this, I fear, beneath the earth

Full deep enough, reck'ning with him who bought him.

Pie. Reck'ning with him who bought him! Be there then

Such fearful compacts with the wicked power?

Gau. Have ye not heard of John the Prosperous, Who, starting at the sound of piping winds, That burst his chamber door, full sore aghast, With trembling steps his gorgeous chamber left, And, by himself in a small boat embark'd, Steering his way to the black wheeling eddy In centre of the lake, which swallow'd him?

Pie. My flesh creeps at the thought?

Gomez. Dost thou believe it?

Gau. Ay; or what think ye of the Count Averno, Who, after years of such successful crimes, Took leave of all his friends, at warning given By sound of midnight trumpet at his gate; Round which, 'tis said, a band of plumed spectres, Whose whiten'd bony jaws and eyeless sockets Did from their open'd beavers to the moon Stare horribly, stood ready to receive him?

Ommes. And went he with them?

Gau. Ay, certes, did he! for above the ground With mortal men he never more was seen. (*To GOMEZ.*) But enter, man, and have a stoup of wine;

Thou seemest faint and spent.

Ommes. Ay, give him wine, for see how pale he is.

Pie. Like one who hath been near unearthly things. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The garden.

Enter the Countess and SOPHERA.

Soph. (*speaking as they enter.*) And look, I pray, how sweet and fresh and fragrant

The dewy morning is. There, o'er our heads The birds conven'd like busy gossips sit, Trimming their speckled feathers. In the thick And tufted herbage, with a humming noise Stirs many a new-waked thing; among the grass Beetles, and lady-birds, and lizards glide, Showing their shining coats like tinted gold.

Countess. Yes, all things, in a sunny morn like this,

That social being have and fellowship With others of their kind, begin the day Gladly and actively. Ah! how wakes he, His day of lonesome silence to begin, Who, of all social intercourse bereft, On the cold earth hath pass'd the dismal night? Cheerful domestic stir, nor crowing cock, Nor greeting friend, nor fawning dog hath he To give him his good-morrow.

Soph. Nay, do not let your fancy brood on this. Think not my lord, though he with Gomez parted

In a lone wood, will wander o'er the earth In dreary solitude. In every country Kind hearts are found to cheer the stranger's way.

Countess. Heaven grant he meet with such!

Soph. Then be not so cast down. Last night the air

Was still and pleasant; sweetly through the trees, Which moved not, look'd the stars and crescent moon:

The night-bird's lengthen'd call with fitful lapse, And the soft ceaseless sound of distant rills

Upon the list'ning ear came soothingly; While the cool freshness of the air was mix'd

With rising odours from the flowery earth. In such sweet summer nights, be well assured The unhoused head sleeps soundest.

Countess. The unhoused head! and Garcio's now is such!

I could not sleep; and, as I paced my chamber, Alas! thought I, how long a term is night To lonely watchers! e'en a summer's night.

And in the lengthen'd gloom of chill December— Why dost thou move?

Soph. There is a stranger coming.

Countess. Perhaps it is some message from my lord.

Soph. I rather fear it is Tortona's lord.

Countess. I wish my gate had not been open'd to him.

Will he persist to press his presence on me?

Enter TORTONA.

Tor. Pardon me, madam, this too bold intrusion, But hov'ring round your walls, like the poor moth Circling the fatal flame, I needs must enter.

I was compell'd to do it. May I hope I see you well as lovely, and inclined, From the angelic sweetness of your nature, To pardon me?

Countess. You still preserve, my lord, I do perceive,

The bountiful profusion of a tongue Well stored with courteous words.

Tor. Nay, rather say,

A tongue that is of all expression beggar'd, That can the inward sentiments declare Which your angelic presence still inspires.

(*Pointing to SOPHERA.*) This lady knows how deep, how true they are.

She did refuse, yet, ne'ertheless, I trust She bore my secret message to your ear.

Soph. 'Twas well for you I did not, good my lord;

You had not else, I trow, found entrance here.

Countess. It had, in truth, prevented this presumption.

A secret message, saidst thou, for the ear Of Garcio's wife!

Tor. And does the man who quits thee,—

Like a dull dolt such heavenly beauty quits,—
Deserve the name of husband? No, sweet Margret;

Gloze not to me thy secret wrongs: I know,
Full well I know them; nor shall formal names
And senseless ties my ardent love repel.

[*Catching hold of her hand.*

Countess (*shaking him off*). Base and audacious
fool! did not thy folly

Almost excuse thy crime, thou shouldst most dearly
Repent this insult. Thinkst thou my lord
Has left me unprotected?—Ho! Rovani!
Move with a quicker step.

Enter ROVANI, followed by GONZALOS.

(*To TORTONA, pointing to ROVANI.*) Behold, my
lord, the friend of absent Garcia,
And in his absence holder of this castle.

To his fair courtesy, as it is meet,
I now consign you with all due respect;
And so farewell. [*Exit, followed by SOPHERA.*

Tor. I might, indeed, have known that modern
dames
An absent husband's substitute can find
Right speedily.

Rov. (*aside to GONZALOS*). Jealous of me, I hear.
It makes my soldier's plume more proudly wave
To think such fancies twitch him.

[*Aloud to TORTONA, advancing to meet him.*
Noble marquis!

Proud of the lady's honourable charge,
That to my care entrusts a guest so valued,
Let me treat you to partake within
Some slight refreshment. After such fatigue,
So early and so gallantly encounter'd,
(Two leagues at least upon an ambling steed
Your morning's hardships fairly may be reckon'd,)
You must require refreshment.

Tor. Paltry coxcomb!

Rov. Yes, paltry as a coxcomb, good my lord,
Compared to greater. Pardon a deficiency
Your presence has occasion'd, and permit
That I conduct you—

Tor. Most contemptible!
Follow me not! My way from this curst place
I'll find without a guide.

Rov. Then be it so.
If it so please you: and, farewell, my lord,
Until within these walls you shall again
Vouchsafe to honour us.

Tor. Which may be, jeering minion, somewhat
sooner
Than thou dost reckon for.

Rov. Whene'er you will, we're ready to receive
you. [*Exit TORTONA.*

He calls me minion: seest thou not, Gonzalos,
Which way suspicion leans? The fool is jealous,—
Jealous of me! Hath any one besides
Harbour'd such foolish fancies?

Gon. No, by St. Francis! ne'er a soul besides
Hath such a thought conceived, or ever will.

Rov. Thou'rt angry: dost thou think my thoughts
are evil?

Gon. No; evil thoughts thrive not within thy
brest,

Valiant Rovani; this I know right well:
But vain ones there a fatt'ning culture find,
And reach a marv'lous growth.

Rov. Well, do not chide: I will with scrupulous
honour

Fulfil my trust; and do but wish my arms
The lady and this castle might defend
Against a worthier foe than that light braggart.

Gon. But thou knowst well, or ought to know,
Rovani,

A braggart may be brave. Faith! were it not
For some small grains of wit and honest worth
Which poor Tortona lacks, thyself and he

In natural temperment and spirit are
So nearly match'd, you might twin nestlings be
From the same shell.—Be not so rash, I pray!
Tortona is no coward; and his forces

Greater than thou in ruin'd walls like these
Canst prudently oppose: therefore be wise,
And send for timely aid, lest he surprise thee.

Rov. I will be hang'd before another soldier
Shall be admitted here.

Gon. See to it then.

Rov. And so I will; it is not thy concern.

[*Exit GONZALOS.*

Rov. (*alone*). He, too, 'tis manifest, has some
suspicion

That Marg'ret favours me.

[*Muttering, and smiling to himself, then speaking
aloud.*

Ay, those same looks. Well, well, and if it be,
It touches not our honour.—Fair advice!
Call in some neighbouring leader of banditti
To share the honour of defending her!
I know his spite. Twin nestlings from the shell
With such a fool! I know his jealous spite.
I will be hang'd before another soldier
Shall cross the bridge or man our moated wall.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*The outer court of the castle. Hermit, pilgrim, and
several mendicants, discovered standing round the
gateway at the bottom of the stage.*

*Enter, on the front, LUDOVICO, GAUVINO, and
GOMEZ.*

Gau. The rumour of our lady's bounteous alms
Spreads o'er the country quickly; every morning

Adds to the number of those mendicants,—
Those slothful pests, who thus beset our gates.

Lud. Rail not so bitterly; there are, thou seest,
The sick and maim'd, and truly miserably,
Although some idle vagrants with the crowd
Have enter'd cunningly. Dost thou not see
Our hermit is among them?

Gau. What, comes he too a-begging? Shame
upon him!

His cot is stored with every dainty thing
Our peasant housewives rear, poor simple souls!
And prowls he here for more?

Gomez. He never came before.

Lud. Ay, and belike

He rather comes to give than to receive.

Gau. And what hath he to give? God mend thy
wit!

A broken rosary?

Lud. A good man's blessing.

Gau. Pooh, pooh! what folks are wont to sell at
home,

They will not go abroad to give for nothing.

Gomez. And see yon aged pilgrim by his side,
How spent and spare he seems!

*Gau.*hovels, and caves, and lazar-houses soon
Will pour their pests upon us.

Lud. Hush, man! thou art a surly heartless churl!
Yonder the lady comes.

Enter Countess.

*Mendicants (advancing, and all speaking at once
as she enters).* Blessings upon your head,
most noble lady!

Countess. I thank you all: have they been care-
ful of you?

Mendicants. Ay, bless you! they have served us
bountifully.

Countess. But wherefore stand ye here? Retire
within,

Where ye may sit at ease and eat your morsel.

Good pilgrim, thou art weary and lackest rest;

I fear the hardships of thy wand'ring life

Have blanch'd thy scanty locks more than thine
years.

Pilgrim. No, gentle lady: heav'n provides for
me.

When ev'ning closes, still some shelt'ring cave,

Or peasant's cot, or goatherd's shed is near;

And, should the night in desert parts o'ertake me,

It pleases me to think the beating blast

Has its commission, by rough discipline

To profit me withal.

Countess. The beating blasts have well fulfill'd
on thee

Their high commission.

But, oh! exceed not! Wander forth no more.

If thou hast home, or wife, or child, or aught

Of human kind that loves thee, O return!

Return to them, and end thy days in peace.

Didst thou but know the misery of those
Who hear the night-blast rock their walls, and
think

The head to them most dear may be unshelter'd,
Thou couldst not be so cruel—

(*Turning round.*) Who twitch'd my robe?

Lud. It was our holy hermit,
Who press'd, e'en now, its border to his lips,
Then shrank aside.

Countess. But how is this? He hurries fast
away.

Lud. He is a bashful man, whose hooded face
On woman never looks.

Countess. Has he some vow upon him?

Lud. 'Tis like he may; but he will pray for you.

Countess. And good men's prayers prevail, I do
believe.

Lud. Ay, madam, all the peasants round, I
trow,

Set by his prayers great store. E'en mothers leave
The very cradles of their dying infants

To beg them. Wives, whose husbands are at sea,

Or absent, or in any jeopardy,

Hie to his cell to crave his intercession.

Countess. Do they? Most blessed man!

[*Beckoning to the hermit, who stands aloof.*
I have words for thine ear; approach, I pray.

[*Leading him apart, on the front of the stage.*
The absent and in jeopardy by thee

Remember'd are, and heav'n receives thy prayers:

Then, oh! remember one, who for himself,

Depress'd, discouraged, may not to God's throne

Meet supplication make!

[*Taking him further apart, and in a lower
voice.*

There is a lonely wand'rer in the world

Of whom thou wottest. When the vespers sweet

And ev'ning orisons of holy men

Sound through the air, and in his humble cot,

With all his family round, th' unlearn'd hind

Lifts up his soul to heaven; when e'en the babe,

Tutor'd to goodness, by its mother kneels

To lisp some holy word,—on the cold ground,

Uncheer'd of earthly thing, he'll lay him down

Unblest, I fear, and silent. Such a one

Thou wottest of, good father; pray for him.

How's this? thou'rt greatly moved, and dost not
answer.

Have I requested what thou mayst not grant?

Heav'n hath not cast him off. O do not think it!

The heart that loved him hath not cast him off,

And do not thou. Pray for him: God will hear
thee.

[*He retires from her; she still following him.*

I do entreat, I do beseech thee, father!

I saw thy big tears glancing as they fell, [speak?

Though shrouded be thy face. Wilt thou not

Hermit (in a disguised voice). I will obey thee,
lady.

Countess (to herself). He hath a strange, mistuned, and hollow voice,
For one of so much sympathy. [*Alarm bell without.*
Ha! the alarm! What may it be? Ho! Pietro.

Enter PIETRO, in haste.

Pie. Haste, shut the castle gates, and with all speed
Must our strength,—there is no time to lose.
Madam, give orders quickly. Where's Rovani?

Countess. What is the matter? Why this loud alarm?

Pie. The Marquis of Tortona, not far distant,
With hasty march approaches, as I guess
Three thousand strong.

[*Alarm rings again, and enter ROVANI, GONZALOS, and others, from different sides.*

Countess. Heav'n be our trust! Hearest thou this, Rovani?

Rov. I've heard the larum bell and strange confusion.

Countess. Tortona with his hostile force approaches—

(*To PIETRO.*) Tell it thyself; saidst thou three thousand strong?

Pie. Yes, madam, so I did compute his numbers; And with him, too, one of those horrid engines
So lately known, which from its roaring mouth
Sends horrible destruction.

Not two leagues off I met him in array
Skirting the forest; and through dell and stream,
Fast as my feet could bear me, I have run
To give you notice.

Countess. Heaven aid the weak! I fear our slender force
Will be as nothing 'gainst such fearful odds.
What thinkest thou, Rovani? for on thee
Our fate depends.

Rov. Fear not, my noble mistress!
I will defend you. In your service bold,
Each of your men will ten men's strength possess.
Withdraw, then, I entreat you, to your tower,
And these good folks dismiss.

[*Pointing to the mendicants that still remain.*

[*Exeunt Countess and all the mendicants except the hermit, who retires to a corner of the stage.*

Gon. (*advancing to ROVANI on the front.*) Rovani, be thou bold, yet be not rash.
I warn'd thee well of this; but let that pass:
Only be wiser now. There is a leader
Of bold condottieri, not far distant;
Send to him instantly: there may be time.

Rov. I will not: we can well defend these walls 'Gainst greater odds; and I could swear that coward

Has number'd, in his fright, Tortona's soldiers
Threefold beyond the truth. Go to thy duty:

Must the men within, while I, meantime,
From place to place all needful orders give.

[*Exeunt GONZALOS and ROVANI severally, while many people cross the stage in hurry and confusion, ROVANI calling to them sometimes on one side, sometimes on another, as he goes off.*

Gomez (*to LUDOVICO, following ROVANI with his eye*). A brave man this, and gives his orders promptly.

Lud. Ay; brave enough, but rash. Alack the day!

Would that our valiant lord were here himself,
His own fair dame and castle to defend.
Alas! that evil deed e'er stain'd his hand,—
If this were so: we'll see his like no more.

Hermit (*going close to LUDOVICO*). Fear not, good man, who lov'st thy hapless lord;

Give me thine ear. [*Whispers to him.*

Lud. (*aside to hermit*). Conceal thee in that tower!

Hermit. Hush, hush! and come with me: I will convince thee

That what I ask is for thy lady's good.

[*Exeunt, hermit leading off LUDOVICO from GOMEZ.*

SCENE II.

The great hall of the castle.

Enter the Countess, meeting SOPHERA; a confused noise heard without, and a discharge of cannon.

Countess. What sawst thou from the turrets, for thy face

Looks pale and terrified? The din increases;
They have not made a breach?

Soph. I hope they have not; but that fearful engine

Is now against our weakest buttress pointed.

[*Cannon heard again.*

It roars again; have mercy on us, heaven!
How the walls shake, as if an earthquake rock'd them!

Countess. My child, my child! I'll to the lowest vaults

Convey him instantly.

Soph. But you forget th' attack is still directed
Against the eastern side; here he is safe.

Countess. And may th' Almighty ever keep him so!

[*Cannon without.*

Soph. Again the horrible roar!
Countess. Our ruin'd walls are weak, our warriors
Should they effect a breach!—O Garcio, Garcio!
Where wand'rest thou, unblest, unhappy man,
Who hadst our safeguard been!

Enter PIETRO.

Ha! bringst thou tidings?

Pie. Ay, and fearful tidings.
The foe have made a breach, and through the moat,

Now grown so shallow with the summer drought,
Have made their way.

Countess. Where does Rovani fight?

Pie. He did fight in the breach most valiantly;
But now the foemen o'er his body pass,
For he is slain, and all, I fear, is lost.

Countess. It must not be: I'll to the walls myself;

My soldiers will with desperate courage fight,
When they behold their wretched mistress near.

Soph. (*endeavouring to prevent her*). O, madam,
do not go!

Alas, alas! our miserable fate!

Countess. Restrain me not with senseless lamentations;

Driven to this desp'rate state, what is my choice?
For now I must be bold, or despicable. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The ramparts. Women discovered looking down from one of the lower battlements of the castle; the din and clashing of arms heard without, as if close at hand; then TORTONA and his soldiers cross the stage, fighting with the soldiers of the castle.

1st woman. See, there! see how our noble lady stands,

And bravely cheers them!

2d woman. If they have any soul or manhood in them,

They'll fight like raging lions for her sake.

Gen. (*without*). Fie, fie! give way before your lady's eyes!

1st woman. Ay, brave Gonzalos there right nobly strives;

But all in vain,—the enemy advance;

They gain the pass, and our base varlets yield.

(*Voice without*.) Bear in the lady there; 'tis desperation!

(*2d voice without*.) Resistance now is vain; bear in the lady!

(*3d voice without*.) A miracle! a miracle!

1st woman. What is't? Why call they out a miracle?

2d woman. Hast thou not eyes to see? Upon our side

The hermit combats, coiling round one arm
His twisted garments, whilst the other wields
A monstrous brand, might grace a giant's grasp.
O brave! look how he fights! he doth not fight
Like mortal man: heav'n sends him to our aid.

1st woman. And see! there is another miracle!

See Ludovico fighting by his side!

Who could have thought our gentle seneschal
Had pith and soul enough to fight so bravely?

2d woman. See, see! the vile Tortonians stand aghast:

They turn, they fly!

[*Loud shouts heard without, and re-enter TORTONA and his party, pursued by the soldiers of the castle, led on by the hermit.*]

Hermit. Turn, valiant chieftain! the most gen'rous foe

Of dames, whose lords are absent; turn, for shame!
Do not disgrace thy noble enterprise

With wounds received behind. Whate'er their cause,

Tortona's lords have still been soldiers. Turn,

Or be the scorn of every beardless boy,

Whose heart beats at the sound of warlike coil.

Thou canst not fear a man unhelm'd, unmail'd?

Tor. No; if a man thou art, I fear thee not!

Hermit. Well, to it, then, and prove me flesh and blood.

Tor. Whate'er thou art, I'll bear thy scorn no longer. [*Exeunt, fighting furiously.*]

SCENE IV.

The great hall: a shouting heard without.

Enter PIETRO, calling as he enters.

Pie. Where is the countess?

Enter SOPHERA, by the opposite side.

Soph. Thy voice calls gladly; dost thou bring good tidings?

Pie. I do; but stop me not! Where is the countess?

Enter Countess in haste.

Countess. What joyful shouts were those? My soldiers' voices!

Some happy chance has changed the fate of battle.

Pie. Ay, changed most happily.

Countess. And heaven be praised!
How has it been, good Pietro? Tell me quickly.

Pie. When we were panic-strick'n, rest of our wits,

Treading, like senseless sheep, each other down,
Heav'n sent us aid.

Countess. And be its goodness praised!
So near the verge of merciless destruction,
What blessed aid was sent?

Pie. By our fierce enemy, as I have said,
So sorely press'd, a powerful voice was heard
Calling our courage back; and on the sudden,
As if the yawning earth had sent it up,
A noble form, clad in the hermit's weeds,
But fighting with such fury irresistible
As armed warrior, no, nor mortal man
Did ever fight, upon our side appear'd,
Inspiring us with valour. Instantly

We turn'd again on our astonish'd foe,
Who fled to gain the breach by which they
enter'd.

Few have escaped ; and by our noble hermit
Tortona's lord is slain.

Countess (after looking up to heaven in silent adoration). That mighty Arm which still protects the innocent,

Weak woman, helpless infancy, and all
Bereft and desolate, hath fought for us !

But he, the blessed agent of its power,
Our brave deliv'rer, lead me to him instantly !
Where is the marvellous man ?

Pie. I left him, madam, on the eastern rampart,
Just as Tortona fell.—See Ludovico,
Who still fought nearest to him ; he'll inform you.

Enter LUDOVICO.

Countess. Brave Ludovico !—But that woeful
look,

In such a moment of unhop'd-for triumph !
Is the brave being safe who hath preserved us ?

Lud. Alas ! e'en as we shouted at the fall
Of proud Tortona, conquer'd by his arm ;
E'en as he stoop'd to soothe his dying foe,
The hateful caitiff drew a hidden dagger
And plunged it in his breast.

Countess. Alas, alas ! and is his life the forfeit
Of his most gen'rous aid !
O lead me to him ! let me thank and bless him,
If yet his noble mind be sensible
To words of gratitude.

Lud. They bring him hither. He himself
desired
That they should bear him to your presence. See !
With sad slow steps they come.

Enter soldiers bearing the hermit on a low bier, and set him down near the front of the stage. The Countess stands in woeful silence till he is placed, and then throws herself at his feet, embracing them.

Countess. Devoted, generous man ! Heav'n's
blessed minister !

Who hast, to save us from impending ruin,
Thy life so nobly sacrificed ; receive,—
While yet thy soul hath taste of earthly things,—

Receive my thanks, my tears, my love, my blessing ;

The yearning admiration of a heart
Most grateful ! Generous man, who'er thou art,
Thy deeds have made thee blood and kindred to
me.

O that my prayers and tears could move thy God,
Who sent such aid, to spare thy precious life !

Hermit (uncovering his head, and discovering the face of GARCIO). Margaret !

Countess. My Garcio !

[*Throwing her arms round him for some time, then raising herself from the bier, and wringing her hands in an agony of grief.*

This is my wretched work ! Heaven was his
judge,

Yet I, with cruel unrelenting sternness,
Have push'd him on his fate. O Garcio, Garcio !

Gar. Do not upbraid thyself : thou hast done
well :

For no repentance e'er could make me worthy
To live with thee, though it has made me worthy
To die for thee.

Countess. My dear and generous Garcio !
Alas, alas !

Gar. O calm that frantic grief !

For had my life been spared, my dearest Mar-
garet,

A wand'ring banish'd wretch I must have been,
Lonely and sad : but now, forgiven by thee,—
For so my heart assures me that I am,—
To breathe my parting spirit in thy presence,
For one who has so heavily offended,
Is a most happy end. It is so happy
That I have faith to think my deep contrition
Is by my God and Judge accepted now,
Instead of years of wretchedness and penance.
Be satisfied and cheer'd, my dearest wife !
Heaven deals with me in mercy.

Where is thy hand ? Farewell, a long farewell !

Soph. See, he revives, and strives to speak again.

Gar. Could I but live till I have seen my
child !

It may not be : the gripe of death is here.

Give him my dying love.

[*Dies.*
[*Curtain drops.*

THE STRIPLING:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

ARDEN.
 YOUNG ARDEN.
 ROBINAIR.
 BRUTON.
 HUMPHRY, *an old servant in the family of ARDEN.*
 MORGAN, } *servants.*
 ROBERT, }

Gaolers, servants, countrymen, &c.

WOMEN.

MRS. ARDEN.
 MADALINE.

Scene, in London and the vicinity.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

ARDEN's house; MRS. ARDEN discovered in a disconsolate posture, with MADALINE hanging over her soothingly.

Mad. Be not so overcome, my dear cousin; he has friends who will exert all their interest on his behalf.

Mrs. Arden. Ay, ay! thou talkest like a child who believes every one as sincere and affectionate as herself. Who are they who interest themselves

for the unfortunate? They who have daily conversed with him, laughed with him, gamed with him; who have daily quaffed wine at his table, and repeated every pleasantry that fell from his lips? (*Shaking her head with an expression of bitter contempt.*) My husband had many such friends!

Mad. But you think too hardly of mankind: some one, even among them, will be found to stand up in his defence now in his hour of need. Robinair, for instance; he will bestir himself vigorously. He is in credit with people in power: he has always been warm in his expressions of friendship, I may say of admiration, for Mr. Arden. He will find means to influence them in his favour.

Mrs. Arden. Alas, alas! does our hope hang on this point? I fear, indeed, that he has too much committed himself to this man; he hinted to me something of the kind, which, more than any other unfavourable circumstance, makes me tremble.

Mad. Why, how is this? I thought Robinair had been *your* friend, too. I have always understood, though I was then too young to be admitted into your confidence, that he was attached to you before you married. And has he not, ever since his return from abroad, befriended your husband in all the embarrassments into which his imprudence has thrown him?

Mrs. Arden. Rather say that, in the bitterness of disappointment, he has haunted us like a malevolent spirit, to enjoy our misfortunes and distress.

* The following Play was written when Master Betty, known by the name of the Young Roscius, was in the highest favour with the public, and before I had seen him perform; but, upon after consideration, was not offered to the theatre. It appears to me, in reading it again, after a long lapse of years, to be a play not ill suited to a very young actor, at the beginning of his career; being in prose, and having, I hope, no false, overstrained passion in it, to mislead him into ranting or exaggerated expression, either as to gesture, voice, or face.

Were there more characters of simple nature, adapted to young actors, to be found in our dramatic stores, they would not at first acquire those bad habits which so often prevent their after excellence. And the public would, in this early stage of their progress, receive from them a rational en-

tertainment; for, surely, to see a boy assuming the warlike air and tormenting jealousy of Othello, or the delicate and complicated feelings of the Prince of Denmark, scarcely deserves that name.

The story of the play is in some measure taken from a melancholy event which took place many years ago in Glasgow, yet still within the recollection of some of its present inhabitants. A young man, whose father was in prison, and about to be tried for a capital offence,—his fate depending on the single evidence of one person, which it was believed must prove fatal,—fired through a window at night, and killed the dreaded witness. The father's life was by this means spared, and the son was executed for the criminal act, though it was perpetrated from the strongest feeling of filial affection, being himself in no degree implicated in the guilt of his father.

Mad. Can he be so wicked ?

Mrs. Arden. Without being able directly to accuse him of one unfriendly office, something within my breast has always whispered this to me. But Arden, my poor Arden, thought otherwise; and it was the only thing that ever caused disagreement between us. I enjoyed the confidence of my husband till he became so intimate with him, and from that time I have been kept in the dark regarding all his schemes and transactions. Judge, then, with what heart I shall put my trust in Robinair!

Mad. Try, him, however: put his friendship to the proof.

Mrs. Arden. I mean to do so, Madaline: I have already sent to him, and expect him every moment. (*Listening.*) Is there not somebody coming?—A heavy footstep—his step! Now must I hold down this proud heart within me, and be supplicant to him whom I despise.

Enter BRUTON.

Mr. Bruton! I expected, sir, to have seen your friend.

Bruton. Unavoidable business, madam, prevents Mr. Robinair from waiting upon you: he cannot possibly come to this part of the town to-day; but he will be happy to have the honour of receiving you, at his own house, any hour in the forenoon which you may be pleased to appoint.

Mrs. Arden. He says so? (*A pause.*) I ought not to be surprised at this message.—I shall wait upon him at half-past twelve. Perhaps I shall find more generosity in his nature than this message, or the misgivings of my own heart, seem to promise. (*Looking earnestly at BRUTON.*) You are silent, Mr. Bruton: you make no rash promises for your friend.

Bruton. I hope, madam, you will not be disappointed in any good opinion you may form of him. I hope he will make every exertion in favour of Mr. Arden; but, in cases of this nature, all applications to royal benevolence, unless under very peculiar circumstances, have proved unsuccessful.

Mrs. Arden. Alas! I know that forgery is a crime which, in a commercial country, is rigorously dealt with; and if Arden is once condemned, notwithstanding his innocence, I shall be hopeless. It is the services of a friend regarding the evidence to be produced upon his trial that I would solicit from Mr. Robinair. No one is so capable as himself of rendering them effectually.

Bruton. He is, indeed, active, sagacious, and acute. (*Muttering words indistinctly.*)

Mrs. Arden. Yes, he has all the qualities you have named.—Half-past twelve, then, you think he will be at leisure?

Bruton. Yes, madam: good morning. (*Going.*)

Mrs. Arden. Mr. Bruton! (*Calling after him.*)

Bruton. Did you call me, madam?

Mrs. Arden. I beg pardon—there is nothing: good morning.

Bruton. Good morning, lady. (*Going as before, till almost off the stage.*)

Mrs. Arden (*stepping after him hastily*). Mr. Bruton! forgive this irresolute weakness: I did call you. Oh, sir! the wretched hope for succour where no claims exist,—even from the stranger and the unknown; and think that every look of pity comes from one who would befriend them. There was an expression on your face as you went; have I read it truly? Will you use your influence with Robinair for the unhappy? Although, I acknowledge, the sentiments I have felt and, perhaps, too strongly expressed for all those who, with Robinair, seemed engaged in drawing my husband into expensive and dangerous habits, do not entitle me to ask any favour of you.

Bruton. Be assured, madam, no remembrance of such expressions shall rest upon my mind at present; and if it be possible to be of any use to you, I will. Would to God I could serve you!

Mrs. Arden. You can—you can! You can move him.

Bruton. Move him!—I will try to do it; but, if he is to be moved, who can do it so powerfully as yourself? My best wishes are on your side.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Arden. “Move him!”—“if he is to be moved!” Didst thou mark with what a voice he uttered those words?

Mad. Nay, do not despair.

Mrs. Arden. He knows the man. Oh, my unfortunate husband! And my son—my boy, my pride—must thou be the son of a condemned— (*bursting into tears.*)

Mad. Do not bewail yourself thus, as if the worst had already befallen you. The storm will pass: the innocent will never be condemned, how strong soever the circumstances may be that make him at present suspected. And for your son, so far distant at school, he will know nothing of this terrible distress. How fortunate it is, poor boy, that he is absent! His affectionate and sensible heart would ill support itself against the dreadful shock.

Mrs. Arden. Alas, poor fellow! he is conning over his daily tasks, and sporting with his careless playmates, and little dreams of the misery at home. O that he may never know it! Thank heaven, however, that he is at present removed from it.

Mad. It is one fortunate circumstance amidst your many distresses. Do not suffer yourself to be so depressed; wrestle more bravely with your misfortunes, and heaven will support and protect you.

Mrs. Arden. I will try to do so.

Mad. This is well said: and, if I might advise you, retire for an hour to your chamber, and, if possible, take a little rest. You have been up the whole night, and it is still early in the morning. You will

not else have strength to comfort him who so much wants your comfort.

Mrs. Arden. I thank you, my kind Madaline; I will do as you desire me, though nowhere is there any rest for me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*An ante-room.**Enter HUMPHRY and ROBERT, meeting.**Robert.* Art thou from the prison, Humphry?*Humphry.* Yes.*Robert.* Hast thou seen our master?*Humphry.* Yes.*Robert.* Is he on the felons' side?*Humphry (angrily).* Yes.*Robert.* Be there irons upon his legs?*Humphry (pushing him away).* No, beast; but I wish there were upon thy tongue.*Robert.* What makes you growl so at a body? Is there any harm in axing a question or two? for I wants hugely to know how he looks, and how he demeans himself upon it.*Humphry.* He demeans himself like a man; and how he looks, those may say who have courage enough to look at him. I saw no part of him higher than his waist.*Robert.* Ah, poor gentleman! he was a good master to us, I must say that for him; and had it not been for those sharking fellows hanging about him so, eating up his substance through the day, and leading him to the gaming-house at night, he would have remained so, living in credit and honesty. His lady, poor woman! my heart grieves for her; and that fine lad, our young master, what will become of him?*Humphry.* Ay, generous boy! kindly boy! noble boy! it will pull hard at his high spirit, I warrant you. He will be fifteen next Monday; and what a joyless birthday it will be!*Robert.* Yes, man: he is so courteous and so gentle with us here; and yet they say at school, among his playfellows, he is the master boy of them all, and reigns over them as bravely as any prince.*Humphry.* Ay; yes is me for him!*Robert.* It is well, howsomever, that he knows nothing of it at present. Evil comes soon enough, God wot.*Humphry.* Is my lady in her chamber?*Robert.* I thought I heard a noise as if she were. *(Both draw close to the side-scene to listen.)* They told me she was gone to lie down; but she may be stirring now.*Enter YOUNG ARDEN by the opposite side.**Young Arden (aside).* Ha! there's old Humphry and Robert confabbing together. I am taller since I left home, and they have never seen me in a coatof this fashion: I think I may play them a trick. *(Pulling his hat over his eyes, and speaking in a feigned voice.)* Pray, ye good sirs, is young Mr. Arden at home?*Humphry.* No, sir; have you any business with him? He's at school.*Young Arden.* And he had better stay there, I trow, if he has not a mind for as sound a beating as ever fell to the share of a sorry jackanapes.*Humphry.* Sorry jackanapes, sir! There is not a braver boy in the kingdom. He would think no more of chucking such a sneaking fellow as you into the kennel than I should of twisting round this junk of tobacco.*Young Arden.* Yes, to be sure, it becomes you to speak well of him, for the honour of the house you are in; but you know well enough that he is but a paltry fellow, who runs about the house and calls out "O dear!" if his finger be but scratched, that every body may pity him.*Humphry.* He is ready enough to pity any body; but scratch his own finger to the bone, ay, cut off his leg, an you please, and the devil himself will not make him call out "O dear!"*Young Arden (casting away his hat, skipping across the room, and throwing his arms round HUMPHRY'S neck).* My dear Humphry! my kind old Humphry! thou lovest me as much as ever, I see; and I might ride on thy shoulders still, were I not somewhat heavier now, and thou scarcely so strong. We have had happy days together, Humphry! and we'll have them again, though after a different fashion.*Humphry.* Ah, my dear child! what has brought you here?*Young Arden.* Our school has broken up suddenly, on account of a fever that has got into it. I thought I should come upon you by surprise. But how is this? You look strangely upon me.—And you too, Robert: are you not glad to see me? *(A pause.)* What is the matter? Is my father within?*Humphry (making signs for ROBERT to be silent).* No, he is not within—or, rather, he is not at home—or, that is to say, he has left his own house for a little time.*Young Arden.* And my mother, is she well?*Humphry.* Pretty well—so so.*Young Arden.* So so! Where is she?*Humphry.* Taking a short rest, I believe, in her own room. *(Preventing YOUNG ARDEN, who is hastening towards the door.)* Nay! let her rest a little while before you go to her; and wait meantime in the library, where you will have books to amuse you.*Young Arden.* Be it so, then; but I cannot wait long. I want only to look upon her, but not to wake or disturb her. [*Exit.**Humphry.* How tall he has grown! he has the size of a man, and I'm sure he had always the spirit of one. Oh, how it will be put to the proof!

Robert. It makes a body quake to think of it. His own father to die the death of a——

Humphry. I'll throttle thee if thou say another word about that!

Robert. Lord 'a mercy! one may not speak to you now about any thing that one cares most to speak about. [Exit severally.]

SCENE III.

MRS. ARDEN'S bed-chamber. *She is discovered lying on a couch, as if asleep, with a shawl thrown over her face.*

Enter YOUNG ARDEN, stepping softly on tiptoe.

Young Arden. Is she asleep? Her breast heaves under that covering, as if she slept soundly. (*Going up to her.*) All covered up so closely! Ha! here is a hand peeping out which I will press by-and-bye right dearly. (*Kneels, and bends over her hand, mimicking the action of kissing, but without touching it.*) I can see her features, too, through these folds. (*Putting his face close to hers, affectionately.*) How surprised she will be when she wakes, and sees me by her! Does she not move? She is awake. (*Lifting the shawl gently from her face.*) Mother! my little dormouse mother!

Mrs. Arden (*shrieking, and starting up*). Good God! art thou here, Edmond? Why art thou come? What brings thee? Hast thou heard any thing?

Young Arden. Heard any thing! What should I hear? Has any thing happened? where is my father? They tell me he has gone from home for a short time: where is he gone?

Mrs. Arden. Yes, yes; he is gone from home. This house is not his home at present. (*Bursting into tears and falling on his neck.*)

Young Arden. My dearest mother! why this excess of grief? Where is he gone to? For God's sake! where is he gone to?

Mrs. Arden. He is gone—they have put him—he is gone——

Young Arden. To prison?

Mrs. Arden. Even so, boy! thou hast guessed it. But, oh, think not hardly of him! He has been misled; he has been imprudent.

Young Arden. Think hardly of him, mother! I would not think hardly of him, though I were turned to the streets for his sake, and left to beg my bread from door to door.

Mrs. Arden. Oh, my child! what hast thou to go through!

Young Arden. Think not of me, dear mother; I can go through it all with a good heart.—But what will become of you till I am old enough to work for you?—Fie on't! I am old enough now: I am sound of life and limb, and I have spirit enough to face any thin

Mrs. Arden. Alas, alas! for thee.

Young Arden. Fear not, fear not. I am a proud boy, it is true; but I will not be ashamed before any one when I am working for my mother.

Mrs. Arden. My blessed child! and must this be thy portion?

Young Arden. Yes, madam, and an honourable one too. Cheer up, cheer up, my dear mother. I shall go to my father presently, and meet him with such a cheerful countenance, that he shall only wait for a discharge from his creditors, which they cannot refuse when he has given up all that he has,—to be a far happier man than he was before.

Mrs. Arden. Oh! oh! thou little thinkest what thou hast before thee!

Young Arden. Nay, say not "Oh! oh!" I have looked forward to this for some time, and have hardened myself to meet it. I saw well enough, school-boy as I was, what the gaming-table and his numberless expenses would lead him to.

Mrs. Arden. And didst thou think of him thus?

Young Arden. Yes, I did, mother; but I loved him, nevertheless, and will love him still.—Be composed, then, I beseech you, and let me run to him immediately.

Mrs. Arden (*holding him*). Not now, not now! Stay with me, and tell me why thou hast come to us so unexpectedly.

Young Arden. That can soon be told.—But here is Madaline. Well, cousin; you are come to welcome me? (*Holding out his hand.*)

Enter MADALINE.

Mad. I was told you were here.

Young Arden. And this is the rueful face you put on for my welcome. Fy, Madaline! you should cheer my mother, and look pleasantly before her.

Mrs. Arden. Don't reproach her: she is very kind and very considerate. Without her, I should sink altogether.

Young Arden. Then, she is a good girl, and shall be chidden no more.

Mad. We shall make up this difference in the next room, where I have ordered some refreshment for you; and you must eat something after your journey, and persuade my aunt to do so, too. You must both eat, if you would not sink under entirely.

Young Arden. I thank you, kind cousin, and so we will. Sink under, sayst thou? No, no! we sha'n't do that, God willing. There is more spirit in us than that comes to;—is there not, mother? (*Taking her arm under his as they go off.*) [Exit.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

BRUTON's lodgings. ROBINAIR and BRUTON, speaking as they enter.

Rob. And you are just come from hearing Arden's examination? How went it?

Bruton. It was scarcely closed when I came away,—as I thought you would be waiting for me; but I heard all the material part.

Rob. And how did he behave himself?

Bruton. With greater caution and presence of mind than I should have supposed a character like his, depressed with a sense of disgrace, was capable of.

Rob. Indeed! He kept possession of himself, then?

Bruton. Wonderful! he has not betrayed himself in one of his answers, though he was questioned very shrewdly.

Rob. Ha! where have those brains been stored up all this while, which he now brings into use for the first time? "Call no man happy till he be dead," says the old proverb. We must now add some words to it: Call no man a fool till the same seal has been set upon him.

Bruton. Ay; strong necessity will make a man wise as well as bold. But your dislike to Arden made you undervalue his abilities.

Rob. Devil take him and them both!—Not once off his guard?

Bruton. Not once, as far as I could judge of the matter. It will be proved, indeed, that, a few days previous to the date of the forgery, he purchased at the stationer's with whom old Fenshaw deals, that peculiar kind of paper upon which the old gentleman always writes his money bills,—a kind which he had never purchased before: but this circumstance is not very conclusive, since Fenshaw acknowledges giving him a bill of the same date, though for a much smaller sum. Now the old gentleman's memory is impaired, and he may easily be supposed to have set down, in mistake, one sum for another. Your having seen the real bill is the only circumstance that makes positively against him. His life, therefore, is in your hands.

Rob. I know it is. Now is my time of revenge for all the scorn, for all the insults, I have endured from that proud woman.

Bruton. And is it generous to use it?

Rob. Generous! and hast thou kept company with me all these years, Bruton, to talk so like a simpleton as thou dost? I have carried myself with a show of specious sentiments to the world; as every man must do who is not a fool, and intends to live with some credit in it. I have been the delicate, the liberal, the good, and, above all, the good-natured Mr. Robinair, to many; but when

did I ever pretend to refinement or generosity before thee?

Bruton. I cannot, indeed, greatly accuse thee of it. But the present case is so very distressing.

Rob. It is so; I apprehend as much, good Mr. Bruton.

Bruton. But you have lived upon poor Arden; you have encouraged him in all kinds of extravagance.

Rob. Well, sir, this has not escaped my memory.

Bruton. You have enticed him to the gaming-table, and ruined him.

Rob. Well; of this, also, I have some recollection.

Bruton. And your lax doctrines respecting money transactions have, I doubt not, suggested to him, that robbing an old relation of what he could easily spare, and of what, in the course of a few years, would probably be his own by right, could scarcely be considered as a crime.

Rob. Thou sayst truth: I have done all this. And wherefore have I done it, thinkest thou? For the paltry gains to be made from the ruin of a man of moderate fortune?—I, who had talents to have speculated on a much grander scale? Out upon thy little narrow conceptions!

Bruton. Nay, I knew that revenge for disappointed passion had a good share in all your manoeuvres.

Rob. Sharp-witted fellow! thou knowest that I loved his wife, and was rejected by her, who preferred this fool to me; that I went abroad in disgust, and, upon my return, insinuated myself into his confidence, with the hope of sowing discord between them, and, if possible, of undermining her fidelity. Thou knowest she has still treated me with disdain, so that nothing but his complete ruin can possibly detach her from him;—thou knowest all this, yet hast the folly to stand before me, with that piteous countenance of thine, desiring me seriously to undo all I have been labouring for so long. Will the wolf, with the prey in his fangs, forbear to devour it, because, forsooth, he will be called an unamiable wolf?

Bruton. I would have you at least to consider—

Rob. No! good, compassionate Mr. Bruton: I have considered, and I will not save him. On the scaffold let him die! and let those who have suffered within them the torments that I have endured condemn me, if they can. It is not by calm, even-tempered dozers through life, such as thou art, that I will submit to be judged.

Bruton. Then, by my faith, Robinair, thou art a fiend!

Rob. Better be a fiend only, than fiend and fool both. I am a man of more simplicity than thou art; I do not try to have so many contrary qualities at once. Sound no more of that piteous nonsense in my ears!

Bruton. Pity, indeed, seems out of use at present. Who could have thought that old man would have prosecuted the life of one who, though distantly related to him, is still his nearest of kin! Some secret enemy has goaded him to it.

Rob. And thou art at a loss, I doubt not, to guess who this wicked enemy may be; judging, as thou dost, in all the imbecility of innocence. (*Smiling on him with malignant contempt.*)

Bruton (*shrinking from him in disgust*). I understand that smile.

Rob. Thou hast understanding enough for that, hast thou? But do not imagine, however, that I am entirely destitute of every good disposition. I intend, when I am in possession of old Fenshaw's fortune, which he has promised to bequeath to me, to be liberal, and even generous, both to Mrs. Arden and her son. When she is in my power I will treat her nobly; but she must be in my power.

Bruton. I have no more to say to you; my pleading is at an end.

Rob. I am glad to hear it. And now, dropping this subject, which must never again be resumed, let me remind you of the business you are to transact for me at the other end of the town. I have ordered my carriage to meet me here, and it is just drawing up at the door. (*Hasting away, and returning.*) Half-past twelve, I think, is the time Mrs. Arden has appointed?

Bruton. Yes, it is the time she fixed.

Rob. I must hurry home, then. [*Exit.*]

Bruton (*alone*). And this is the man to whom my cursed extravagance has subjected me, while, having me in his power, he treats me like a menial—like a slave! Oh, thou vice of gaming! thou hast overthrown thy thousands and tens of thousands, never to rise again—never again to bear themselves with the erect dignity of an honest man! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

An open hall or lobby in a prison, from which a wide arched passage branches off. Over the arch is written, "The Felons' Side."

Enter YOUNG ARDEN, *meeting the head Gaoler.*

Gaoler. Did you look for any one, young gentleman?

Young Arden. I am wrong, I see. Can you show me the way to the debtors' side? There is a prisoner I would inquire after.

Gaoler (*pointing in another direction*). That, sir, will lead you to it: but you had better stop here a few minutes; for yonder are persons coming this way, conducting a prisoner from examination,—a poor unfortunate gentleman.

Young Arden. A gentleman! what is his name?

Gaoler. His name is Arden.

Young Arden (*aside*). Examination! is it a meeting with creditors he means?

Gaoler. Yonder he comes, poor man!

Young Arden. You seem to pity him very much.

Gaoler. It always grieves me to see a gentleman in his situation.

Young Arden. You have a kind heart, sir; but misfortunes will happen to persons in every rank of life.

Gaoler. Here he is, and his friends and counsel with him.

Young Arden (*aside, and shrinking back*). I'll stand behind; I cannot go up to him before those people.

Enter ARDEN, *with his Counsel, &c., and walks slowly across the stage, passing close by his son, who keeps behind the gaoler, casting a furtive look at his father's face as he passes; then, seeing him about to enter the felons' passage, springs forward eagerly, as if to prevent him.*

Gaoler (*pulling him back*). What would you?

Young Arden. He is going the wrong way!

Gaoler. He is right enough.

Young Arden. That is the felons' side!

Gaoler. And therefore it is his.

Young Arden. Thou liest!

Gaoler. What say you?

Young Arden. He is no felon!

Gaoler. That will be known when his trial is ended.

Young Arden. What trial?

Gaoler. His trial, that comes on to-morrow, for a forgery. (*YOUNG ARDEN sinks to the ground; gaoler beckoning to the under-gaoler to assist him.*) Poor lad! this has struck through his heart like an arrow. He must be some near relation to the prisoner.

Under-gaoler. His son; I'll pawn my life on't.

Gaoler. Ah, poor boy! (*Chafes his hands and temples, and YOUNG ARDEN recovers.*) My good young sir, go into my house for a while and recover yourself.

Young Arden. There was a wonderful buzzing of voices round me.

Gaoler. There was nobody spoke to you but myself; and I spoke softly too.

Young Arden. I must go to my father.

Gaoler. Yes, presently; but not till you are better recovered. Beside, he is engaged at present with gentlemen, who are assisting him to prepare for his trial.

Young Arden. His trial! Oh, oh!—But he is innocent!

Gaoler. Yes, my good boy; we hope so: and then there is no fear of him.

Under-gaoler. The innocent are never condemned in this country.

Young Arden. Ah! were that but certain, he would be safe.

Gaoler. Then he is safe: so, cheer up, my sweet young sir; and come with me to my house, hard by, till his counsel have left him.—How came you here without a conductor?

Young Arden. My mother desired me not to go till she could be with me; but I was impatient, and stole out of the house as soon as she left it to execute some business elsewhere. Alas! I see now why she forbade me to go. [Exit.

SCENE III.

ROBINAIR'S house.

Enter MRS. ARDEN, and a servant showing her in.

Serv. (placing a chair). My master will attend you immediately, madam. [Exit.

Mrs. Arden (alone). And here I am in the house of this man, a humble supplicant for his pity! Righteous heaven! sunk thus low in misery, give me strength to support it! If I have been haughty or elated in prosperity, teach me now resignation in adversity!—I hear him coming.—Ah! do I feel pride still? No, no, no! what have I to do with feelings like these, when I am pleading for the life of my husband?

Enter ROBINAIR.

Rob. Madam, I have kept myself at home in obedience to your appointment.

Mrs. Arden. I thank you, sir, for paying so much regard to one so very miserable. I come to you, Mr. Robinair, a depressed and wretched suitor.

Rob. Is there any thing, in any situation, that Mrs. Arden will deign to desire of me?

Mrs. Arden. There is, there is! there is something I must desire—I must beg—I must beseech of you; and I will not do your friendship for Arden the injury to suppose it possible that you should refuse me.

Rob. I am infinitely honoured by your good opinion, madam. In what can I possibly serve you?

Mrs. Arden. O tell me first—tell me faithfully and truly, what is your opinion of my husband's situation. He has been very imprudent, but it cannot be that he is guilty.

Rob. Imprudence leads men into great temptation. You know whether or not the character of your husband made him more likely than other men to resist it.

Mrs. Arden. Alas! I know well the weakness of his mind, and I know his necessities were great: but great as they might be, they could never move him to commit such a crime.

Rob. So do all good wives conceive of their husband's integrity; particularly those who have en-

joyed the felicity of a romantic attachment. How happy should I be to feel equally confident on this point!

Mrs. Arden. Then you do not? O, no, no! you cannot believe him guilty, how strongly soever appearances may be against him.

Rob. I wish it were possible for me to hold your faith upon this subject, madam, or even to avoid the necessity I may be under of appearing on his trial, as the principal witness against him.

Mrs. Arden. Merciful heaven! and do you walk about at liberty, waiting here to give the death-blow to him whom you have called your friend? Fly, fly, I beseech you! On my knees I beseech you to have pity on us. Fly this country for a season, and conceal the place of your retreat.

Rob. Pray, madam, do not give me the pain of seeing you in that posture.

Mrs. Arden. No posture but this till you have granted my request! Have pity on us! Fly the country, or conceal yourself immediately, and we will bless you. (*Still kneeling, and catching hold of the skirts of his coat, as he retreats from her.*)

Rob. I will not listen to another word while you remain thus. (*Placing a chair for her; they both sit down.*)

Mrs. Arden. Then you will listen to me now: you will consent to fly, or conceal yourself, till the trial is over.

Rob. Are you aware, madam, that you are desiring me to become an exile, an outlaw; to destroy my own character and credit in the world? Your many kind instances of regard for my happiness may indeed merit a grateful return, but something short of this (*ironically*). Command my services in any other way. My fortune is at your disposal. I will be the protector of yourself and of your son.

Mrs. Arden (starting from her seat). Heaven forbid! thy protection were the venomous coils— (*checking herself, and covering her face with her hands.*)

Rob. Of a serpent, you would have said. But, pray, speak without reserve, that we may understand one another completely. My protection is not, perhaps, what you would voluntarily have chosen; but, when no better expedient presents itself, it may possibly be endured. Ay, madam, and shall be endured, if you hope for any favour for your husband, whom it is in my power to save, without flying the country. Must I commit perjury to please you, whilst your marriage vow, the bane of all my happiness, remains unbroken? Must I be the sinner, and you still continue immaculate? (*After a pause, in which she seems strongly agitated.*) Take this into your consideration, lady. I shall sleep to-night in my house near Chelsea, where, if you will have the condescension to come yourself, and acquaint me with your determination, I shall think myself honoured.—Excuse me now; I am

exceedingly hurried with business. Let me have the pleasure of attending you to your chair, Letitia ; I once called you by that dear name. (*Taking her hand familiarly.*)

Mrs. Arden (*pulling away her hand indignantly.*) Insulting, detestable villain ! let one general ruin overwhelm us all, before I owe anything to thee ! (*Hurrying from him.*) [*Exit.*]

Rob. (*looking after her significantly.*) Yes ; pride must make some blustering, before he be entirely turned out of doors : this is but reasonable, and according to the working of nature. Yes, yes, yes ! there will be time enough between this and midnight to smooth the haughty brow into submission. (*Walking hastily up and down, and stopping now and then as he speaks.*) Now will the days of thy scorn be remembered with bitterness, when, wife to a degraded husband, thou lookest timidly up to the eyes of a protector—even him whom thou hast rejected with disdain.—Let this one be, and I shall feel it worth all the—No ; I will not call it villany—my provocations would justify any thing—all the artful management it has cost me.

Re-enter MRS. ARDEN, with mortified timidity.

Mrs. Arden. You will be at Chelsea to-night ?

Rob. Yes, lady, where I shall be delighted to see you, and to obey your commands. [*Exit Mrs. ARDEN.*] (*Holding up his hands exultingly.*) I knew it would be so ! There was a rude burst of anger, to be sure ; but the vision of a man's bare throat, with a noose about it, has crossed her in the hall, and cheeked her wayward steps.—Ho, there !

Enter a Servant.

Send notice to the housekeeper at Chelsea that—No, I must write down her directions, else there will be some cursed mistake or other. (*Goes to a table, and sits down to write, while the servant waits.*)

Enter BRUTON.

Bruton. You are engaged I see.

Rob. No, no ! I'll speak to you immediately.

Bruton (*aside*). What is he about now ? No good, I'm sure, from the eagerness of his eye, and that ironical twisting of his mouth.

Rob. (*after sealing the note, and giving it to the servant.*) Bid Charles carry that to Mrs. Cookum without delay.

[*Exit servant, and ROBINAIR comes forward to BRUTON with a gay, light step.*]

Bruton. You are not surely going to Chelsea to-night ?

Rob. But I am ; and I tell thee besides, as surely, that thou art going with me.

Bruton. Indeed ! I am engaged elsewhere.

Rob. Let the elsewhere forego thy gracious presence for this bout. Thou art engaged to me.

Bruton. Something too arbitrary, methinks.

Rob. O ! displeas'd, I see ! Come, come ; do not be a restive fool upon my hands, when I want thee confoundedly. For I must be in waiting there before the hour ; and I hate to wait alone.

Bruton. For whom ?

Rob. Her, who has the prettiest hand and foot of any woman in England ; her, who has haunted, and scorned, and tormented me for almost the half of my life ; for Arden's wife. I have an appointment with her at midnight.

Bruton. You do not say so,—you cannot say so. Has misery driven her to this ?

Rob. We shall see—you shall see.

Bruton. I cannot believe it.

Rob. Be as sceptical and as cautious as you please ; but go with me to Chelsea in the evening, and let seeing and believing be yoke-fellows.

Bruton. I will not go.—Nay, I will go to see you disappointed. You deceive yourself : she cannot have fallen so low.

Rob. Ay, she was lofty enough once. But the lark cannot be always in the clouds ; the heavy rain beats upon her wings, and down she drops upon the wet sod, where earth-grubs and snails are her neighbours.—Disappointed, ha ! ha ! ha !—But I have other things which thou must do for me in the mean time.—nay, don't seowl so—things that must be done.—Ha ! here comes Beacham's man with the money.

Enter a person, with a small bag.

Bruton (*aside, as he turns from ROBINAIR*). Domineering insolence ! it is insufferable.

Rob. (*to the stranger*). Good morning, Mr. Martin ; how is your master ? You have brought, I see, the little sum that was left unsettled between us. He is an honourable fellow. But thou shakest thy head, man ; thou lookest ruefully.

Stranger. Come honesty first, and honour will follow.

Rob. Fogh ! some old saw of your grandmother's ; quite out of date now, my good friend. Look not so grumly at me : there is something to make thee more cheerful. (*Offering him money with one hand, while he receives the bag with the other.*)

Stranger. I'll have nothing of yours, sir.

Rob. No ! good gold pieces are not to be despised.

Stranger. Be they gold or copper it is the same to me. [*Exit.*]

Rob. (*laughing*). What think you of this angry fool, Bruton ?

Bruton. He has cause to be angry. You have stripped the coat from the back of his poor silly master.

Rob. Well ; he will go to Paris in his waistcoat. He may find it the fashion there, perhaps, to go so clothed.

Bruton. And how long will he keep his waistcoat

when he gets among the worthies of the Palais Royal ?

Rob. What does that signify? The thick waters of the Seine will make him a coat, vest, and winding-sheet, all in one, with no more to do about the matter.

Enter a man, with papers, &c.

Oh, oh ! Mr. Skriever ; you are come at last with the deeds.

Skriever. Yes, sir, and you will find the security good, and the interest of your money regularly paid.

Rob. I trust so ; for otherwise I shall foreclose upon you without hesitation. Go into my library, and I'll sign it there. [*Exit SKRIEVER by a side door.*] (*To BRUTON, after going about the room fantastically, with a gay, skipping step.*) The breezes of fortune, you see, are in my sails.

Bruton. But you may be wrecked full soon, notwithstanding.

Rob. Never fear : I am a skilful pilot as well as a bold sailor, and when I am——O what may I not be !—I will make a man of thee, Bruton.

Bruton. Could you restore me to the man I was, when you first took me up, I should ask no better fortune, and take my leave of you for ever.

Rob. What ! leave me ? No, no ! I must not part with that sober face, and seeming sanctity of thine : they will be necessary to keep me in credit with the world. "Hold your tongue," will the faded maids and dowagers exclaim, as they arrange their cards, "I will not hear one word against Sir John Robinair, as long as he is so intimate with good Mr. Bruton."

Bruton. Sir John Robinair !

Rob. Yes ; I shall be a baronet by-and-bye, you know. There will be nothing very wonderful in that, surely. But I waste time here : I must go and sign those deeds. [*Exit into the side door.*]

Bruton. He is mad with prosperity. But pride comes before a fall ; and may the proverb be verified here ! [*Exit.*]

ACT III

The prison ; ARDEN is discovered sitting in a disconsolate posture. After a pause, he rises, and walks once or twice across the front of the stage.

Arden. And if it should come to this, in what is it really different from that which, many times, in the accumulation of my distresses, I have wished for—I have almost been upon the brink of perpetrating ? How often, after returning in despair from the gaming-house, have I wistfully looked at the pistols that hung on the wall, or the razor that lay on my table!—Ah ! but disgrace, disgrace !

The murmurs of detestation and pity ; the broad gaze of the innumerable multitude ; the last horrible act imposed on a passive wretch ;—this is what the human mind strongly recoils from ! this is dreadful ! (*Sinks down again upon his seat.*)

Enter under-gaoler, bearing a covered dish, &c.

Under-gaoler. I have brought you something to eat, sir : you will be quite faint if you fast longer.

Arden. Take it away, friend ; I cannot eat yet.

Under-gaoler. Pray, sir, be advised. If it were but a single morsel, it would do you good.

Arden. Take it away—take it away, I pray thee. Why art thou so importunate ?

Under-gaoler. There is a young gentleman below, who wishes to see you, and my master is anxious you should take some refreshment before he comes to you ; just, as it were, to strengthen you first.

Arden (starting up). A young gentleman, said ye ? A boy, do you mean ?

Under-gaoler. Yes, sir, one of your good, manly, gentleman-like school-boys ; but wonderfully out of heart, poor fellow.

Arden. Good God ! Show him up immediately.

Under-gaoler. Yes, sir ; but will you not take a little wine first, if you will eat nothing ?

Arden. No, no, kind fool ! it would choke me. Show him up immediately. (*Exit gaoler.*) Now do I feel all my miseries ! Now am I the selfish, the cruel, the disgraceful father. O God ! O God ! what is the gaze of a multitude to this boy's eye ?

Enter YOUNG ARDEN, who, running up to his father, falls upon his neck, and bursts into tears.

Arden. Boy, boy ! why hast thou come to me ?

Young Arden. To bless you, father.

Arden. To bless me, boy ?

Young Arden. Ay, and to cling to you, father : to be with you and serve you, father ; who should do that, as you are now circumstanced, but me ?

Arden. Woe is me ! that thou shouldst have such an office ! It must not be.

Young Arden. Turn not away from me thus ! I am now at your feet in a posture you have never seen me take before. (*Kneeling and catching his hand.*)

Arden. I know thee well : thou art a generous boy ; thou art a noble boy ; but what a father am I ? I have blasted thy fair promise, freshly springing plant ! I have blighted thee with disgrace !

Young Arden. Say not so, my dear father ! what ruin is there to him who has a sound mind and a sound body left, and is willing to be a poor man, since heaven pleases not that he should be a rich one ? And for disgrace, I shall think it no disgrace to be the son of an unfortunate father, knowing that he is only unfortunate. Look not on me then with such anguish ! You will be able to vindicate your character to the world. (*ARDEN shakes his head.*)

Nay, and if all the world regard you as guilty, I will believe you to be innocent.

Arden. Oh, oh, oh ! This is misery indeed.

Young Arden. Why that terrible groan, dear father?

Arden. Thou wringest my heart, my son !— Little dost thou know—but thou shalt know it. I have kept thy mother in ignorance, but I will conceal nothing from thee. (*Going to the door to see if it be closely shut.*)

Young Arden. Good heaven ! what is it you would tell me ?

Arden. The fatal progress of a ruined unfortunate man.

Young Arden. I know you are unfortunate.

Arden. Hold thy peace, and hear me out.— Naturally thoughtless and profuse, and fond of the pitiful distinction that expense bestows, I dissipated an easy fortune which ought to have been thine, Edmond.

Young Arden. Nay, nay ! take no thought of that : let it go. It is but a feather in the air ; and may light where it lists.

Arden. Having squandered it, as I said, that false friend Robinair—

Young Arden. Is he false ?

Arden. False, base, and treacherous.

Young Arden. May he be sent to perdition then !

Arden. Be quiet, be quiet, and hear me out. That false friend, who had insinuated himself into my confidence, by many flattering praises and professions of regard, and by sometimes accommodating me with small loans of money, which I still hoped to repay, introduced me to the gaming-table. There I was at first allowed to be successful, and encouraged to risk still higher stakes : at last a tide of ill luck, as it was called, set strongly against me, and I was borne down to ruin and despair.

Young Arden. O what you must have suffered, father !

Arden. I was not a very happy man, Edmond ; and when I thought of your mother and you—

Young Arden. Nay, nay ! say nothing of this. We shall do very well : we are satisfied.

Arden. I will go on with my story. Being thus desperate, I wrote to my old relation Fenshaw for the loan of a thousand pounds, which I sincerely meant to repay, whenever I should have it in my power.

Young Arden. I knew it, sir : I knew you would willingly wrong no man.

Arden. Nay, listen. Fenshaw, suspecting the state of my affairs, but pitying my distress, sent me, indeed, a bill on his banker, but it was only for a hundred pounds, which was nothing to my necessities. I had, formerly, to amuse myself, imitated different kinds of handwriting, and once,—this is the circumstance that, if brought in evidence, along with another only known to Robinair, would have the strongest effect on the decision of a jury ;

namely, his having seen the bill which Fenshaw sent me. Nothing was concealed from him. Once, after copying a note of Fenshaw's so exactly that it could not be discovered from the original, I showed it to Robinair, and said, "This may be a resource to me in time of need."

Young Arden (eagerly). But you said it only in jest ?

Arden. I did so then : but ruin overwhelmed me ; I had no resource, and a strong temptation took hold of me. To convert this bill for a hundred into one for a thousand pounds seemed so easily done ; and still, like a madman, confident of retrieving all if I were but once more enabled to attempt fortune, I thought I should contrive to repay the sum, before the fraud could be discovered. This fatal idea came into my head in my despair, was rejected, yet still returned to me again, and, at last, an irresistible temptation fastened itself upon my miserable imbecility.

Young Arden (in a half-choked voice). But you resisted it ?

Arden. Alas ! I did not.

[*YOUNG ARDEN staggers back some paces, then sinks down upon a chair, and from that upon the ground, where he throws himself along, covering his face with his hands, while ARDEN strides to and fro on the front of the stage, in violent agitation.*]

Enter MRS. ARDEN.

Mrs. Arden (to her husband, not perceiving her son, who is partly concealed by the chair from which he sank). Ha ! how is it now ? Thou art more overcome than I have ever seen thee before. Alas ! if thy strength fail thee now, when thou hast such exertions to make, what will become of us ?

Arden. Let me alone—let me alone : thoughts of unutterable anguish are dealing with me.

Mrs. Arden. Alas ! alas ! I thought to have brought thee comfort.

Arden. What comfort ? Where is it ?

Mrs. Arden. I went in quest of it, but I have returned empty. He is inexorable.

Arden. O ! I remember now. Thou hast been with Robinair then ?

Mrs. Arden. Yes ; I am come from his house, where I have knelt and wept at his feet.

Arden. And he is inexorable ?

Mrs. Arden. There is nothing to hope for from him. He has talked of befriending me and my son : but for thee he has no pity. He has talked, indeed, as if certain compliances on my part might have power to move him in your behalf, and desired me to acquaint him with my determination this night at his house near Chelsea ; but there was a malignant mockery on his face, as he spoke, which made me regard what he said as an unworthy insult, that had no serious meaning.

Arden. But it had a meaning,—a damned mean-

ing. My life is in his power, and he had the audacity, even to me, to propose that which, were I but to utter it, would cover us both with shame.

Mrs. Arden. Let it not then be uttered! Thou hast rejected the detestable proposal with abhorrence: I know thou hast; and, for the rest, let heaven in its mercy send us deliverance! (*ARDEN groans.*) O! how is this? Where is that vehemence of indignation? Surely thou hast rejected it with abhorrence!

Arden. I did reject it with abhorrence, and I do so till. But, oh! Letitia! there are moments when the thoughts of public disgrace; of the last dreadful act of dying on a scaffold, a spectacle to the unfeeling multitude, does so terribly beset my imagination, that, were it possible to endure the idea of thy degradation, I could almost——

Young Arden (*who has been eagerly listening, raising himself meantime from the ground by degrees, now springs upon his feet, and rushing between his father and mother, separates them vehemently with his thrown-out arms.*) But it is impossible.

Mrs. Arden (*to her son*). Ha! art thou here?

Arden (*to his son, who is looking fixedly upon him*). Take off thine eyes from me, boy; they strike me to the earth. Look not so on one whom thou hast called thy father. I know the spirit that is in thee, and, alas! I know that it is none of mine. Thou hast clung round my knees, and the first word of thy lips has been my name; thou hast clung to my side, and appeared to belong to me, but the soul that is in thee claims a far higher descent; thou shouldst have been the son of a nobler father. Yet strike me not to the earth in my wretchedness: I can bear any degradation but this.

Young Arden. Father, father! speak not such words of humiliation: they are in my heart like daggers; they pierce it to the core. If I have looked at you as I ought not to have looked, punish me as you will, but, oh, not in this manner! Give me any other chastisement! You are the father that heaven has given me, and I will be your son in riches and poverty, in honour and disgrace.

Arden. My noble, my generous boy! Oh, the curse of my unutterable folly! What a proud father I might have been! But now——No, no! change thy name, and let no creature know who it was who gave thee being. Let me die the death of a malefactor: it will be horrible, but it will be short.

Young Arden. May you not yet be saved?

Arden. I ask it not now: I am resigned, if thou canst save thyself from infamy, and wilt blot out from thy remembrance that a weak wish for life did once for a moment betray me into unworthy thoughts.

Mrs. Arden. O God! and is there no deliverance for thee? Can any thing be a crime that saves thy life?

Arden. Speak not of this again. The degrading

wish which I have torn from my breast, shall return to it no more. Be calm, be resigned, my dear Letitia: there is no deliverance.

Young Arden (*after a thoughtful pause, springing up in the air*). But there is——there is deliverance!

Arden. What keen voice of exclamation is this? Art thou beside thyself?

Young Arden. No; but I am beyond myself. I am more than myself. The strength of a man thrills along my new-strung limbs, and with it there is deliverance for thee. [*Running hastily to the door.*]

Arden. What dost thou mean? Where art thou running to, Edmond?

Mrs. Arden. Come back, come back, child: thou shalt not leave us.

Young Arden. Oh, call me not back! Let me be for this one day unquestioned, and free from control, and all my life after I am subject to your will.

Arden. Knowest thou of any interest to be moved? of any means that we are ignorant of?

Young Arden. Yes, father; and ignorant you must be. Let me go, I beseech you: I have a thing in my head, and with you I dare no longer remain.

Arden. This is a strangely sudden thought.

Mrs. Arden. When shall I see thee again? I shall be at home in an hour or two.

Young Arden. But I shall not return to you then.

Mrs. Arden. Before dark, at least, I may expect you?

Young Arden. I shall not return so soon.

Mrs. Arden. Good heavens! when shall I see thee?

Young Arden. Inquire not about me, I beseech you! After midnight, perhaps—but rise not when I knock at the door. In the morning—daylight will be dawning on the sky when I see you again. Farewell! farewell! and may heaven have pity upon us! [*Exit hastily.*]

Mrs. Arden (*running after him*). I cannot let him go: there is something in his words that alarms me.

Arden (*pulling her back*). Do not go after him, nor prevent him from following his own generous impulse, noble creature! There is some person whom he hopes to interest strongly in my favour;—some of his school-fellows, perhaps, connected with people in power. It is in vain, indeed; yet let him follow his own ideas. He will have satisfaction afterwards in having made the attempt.

Mrs. Arden. Pray heaven it be so! I have strange fear upon me that I cannot account for. 'Tis like a presentiment: I have become superstitious.—What if I should see him no more?

Arden. Do not give way to it, my dear love! Misery makes us all superstitious.

Enter Gaoler.

Does any body wish to see me?

Gaoler. Your counsel, sir, are returned; and as you are permitted to use the next apartment, where there is better accommodation than here, I have shown them into it, and they wait for you.

Arden. I will come to them immediately. (*Exit gaoler.*) Leave me then, my dear Letitia, and keep up your heart, if you can. I shall see you again in the evening.—God bless and support you, under the sad trials which my sins and follies have brought upon you! [*Ezeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.

A green lawn, with borders of flowers, in front of ROBINAIR'S house, near Chelsea. Moonlight.

Enter ROBINAIR and BRUTON from the house.

Rob. The night air is cool and refreshing here: it is stifling to sit in that close library, which you are so fond of. (*Walking quickly up and down, and sometimes stopping to listen.*)

Bruton. Yet you give yourself no time to enjoy it. Is that hurried pace the motions of one who comes forth to breathe the still air of evening? There is a sky, too, over your head, with that peaceful, brilliant moon shining from it, to which the duller eye might be turned with a species of devotion, yet you look not up once to behold it.

Rob. This vile state of suspense! Who thinks of moon, clouds, or sky, when enduring it? (*Listening.*) I hear a footstep coming up the lane.

Bruton. My ears are less quick; I hear nothing; and if you are come out to listen for the arrival of her whom you expect, you will have the cool air about you long enough, I believe.

Rob. What! think you she will not come?

Bruton. I am almost certain she will not.

Rob. Thou little knowest how the proud may be subdued by distress.

Bruton. If I have any true knowledge of Arden, with all his weakness and folly, he will not submit to be saved by such base means as you propose.

Rob. Pshaw, pshaw! thou art too simple; contemptibly simple. The love of life works powerfully in stronger minds than his. Besides, the lady may be willing to save him without his consent. She, depend upon it, will be here by-and-by.

Bruton. You are very sanguine.

Rob. Not unreasonably so: she will be here ere long. And then that eye of pride, those lips of scorn, that step of haughty defiance—ay, then shall I see them changed—changed into humble, abashed, submissive gentleness. This will be triumph! this will be happiness! yea, that very thing, happiness, which I have been pursuing all my life, and have never yet overtaken.

Bruton. And so you confess, after all your successes in life, the fools you have cajoled, the dangers you have escaped, the sums you have amassed, the passions you have gratified, that happiness is a thing which has still escaped you?

Rob. Yes, Bruton, in some cursed way or other it still has escaped me.

Bruton. But you are resolved to make sure of it now, by becoming the object of concealed detestation to one whose open disdain has so long and so sorely galled you?

Rob. Well, be it so! be it so! let her detest me as she will; but she shall, nevertheless, be the humbled mistress, and I the condescending protector.

Bruton. An enviable state, truly, you project for yourself!

Rob. And Arden, too; he must in his turn give place, and bend his blushing brow to mortification and contempt.

Bruton. A blessed sight to behold!

Rob. Ay, and that proud boy of his, who begins already, like his lofty mother, to bear himself with a spirit above his years, even he must crouch and hold his tongue in humbling consciousness.

Bruton. And thus circumstanced, you propose to be happy. Why, the fiends themselves enjoy as good happiness as this; and if such be your notion of enjoyment, Robinair, you need not be afraid of joining company with them hereafter, for you will certainly have served your time here as a novice of their order.

Rob. Well, if I do take that road to preferment, I sha'n't have the regret of breaking up my intimacy with thee.

Bruton. Nay, I know not that. I am disgusted with this way of life, I assure you, and have very serious thoughts of reforming my bad habits.

Rob. Reforming, ha! ha! ha! Why, what's the matter with thee? Hast thou got gout in thy head, or water in thy chest; or has thy good-natured physician threatened thee with apoplexy? Ha! ha! I am concerned to inquire into this matter, thou knowest, as thou intendest most certainly to make me thine executor.

Bruton. No, Robinair, I have none of the diseases you mention, nor any other, that I know of; but no one knows how long he may enjoy either health or life.

Rob. (*with mock solemnity.*) To be sure, nobody knows how soon his glass may be run. Nobody knows when death may knock at his own door—we are all here to-day, but know not where we may be to-morrow. I have heard all this twenty years ago, from a much better preacher than thou art.—Come, come, let us go into the house again: our cool tankard is waiting for us.

Bruton. As you please: but here comes your man from town.

Enter MORGAN.

Returned from thy watching post, Morgan?

Morgan. Yes, sir.

Rob. And with any intelligence?

Morgan. I have kept my station there all the evening, on pretence of condoling with old Humphry, who is in grievous distress for his master; but I know not that I have picked up any thing particular.

Bruton. What has the lady been doing, Morgan?

Rob. (eagerly). Yes, what of her? Was she at home, or at the prison?

Morgan. She returned from the prison for an hour or two in the evening, and, after writing some letters, as they told me, or such-like business as that, returned to the prison again, where, she said to Humphry, she should stay till a late hour, desiring Robert to come with a chair for her.

Rob. Not the chariot?—This really looks—but art thou sure the chariot is not ordered afterwards?

Bruton. You would fain have the poor fellow to assist you in deceiving yourself. Or did you not hear, Morgan, that it is suspected she will come round in her chair by Chelsea, on her way from the prison?

Morgan. No, sir; I heard little of her intentions, they were all so taken up, before I came away, about young master.

Rob. And what of him? What has he been doing?

Morgan. After spending a long time in the closet where Mr. Arden keeps his arms, he has left the house without speaking to any one, and unseen by any body; and all the servants, particularly Humphry, are in a terrible quandary about him; for he had not returned when I came away, and they fear some mischief has befallen him.

Rob. Much disturbance about nothing, talking fools! They like to be frightened about something: it is an occupation for them, and does not hinder them from eating their supper.

Morgan. Nay, sir; not a morsel has been eaten by them; for they all love the poor youth as if he were kith and kin to every one of them.

Bruton. He is, indeed, a fine-spirited creature. In his father's closet, said you?

Rob. And are any of the arms missing?

Morgan. Humphry says a light fowling-piece is gone; but he is not sure that Mr. Arden himself did not take it some time ago to be cleaned.

Rob. And the old fool is afraid the child will blow out his brains with it. Well, since thou hast no other intelligence than this, Morgan, go thy ways to thy supper. (*Exit MORGAN.*) And let us move into the house also. See, the candles are lighted now in the parlour, and our cool tankard waits for us.

Bruton. With all my heart: we have been in this chill air long enough. [*Exeunt into the house.*]

Enter YOUNG ARDEN, with a fowling-piece in his hand, stepping cautiously, and then looking round, as if disappointed.

Young Arden. He has gone into the house already. After watching here since twilight, I have suffered him to escape. Wretched timidity! though his friend stood so near him, I am marksman enough to have been in no danger of killing the wrong person. Foolish, cruel caution! must I return to my father again, and no deliverance gained? I will not return! Here will I watch till the morning, and shoot him in the light of day. I will not return again to shame, and disgrace, and misery, and despair. (*Observing the light from window, and ROBINAIR and BRUTON, who make their appearance within, and sit down at a table, on which are some refreshments.*) Ha! yonder he is again! Now is my time. (*Raising his arm.*) Hand, hand, be thou strong and steady! Heart, be thou firm! The life of my father is in the exertion of a moment. And Thou, great Father of all! wilt Thou pardon this act? Wilt Thou pity me? Wilt Thou have mercy on me? O, have mercy! have mercy! though I dare not pray to Thee! (*Goes nearer to the window, and points his gun, when BRUTON within changes his position, and comes upon a line with ROBINAIR.*) Nay, this must not be: I must not take two lives at once,—the innocent with the guilty. (*After a pause.*) There is a window at the end of the room, looking to the beech walk; I'll fire in at that.

[*Exit, making his way hastily through shrubs and bushes, which knock off his hat as he goes out. Presently the report of a gun is heard, and ROBINAIR within is seen to fall. Great commotion of servants rushing into the room, and aiding BRUTON to give him assistance, &c. &c. Soon after MORGAN and others issue from the house to give the alarm.*]

Morgan. Holla! holla! you who pass there! Murder! murder! There is murder committed here; and we demand of every body in the king's name to give us assistance.

Enter two men by a wicket gate.

1st man. Murder! where? who?

Morgan. In the house yonder! my master!

2d man. We heard the report of fire-arms. Was it then?

Morgan. Yes, and the murderer can be but a little way off. Assist us in securing him.

Serv. There is a breach in the hedge at the end of that walk: he will escape that way if we are not quick. Let somebody come with me, for I cannot grapple with a ruffian single-handed.

1st man (looking in at the window). Ay, there lies the body within, as stark as any corpse, upon a board.

Morgan. For God's sake, don't think of satisfying

curiosity now! Try to secure the villain first, or he will escape. Come with me in this direction; and (*to 2d man*) do you follow the footman yonder, since nobody will go alone.

1st man (*as they are about to disperse*). Here is a hat on the grass.

Omnes (*gathering round him*). A hat?

2d man. Poh! it is but a boy's hat. Some varlet has come over the hedge to gather gooseberries.

Morgan. Is there a name in it?

1st man. No, there is no name; so what does it signify? I'll e'en take it home with me. It will fit my Neddy to a marvel.

Morgan. Do what you will with it: but let us run. We lose time here. [*Exeunt different ways*].

SCENE II.

The hall in ARDEN's house.

Enter MADALINE and ROBERT.

Mad. It grows very late; did not the clock strike now?

Robert. Yes, madam; twelve and the quarter after.

Mad. I know not what to do, Robert: your poor mistress is in a terrible state of anxiety.

Robert. Yes, poor lady! I have listened for this half hour to her steps pacing backwards and forwards in her own room, and it has gone to my heart to hear it. I'd give the best suit I ever had to my back, that my young master were returned.

Mad. Humphry is a long time gone.

Robert. An hour and twenty minutes.

Mad. Only an hour and twenty minutes! But you have reckoned the time with a more composed mind than we have done: perhaps you may be right.

Robert. My watch has reckoned it, madam, which is more composed than any of us.

Mad. Would he were returned!

Robert. Shall I go after him?

Mad. That would do no good. Open the street door, and listen if there be any footsteps coming. (*ROBERT opens the door and listens.*) Do you hear any thing?

Robert. Yes, I do hear footsteps.

Mad. Light steps like those of a boy?

Robert (*without side of the door*). No, ma'am; mighty heavy steps: but they are Humphry's, I believe.

Mad. Ah! then he brings no good tidings. Do you hear no one coming after him? Is he alone?

Robert. No one, ma'am; he is alone.

Mad. Then he has not found him: where can he possibly have gone to?—Humphry, I hope, has not told his mistress of his having been in his

father's closet before he went out, and his suspicions about the fowling-piece.

Robert. He has not; and, indeed, he thinks now that the fowling-piece was carried to the gunsmith's some little time ago.

Mad. Humphry must be at hand now. Call to him.

Robert (*thrusting his head again out at the door*). Holla! holla, there!—It is he, madam; he answers me.

Enter MRS. ARDEN, running eagerly.

Mrs. Arden. What voices are those at the door? Is he returned?

Mad. Humphry is returned.

Mrs. Arden. And alone?—O God! some mischief has befallen him. He would not have staid so late, to make me miserable. He never before,—even in his play, he was always considerate for me; and would he now, when all this misery is upon me—O, no! some mischief has befallen him.

Mad. Be more calm, my dear aunt, and hear what Humphry has to tell us. He is just at the door.

Enter HUMPHRY.

Mrs. Arden (*running to meet him*). Have you seen him?

Humphry. No, madam.

Mrs. Arden. Have you heard of him?

Humphry. No, madam.

Mrs. Arden. Nor seen any one who has seen him or heard of him?

Humphry. No, madam. I have been every where in search of him, and have inquired of every body I have met, but can learn nothing of him. There is scarcely a creature now upon the streets but the watchman, and you can hear his heavy steps dumping upon the pavement a quarter of a mile off.

Mrs. Arden (*rushing towards the door*). I'll go myself.

Mad (*holding her back*). Alas! what can you do by going out? The night is dark, and you will meet with nothing but disappointment, perhaps insult.

Mrs. Arden. Let me meet with what I may, I will go; I will not be withheld. No night is dark to a mother who is in search of her son. What is insult to me? I shall be strong; I shall fear nothing.

Humphry. Indeed, indeed, my dear madam, you will wander about to no purpose: and if my young master should return while you are gone, we shall have him running out again after you, like a mad creature. Be persuaded to stay here: he will break his heart when he misses you, and finds only us to receive him.

Mad. Yes, Humphry says right. Do return to

your chamber. (*Leading her gently away.*) Humphry will be upon the watch, and give you notice when he comes.

Mrs. Arden. I cannot, I cannot! I'll walk up and down here. I shall go mad if I return to my chamber. (*Walks rapidly backwards and forwards; at last a knock is heard at the door, and she runs to it.*) It is he! it is he!

Enter YOUNG ARDEN.

My son! my son! thank God I have thee again! Long, long have I watched for thee: I have been distracted with fear. Has accident,—has illness detained thee?

Young Arden. No, mother; I am here now.

Mrs. Arden. Yes, thou art here now; and I would not have thee from me again for a world's wealth told ten times over. (*Looking earnestly at him.*) But where hast thou been? Thou art wonderfully pale and spent. Hast thou come along thus through the night? Where is thy hat?

Young Arden. Upon my head, is it not?

Mrs. Arden. No, my love: hast thou been wandering bareheaded in the night air?

Young Arden (*putting his hand to his head*). I knew not that I was so.

Humphry. My dear young sir, what way came you? I have been in search of you every where.

Young Arden. I can't tell. I ran straight forward from it, through every open lane and passage that I saw; and here I am at last.

Mrs. Arden. Straight forward from what? Did any thing pursue thee?

Young Arden (*in a quick altered voice*). Yes, something did.—Have you any wine at hand, good Humphry? I am almost wild with faintness.

Mrs. Arden. Alas! I think thou art.

Humphry. Did you say wine, sir, which you dislike so much?

Young Arden. Never mind, never mind; give me a good draught, though there were arsenic in it.

Mrs. Arden. Oh! thou art not well. Run, Madaline, and fetch him some cordial. (*Exit* MADALINE and HUMPHRY *different ways.*) O what is the matter with thee? Where hast thou been? Thou wentest out to seek deliverance for us, and the rebuff of some cruel-hearted man sends thee back broken-hearted and hopeless to me and to thy miserable father.

Young Arden (*his eyes lighting up keenly*). No, mother; I do not so return. I have kept my word with you: my father's deliverance is earned.

Mrs. Arden. And dost thou tell me so with a joy so wild and so terrible?

Young Arden. Hush, hush, hush! Speak not to me; look not at me; tell it to no one; be as if you knew it not. Say in your own heart, "He shall live," but loek it up there unuttered.

Mrs. Arden. Dear child! thy words strangely perplex me. But here is the wine.

Re-enter HUMPHRY *with wine.*

Take a good draught of it, and then go to rest.—But will you not eat something? (*He shakes his head.*) Well, then, I will not urge thee.

Humphry (*filling up a glass with wine*). Here, my young sir, and may it do you good; but I fear it will fly to your head, as you are not used to it.

Young Arden (*having swallowed the wine hastily*). No, it will not: I may take any thing now.

Re-enter MADALINE *with a phial.*

Mrs. Arden. We had better not give him too many things at once. Go to your chamber, Edmond, and sleep will restore you.

Young Arden. Sleep! Ay, if I could sleep.—Will you remove the light?

Mrs. Arden. Not if you desire to have it left.

Humphry. My dear boy! something has scared you. I'll leave the light in your room; and shall I sit by you?

Young Arden (*eagerly*). Do so, good Humphry! that is very kind in thee.—And so, dearest mother, don't come with me, but let me pass to my chamber and lie down. [*Hurrying away.*]

Mrs. Arden. And wilt thou not let me bless thee ere thou goest?

Young Arden (*returning to her*). Thy blessing, my mother! (*After receiving her embrace, he kisses her hand fervently.*) If heaven bless what thou blessest, I shall have nothing to fear.

Mrs. Arden. And dost thou fear any thing?

Young Arden. No; nothing, when I look upon you. Good night! good night!

[*Exit, hurrying from her, and followed by* HUMPHRY.

Mad. (*observing* MRS. ARDEN, *who remains for some time lost in thought*). My dear Mrs. Arden! what is your mind fixed upon so intently? Now that he is safely returned and gone to bed, take some care of yourself. Let me entreat you to take some nourishment, and lie down for a few hours. Remember you must go in the morning to Mr. Arden, that you may see him before he goes to court; and the trial begins early.

Mrs. Arden (*starting from her reverie*). True; it is still night: it is not the hour yet.

Mad. It is still night. I am begging of you to take some refreshment and go to bed, as you must be up early in the morning; and what you have to go through to-morrow, requires more strength than, I fear, you possess. Do you hear me?

Mrs. Arden. Yes, Madaline. I heard you speak; I knew you spoke kindly to me, but I knew not what you said.

Mad. Let me go with you then to your room; and cheer up a little. All may yet go well.

Mrs. Arden. O, if that be! if all indeed go well, I shall soon cheer up.

[*Exit, MADALINE supporting her as they retire.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

BRUTON'S lodgings. BRUTON and his friend, a Justice of the Peace, are discovered in earnest conversation.

Justice. And you decidedly say your suspicions rest not on Arden.

Bruton. Decidedly. There is not one trait in the character of the man that should raise in my mind the slightest suspicion; nor even any circumstance regarding him of any kind, his interest in the death of the deceased only excepted.

Justice. Did you not hint at another person whom you do suspect?

Bruton. I know a man whose fortune Robinair has ruined, whose sister he has seduced and abandoned, and whom I believe to be capable of executing the fellest revenge; yet, as I have no actual evidence to support my suspicions, you must not receive them from me as any kind of information to be acted upon. It were hard, indeed, if the injuries he has received were alone made the cause of more injuries.

Enter a Servant.

Bruton. What do you want? I am at present engaged.

Serv. One of Mr. Robinair's servants is below, sir; and a poor labouring man is along with him, who found a hat last night on the grass-plot near the house, just after the murder was committed.

Bruton. Show them up immediately.

[*Exit servant.*

Justice. This will probably lead to the discovery.

Bruton. Yes; murder, the proverb says, is always found out. And, in truth, it is often discovered by circumstances that appear at the first wonderfully trifling and minute.

Justice. When men commit such deeds, they do so in a state of mind which renders them incapable of perceiving what circumstances will excite or prevent suspicion; and they are as often detected from caution as from oversight.

Bruton. True; the mind in that state may be cunning; but it is a cunning which betrays offence than conceals; like that of the poor cushat, which vainly tries to mislead a practised fowler by hovering over the bushes where her nest and her nestlings are not.

Enter MORGAN and a Labourer.

Bruton. Well, Morgan, what brings you and this good man here?

Morgan. This man, sir, found a hat last night.

Lab. Ay, please your honour, just as we were all setting off after the villain that killed that there gentleman.

Justice. Tell us, my good friend, in what manner you found it.

Lab. In no manner at all, please your honour. I only sees it on the grass, and I picks it up.

Justice. Well then, it was lying on the grass when you picked it up?

Lab. Yes, your honour; and I'll tell you all how it was, without either meddling or making with it; though I did think there was no great harm in carrying it home to my poor boy, who has been going about bare-headed for this fortnight past, like an ousel with its feathers on end.

Justice. Well, well; where did you find it?

Lab. Last night, your honour.

Justice. I should call that *when*.

Bruton. You puzzle him, my good sir.

Justice. No matter.—(*To labourer.*) When did you find it, then?

Lab. Just there, too, please your honour.

Bruton. Don't question him so methodically; but let him tell his own story first.

Lab. (to BRUTON). Thank your honour, that is just what I means to do as soon as I can get the end of it. For you see, sirs, as soon as I heard the gun go off, and some one a-calling out "Murder!" I guessed as how some mischief was a-doing; so I runs into the garden in no time, and just before me, on the grass, near a thicket, on this hand of me—No, no; on the other hand of me,—a yard off, belike (for I'll tell your honours exact how it was), I sees a black thing lying on the ground, at my feet.

Justice. And near the house? about a yard from it, you say?

Lab. About a yard from the right or the left of me, I an't quite sure which; but, as I said, I took it for some black thing; but when I came close to it, I found it was a hat.

Justice. Well, well; give us no more of thy story at present, but let us look at the hat. Is there a name in it?

Lab. No, your honour; and so I thought no harm to take it home to my poor boy. (*Shows the hat.*)

Bruton (starting as he looks on it). Good God!

Justice. What, Bruton, do you recognise it?

Bruton. I fear I do.

Serv. (to BRUTON, after examining it). It is the very same hat, sir, that you gave in a present to young Mr. Arden, before he went last to school. I'll swear to it: I know it by the twisting of the band.

Justice. This is a strong fact. Come with me, my good friends: your several evidences must be taken in a more formal manner. You seem much hurt, Bruton.

Bruton. I am so.—(*Aside.*) Is it possible that the wretched boy has sacrificed himself for his father? (*To the Justice.*) I'll follow you presently.

Justice. Nay, you must go with me now: I must not leave you behind. My duty requires me not to lose sight of you. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The street before ARDEN's house.

Enter HUMPHRY, meeting ROBERT, who comes out from the house.

Robert. Returned from the court already? Is the trial over?

Humphry. Ay; thank God for it! and our master is a free man again.

Robert (*shipping about*). O, rare news! rare news! Let us run and tell everybody. Acquitted,—acquitted; not guilty?

Humphry. To be sure he is. How can a man be condemned when there is no evidence against him?

Robert. I knew it would be so; I knew he would be acquitted: I knew he had no more done it than I had done it. And yet, for all that, all last night, through my sleep, there was such a howling of a last speech in my ears I could get no rest for the sound of it.

Humphry. Hold thy tongue, fool! I hate to hear the very name of it. Have I not told thee already, I'll give thee a good sound beating if thou ever speak one word of such things again.—Run and take the key of the back gate and open it.

Robert. Why so?

Humphry. Your master is coming home by a private way to avoid the crowd, and will enter by the back gate. In the mean time I'll go and inform my young master of the good news; for he must be quite overcome with despondency, poor boy, else he would never have rested quietly at home all this time. It is so unlike his usual stirring spirits.

Robert (*calling after HUMPHRY as he goes off*).

Humphry! hark ye, Humphry!

Humphry (*turning back*). What sayest thou?

Robert. Did they raise a great huzza when he was acquitted, and did master make them a low bow, and all that?

Humphry (*pushing him off the stage by the shoulders*). Provoking fool! Run and open the back gate directly, or I'll make thee bow lower than thou hast a mind to.—He will be here in a few minutes.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.

A small court or garden behind ARDEN's house.

Enter MADALINE from the house.

Mad. (*looking about*). I thought Edmond would have been here before me. What can make the child so still and inert at such a moment as this! My aunt need not have urged me to remain here to comfort him, I trow: he has kept himself out of the way of every body.

Enter HUMPHRY.

Mad. Come near me, good Humphry; there is a thing I should have asked of thee sooner: did your master know nothing of Robinair's death, till after he came into the court?

Humphry. No, not a whisper of it till the witnesses on the side of the prosecution were called for.

Mad. And how did he look when he heard it?

Humphry. So astonished, at first, that his face became pale with astonishment; and one would have believed it was a witness on his own side that was lost. But soon after, I warrant you, there was a wonderful change in his behaviour.

Mad. How so?

Humphry. Why, now, to make it clear to you, ma'am; seeing him before he heard it, and seeing him afterwards, was, according to my notion, like seeing a man crossing over a river lately frozen, with his half-bended body, picking a step here, and picking a step there, while the ice is bending and cracking round him on every side, and then seeing him when he gets fairly to the shore, lifting up his head, looking round him again, and standing upright and firmly on his legs, like a pillar.

Mad. And Mrs. Arden—how did she receive the news of his acquittal? It grieved me not to be with her; but she had beseeched me so earnestly to remain here with her son, that I was constrained to obey her.

Humphry. I thought so, ma'am; for in truth she wanted a friend to be with her very much.

Mad. Ah! I fear she did. How was it, Humphry?

Humphry. I carried her the news myself. Three steps brought me from the court to the room where she waited; and had I been threescore and ten, I should not, I believe, have made more of them.

Mad. And how did she receive it?

Humphry. O! fainted away like a corpse.

Mad. Indeed! O, that I had been with her! Did you tell her of Robinair's death, too?

Humphry. Yes, ma'am, after she was somewhat recovered, I told her; but I had as lief have held my tongue.

Mad. Why so, my good Humphry?

Humphry. Truly, I thought she would have been

glad on't, knowing so well that she disliked the man for drawing in her poor husband into so many ruinous courses; but contrariwise, she looked terrified when she heard it, and has worn a face of a marvellous, thoughtful, gloomy cast ever since.—But here comes the coach up the lane. (*Listening.*) They will be here in a trice.

Mad. And Edmond not yet come down to receive them: how strange! I thought an arrow from the bow would not have been swifter than he to meet his father. Indeed I wondered much that he did not rouse himself to attend his mother this morning; but his remissness now is astonishing.—The carriage comes no nearer.

Humphry (*listening*). No; it is not they. It has turned into another lane; and Mr. Edmond will be down stairs before they come.

Mad. I hope so. Who would have thought such a brave, spirited boy would have been so deeply depressed with misfortune?

Humphry. I have my own notions about that.

Mad. Your own notions?

Humphry. Don't look frightened, madam. I watched by him last night, after his return, and from his tossings and restlessness, and some strange words which he uttered, as if in a kind of agony, once or twice, I shrewdly suspect the poor boy was at a fortune-teller's, to inquire about his father's doom, and that he was frightened with some horrid sight or other.

Mad. Think you so?

Humphry. I am almost sure of it. Those cursed hags make people run mad sometimes with the sights they raise up before them.

Mad. I have heard of such things in the country, in days gone by, but now—

Humphry. But the days of London wickedness never go by; and if they have unsettled the brain of that noble boy, burning at the stake is too good for them.

Mad. Nay, you are savage.

Humphry. Oh, ma'am! had you heard what I heard! He gave one groan so deep and so terrible, that I started up and pulled the coverlid off him, to see whether there was not a man under it, so impossible it seemed that a boy should have strength to utter such a sound.

Mad. And did you question him?

Humphry. I tried to do it, ma'am; but whenever I began to speak, he looked so sternly at me that I dared not persist.—Blessed child! I never saw him look sternly on any one before.

Mad. And had you no conversation with him at all the whole night?

Humphry. No, none. Whenever I said any thing, he covered up his face quickly with the bed-clothes, as if he were going to sleep; and so I could draw nothing from him, good or bad.

Mad. There is something very strange in all this:

I cannot understand it.—But, hark! there comes the carriage now.

Humphry. Ay, it is so; I know the sound of it well. It is at hand—it stops.

[*Runs and opens a small gate at the bottom of the stage, and enter ARDEN and MRS. ARDEN, who both receive the embraces of MADALINE.*

Arden (*looking about*). So, Madaline, you are the first to meet us.—Ha! here he is.

Enter YOUNG ARDEN, who runs to his father, and throwing himself upon his neck, bursts into tears.

Arden. My son!

Young Arden. My father!

Arden. Yes, Edmond, I will now, indeed, be thy father; and to be worthy of thee and of thine excellent mother, will be the business of my future life. Thy noble nature shall not be put to pain for me any more. I shall see thee virtuous and happy: that will be my portion in this world, and worth all that my folly and extravagance have deprived me of.

Young Arden. See me happy, father!—Oh, oh! be happy yourself, and think not of that.

Arden. How so, boy? Shalt thou not be happy?

Mrs. Arden (*taking her son's hand tenderly*). Shalt thou not be happy with us, my son? Shall thy father and I, united as we may now be in sober domestic peace, not have the blessedness of seeing thee happy?

Young Arden (*with kindled animation*). Yes, mother; you shall see it: you shall see me happy. I shall look upon my father and you in your domestic peace, and feel a kind of fearful happiness.

Mrs. Arden. O! what words are these?

Arden. Let us go into the house. I must be alone with thee, Edmond: I must strain thee to my yearning heart in privacy.

[*As they are about to go into the house, a party of men burst in upon them from the small gate, which has been left unlocked, and lay hold of YOUNG ARDEN.*

1st man. Stop, sir; you are our prisoner: we take you into custody in the king's name.

[*MRS. ARDEN shrieks, and is supported from falling by MADALINE.*

Arden (*catching hold of his son, to pull him from the men*). You must be mistaken, friends; you can have no warrant against a boy like this!

1st man. Read there: it is our warrant against Edmond Arden, junior.

Arden (*looking at the warrant*). O God! (*Rushing upon the men.*) Ye shall take my life before ye seize him!

Humphry. And mine too, before you touch a hair of his head!

[*Brandishing his stick, and rushing furiously upon the men, who keep hold of YOUNG ARDEN.*

1st man. Dare ye resist the king's officers ?

[Drawing a hanger from his side.

Humphry. Ay, or the devil's either! What care I for the flashing of your steel ?

[A violent struggle ensues between HUMPHRY and ARDEN on one side, and the officers of justice on the other, in which YOUNG ARDEN, between the two parties, is wounded.

Young Arden. Oh! I am slain! Give over, dear father: fight no more for me, my brave Humphry!

[A general outcry and panic; and they all close about him, ARDEN supporting him as he sinks to the ground, and MRS. ARDEN kneeling by him distractedly.

Mrs. Arden. Slain! O no, no, no! Thou art wounded, love, but not slain: heaven will not suffer such cruelty. Run, O run for assistance immediately!

Young Arden. My dear, dear mother! nothing can save me.

Mrs. Arden. Say not so. No, no! thou wilt be saved.

Young Arden. There is sure and speedy death in this wound: I feel it, and I am glad of it. Move me not from this spot; torment me not with any vain assistance, but let me quietly go where I ought to go—where I wish to go; for it is not meet that I should live.

Mrs. Arden. No, no! thou shalt live! I will breathe my soul into thee; I will encircle thee, and grow into thee with the warm life of a mother. Death shall not tear thee from me!

Young Arden. Alas! my own dear mother! wring not your hands so wildly.

Mrs. Arden. Woe is me! In the very blossom of thy youth! thou pride—thou flower of my bosom!

Young Arden. How many mother's sons, not much older than I, die far distant on the ocean, on the field of battle, with many terrible wounds; and here I am beside you, mother, and shall look upon you, and keep hold of your hand till the last. My father; where are you? Give me your hand. [Taking ARDEN's hand, and joining it with his wife's.] There, mother; I have earned him for you, and he will take care of you. Will you not now be united in steady unbroken affection? This cheers me; this makes death almost pleasant to me.

Arden. My boy! my noble sacrificed boy! this is agony.

Young Arden. Say not so, father! Mourn for me, but let it die with this bitter grief. I am not sorry to die. I have, I fear, offended my great

and awful Father; but I have prayed to Him to punish and forgive me. This is my punishment, and I know by it that He has heard my prayer. O may He bless and pity you when I am gone! — But there is something I must say while I can speak.

Arden. What is it, my love ?

Young Arden. The men that arrested me—they come near. *(To the men.)* Be ye witnesses that with my dying breath I confess myself guilty of Robinair's death, and solemnly declare no creature but myself had any knowledge of it. My strength goes fast; but this hand and this hand *(pressing his father's and mother's hands)* are still warm in my grasp. Who else stands near who has loved me? — You, cousin, you have been very good to me; and, if I had strength, I would thank you.

Mad. My dear, dear Edmond! I love not my own brother better than thee: how shall I bear to think of thy sad end!

Young Arden. And Humphry too; where art thou? Give me thy honest hand.

Humphry. Oh, my dear young master! I would have laid down my life to save yours.

Young Arden. I know thou hast loved me well—better than I deserved. If I had lived to be a man, we should never have parted.—Wilt thou live with my father and mother when I am gone? No, no! this is not right; I do not ask it. Thou wilt find some master who is able to reward thee as thou deservest.

Humphry. But I will live with them! ay, beg with them—starve with them. O, pardon me! it is not want of respect that makes me speak so.—Yes, I will serve them, for your sake, as I would serve no other master on earth, were he as rich as a prince.

Young Arden. This comes over my heart! My eyes are dark now; lay me back a little. *(Groans.)* Be not unhappy if I groan somewhat. The pain—

Mrs. Arden. Alas, my dear love! art thou in great pain?

Young Arden. No, mother; it is killing me now, but it is not very bad. Farewell, farewell! *(Dies.)*

[MRS. ARDEN sinks down in a state of insensibility by the body, while ARDEN paces about in an agony of despair.

Arden. Fool, fool, fool! vain, selfish, detestable fool! this is the end of thy vanity and extravagance; of thy contemptible ambition and thirst for distinction.—Thou art distinguished enough now,—the curse of heaven is on this miserable head! *(Beating his forehead, and striding across the stage; while the curtain drops.)*

THE PHANTOM:

A MUSICAL DRAMA, IN TWO ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

DUNARDEN, a *Highland chief*.
MALCOLM, *his son*.
THE PROVOST OF GLASGOW.
CLAUDE, *his son*.
CRAWFORD, *friend of CLAUDE*.
GRAHAM.
ALLEN, CULLOCH, and *other Highlanders*.
Sexton, servants, and other inhabitants of Glasgow.

WOMEN.

ALICE, *daughter of the Provost of Glasgow*.
MARIAN, *daughter of DUNARDEN*.
JESSIE, *attending on MARIAN*.
Bride, bridesmaids, housekeeper, &c.
Scene, in the Western Highlands of Scotland, and afterwards in the city of Glasgow.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A green lawn, surrounded with rocks, and mountains seen in the distance. An assembly of Highlanders are discovered, holding bridal revelry: bagpipes playing, and a noise of voices heard, as the curtain draws up.

Enter ALLEN.

1st *high*. Welcome, brave Allen! we began to fear

The water-kelpy, with her swathing arms,
Had drown'd thee at the furd.

2d *high*. Faith did we, man! thee and thy shely too.

Allen. Am I so late? There's time enough, I hope,

To foot a measure with the bonnie bride,
And maidens too. — 'Tis well I'm come at all:
I met the ill-eyed carline on my way.

1st *high*. And suffer'd scath by her?

Allen. Ay, scath enough:

My shely, in the twinkling of an eye,
Became so restive, neither switch nor heel
Could move him one step further.

2d *high*. And so you were obliged to come on foot.

Allen. What could I do? It was not with the beast

I held contention, but the evil spell
Of that untoward witch. — Ay, but for that,
I would defy the wildest four-legg'd thing
In all Lochaber so to master me!

1st *high*. Well, well; the pipes are playing merrily, —

Make up lost time as fleetly as thou canst.

Allen. And so I will; for here are rosy partners,
Ribbon'd and cockernonied, by my faith!
Like very queens. They make, here as I stand,
Each garter'd leg to thrill, and toes to tickle.

[*Seizing one of a group of girls, advancing from the dancers at the bottom of the stage.*

Come, winsome Jean! I'll have a reel with thee.
Look not so coy: where did I meet thee last?

We have not had a merry-making here
Since Duncan Mory's latewake.

Jean. Say nought of latewakes here, I warn you well:

Wot ye who is the bridesmaid?

Allen. Some gentle dame, belike.

Jean. Some gentle dame!

Dumbarton Mary, with her Lowland airs.

Allen. Ay! she that look'd so stern, and said it was

A savage thing, or some such word as that,
To dance at old Glenlyon's funeral. —

But, could the laird himself have raised his head,
He with his ivory stick had rapp'd her pate

For marring with her mincing gentleness

The decent bravery of his last rouse. —
Come, let us have a merry reel together.

[*They mix with dancers, who now advance to the front, where a bumpkin, or dance of many interwoven reels, is performed; after which the bride is led to a seat, and some of her maidens sit by her.*

Bridegroom. Now, while the bride and bonnie maidens all

Take needful rest, we'll pass the cheering cup.

And, Rory of Glenoruch, clear thy throat,

And sing some merry song, meet for a wedding,
Where all are boon and gay.

Bride. O, never mind for that! give us the song
Which thou wast wont on Clachen braes to sing,
And we to praise. Thou knowst the song I mean.

Rory. On bridal day the bride must be obey'd :
But 'tis a song devised for gentle-folks,
Made by the youthful laird of Ballamorin,
And not for common clansfolk like ourselves.
Bride. But let us have it ne'ertheless, good
Rory ;
It shows how sweetly thwarted lovers meet
O' moonlight nights, and talk of happy times
Which fortune has in store for faithful hearts :
The silliest moorland herd can follow that.
Rory. Then be it as you please : I'll do my best.

SONG.

I've seen the moon gleam through the cave,
And minute drops like diamonds glancing ;
I've seen, upon a heaving wave,
The tressy-headed mermaid dancing :
But ne'er was seen, in summer night,
Beneath the moon, in brightness riding,
A moving thing, to charm the sight,
Like Flora to her Malcolm gliding.
I've heard a pibroch, through the wind,
As absent chief his home was nearing ;
A half-stripp'd infant, sweetly kind,
With mimic words its mother cheering :
But ne'er were evening sounds so sweet,
As, near the spot of promise stealing,
The quick, soft tread of Flora's feet,
Then whisper'd words, herself revealing.
My boat I've fastened to the stake,
And on the shelly beach am pacing,
While she is passing moor and brake,
On heather braes her shadow tracing ;
And here we'll pass a happy hour,
For hours and years of bliss preparing,
When we shall grace our girdled tower,
Lands, life, and love, together sharing.

Enter CULLOCH.

Allen. Ha ! our young chief must be return'd, for
here
Comes Culloch, with his staring freckled face.
Omnes (gathering round CULLOCH). Well, man,
what are thy news ? where hast thou been ?
Cul. We've been at Glasgow.
1st high. Glasgow ! Save us all !
Allen (half aside to 1st high). I doubt it not : his
master, I hear say,
Goes oftener there than his good father wots of ;
Ay, or his sister either. I suspect
There is some dainty lady —
1st high. Hush ! say nothing.
Allen. And so, brave Culloch, thou hast travell'd
far :
And what is Glasgow like ?
Cul. Like all Drumleary craigs set up in rows,
And chimneys smoking on the top of them.
It is an awful sight !

1st high. And what sawst thou besides the craigs
and chimneys ?

Cul. There be six kirks, — I told them on my
fingers ;
And, rising from the slates of every kirk,
There is a tower, where great bells ring so loud,
That you might hear them, standing on this
sword,

Were they on great Benlawers.

1st high. Tut ! tut ! thy ears are better than thy
wits.

Bride. And sawst thou any silken ladies there,
With all their bravery on ?

Cul. Ay, ladies, gentlemen, and red-coat soldiers,
And plaided drovers, standing at the cross,
As close as heather stalks on Hurroch moss.
Ah ! well I trow it is an awful place !

Allen (aside as before). And well I trow the chief
has business there

He wishes no observer to discover,
When he, of all the idle household loons,
Took such an oaf as Culloch to attend him.
But I'll e'en go, before he join the dance,
And have a private word of him, to favour
My poor old mother in her ruin'd cot.
I know full well he will not say me nay,
Though the old laird himself be cold and close.

1st high. Go, then, and speed thee well !

[*Exit ALLEN.*]

Bridegroom. Hear, bonnie lassies ! the young laird
himself

Will soon be here, and foot it with you featly.

Old woman. O, bless his comely face ! among you
all

There is not one that foots the floor like him, —

With such a merry glee and manly grace !

Bridegroom. We'll have no further dancing till he
come.

Meantime, good Rory, sing another song ;
Both bride and maidens like thy chanting well :
And those who list may join the chorus rhyme.

SONG

Upon her saddle's quilted seat,
High sat the bonnie Lowland bride ;
Squires rode before, and maidens sweet
Were gently ambling by her side.
What makes her look so pale and wan ? —
She's parted from her Highlandman.
What makes her look, &c.

Where'er they pass'd, at every door
Stood maids and wives the sight to see ;
Curs bark'd, and bairnies by the score
Ran bawling loud and merrily,
But still the bride looks dull and wan ;
She's thinking of her Highlandman.
But still the bride, &c.

The Lowland laird, in bridegroom's gear,
Prick'd forth to meet the fair array ;
His eye was bright, his voice was clear,
And every word was boon and gay.
Ah! little did he reckon then
Of bold and burly Highlandmen.

Ah! little did he reckon, &c.

The bride she raised her drooping brow,
And red as crimson turn'd her cheek.—
What sound is that? The war-pipe now
Descending from yon broomy peak.
It sounds like marching of a clan ;
O can it be her Highlandman ?
It sounds like, &c.

Their bonnets deck'd with heather green,
Their shoulders broad with tartans bound,
Their checker'd hose were plainly seen
Right fleetly moving to the sound.
Quick beat her heart, within a ken,
To see the valiant Highlandmen.
Quick beat her heart, &c.

Now challenge-shout is heard, and soon
The bare claymores are flashing bright ;
And off scour'd many a Lowland loon,
Who ill could brook the fearful sight.
"The fiend," quoth they, "from cave and glen
Has pour'd those stalwart Highlandmen.
"The fiend," quoth they, &c.

Then pistols from their holsters sprang,
Then wax'd the skirmish fierce and hot,
Blades clashing fell, and harness rang,
And loudly bluster'd fire and shot ;
For, sooth to say, the bridegroom then
Full bravely met the Highlandmen.
For, sooth to say, &c.

And so did all his near o' kin,
As Lowland race such stour may bide :
But sank, at last, the mingled din,
And where was then the bonnie bride ?
Ay, ask at those who answer can ;
Ask at the cunning Highlandman.
Ay, ask at those, &c.

The bridegroom, in a woeful plight,
Back to his furnish'd hall has gone,
Where spread on boards so gaily dight,
Cold has the wedding banquet grown.
How changed since break of morning, when
He thought not of the Highlandmen !
How changed since, &c.

And who, upon Benedi's side,
Beneath his shieling blest and gay,
Is sitting by that bonnie bride,
While round them moves the light strathspey ?
It is the flower of all his clan,—
It is her gallant Highlandman.
It is the flower, &c.

Re-enter ALLEN, snapping his fingers, and footing the ground, as he speaks.

Allen. I've seen him, sirs ; I have had words of him.

1st high. Had words of whom ?

Allen. Of the young laird himself.

Omnes. Hast thou? and is he coming to the green?

Allen. He bade me say he'll join you in the evening.

Omnes. And not till then?

Allen. Some strangers have arrived.

And I have seen them too: the lady's mounted
Upon a milk-white nag; and o'er her saddle
A scarlet cloth is spread, both deep and wide,
With bobs and fringes deck'd right gallantly;
And in her riding gear she sits with grace
That might become the daughter of a chief,
Ay, or the king himself.

1st high. Perhaps it is the Glasgow provost's daughter,

Who is, as they have said, the very match
That our old laird is planning for his son.

Allen. Ay, he may plan, but love will have its way,—

Free, fitful love thinks scorn of prudent planning.

No, young Dunarden went not to the town

With simple Culloch for his sole attendant,

To see the provost's daughter.

Bride (to ALLEN). And so he will not join us
till the evening?

Allen. No, damsels; but here are ribands for the bride,

And for you all, which he has sent by me.

Now they who have the nimble hands among you,
Will catch their favourite colours as they fly.

[Pulls out ribands from his pouch, and dances about in a whirling figure to the bottom of the stage, strewing about pieces of ribands, while the girls follow, to catch them as they fall.]

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

The hall in the tower of DUNARDEN.

Enter DUNARDEN and MARIAN.

Dun. (speaking as they enter). In sooth, she well
may grace a noble mansion,
Or chieftain's hall, or palace of a prince,
Albeit her veins swell not with ancient blood.
If so much grace and sweetness cannot please him,
He must be ill to win. And by my faith!
Perhaps she is this same mysterious lady,
To whom, as thou suspectest, his late visits,
So frequent and so long, have been devoted.

Marian. Ah, no! I fear another has his heart,—
His constant heart, whom *he*, at least, will think
Fairer than this sweet maid, or all besides.

Dun. And if it should be so, will nothing please him

But the top-flower of beauty and perfection ?
The second best, methinks, ay, or the third,
Where fortune gilds the prize, might suit him well.
Why dost thou shake thy head ? [apart,

Marian. What might be, and what is, stand far
When age and youth on the same objects look.

Dun. Was I not young, when, of thy grandsire's daughters,

I chose the fairest, and was plainly told
Her heart and hand were promised to another ?
But did I then perversely mope and pine ?

No, I trow not : I clear'd my cloudy brow,
And woo'd the second fairest, thy poor mother.

Marian. So will not he.

Dun. Why so : belike he will not,
If thou abet his folly, as, methinks,
Thou art inclined to do.

Marian. No, father ; not inclined : I shall regret
As much as you, if any prepossession
Prevent him from approving this fair maid,
Who is, indeed, most gentle and engaging.

Dun. Out on thy prepossessions ! Younger sons,
Who may be soldiers, sailors, drovers, ay,
Or tinkers if they will, may choose a mate
With whom, o'er sea or land, through burgh or city,
To scour the world. But for the elder born,
Who must uphold the honours of the race,—
His ancient race,—he is not thus at liberty
To please a youthful fancy.

Marian. But yet, dear sir, you may be ignorant—

Dun. What ! am I ignorant ? Do I not know
The world sufficiently to guide and counsel
Those through whose body my own blood is flowing ?

Not many men have had more opportunity
To know men and their ways, and I have turn'd it
To some account ; at least I fain would think so.
I have been thrice in Edinburgh, as thou knowest,
In London once, in Glasgow many times ;
And I, forsooth, am ignorant !

Marian. Dear father !
You would not hear me out : I did not mean
That you were ignorant of aught belonging
To worldly wisdom ; but his secret heart,
As I have said before, his prepossessions—

Dun. And what has he to do with prepossessions ?
He is, of all men, bound to wed for wealth,
Since he, with his unceasing liberalities,
Would bare me to the quick. No tacksman dies,
But he must have appointed for his widow
A house, with right of browsing for her goats,
And pasture for a cow, all free of charge.
The bedrid carlines, too, and orphan brats,
Come all on me, through his petitioning ;
And I, God help me ! have been weak enough
To grant such suits too often.

Marian. You will not say so on your dying day.

Dun. For that, indeed, it may be well enough ;
But for our living days, I needs must say,
It doth not suit at all.—If he were frugal,
And would with care lay up what is our own,
Having some hoarded store, he might more reason-ably

Indulge his prepossessions, as you phrase it.

Marian. Nay, be not angry with him.

Dun. Angry with him !

Such want of reason would provoke a saint !
Is he to spend the rents with open hand,
Stretch'd out to all who need, or all who ask ;
And please himself besides, by an alliance
With some slight May, who brings but smiles and bloom

To pay the yearly charges of her state ?

Marian. We do not know her yet, and cannot say

That she is poor.

Dun. But we may shrewdly guess.

Else why those stealthy visits,—this concealment ?
Oh, 'tis provoking ! This, our Provost's daughter,
Is just the match that would have suited us,—
That would support our house, and clear our lands,
And he, forsooth !—I'll cast him from my favour !

Marian. I know you will not.

Dun. Lady Achinmore,

If he persist, I'll say and do it too.

His prepossessions truly ! mighty plea !

Supported, too, by Lady Achinmore.

[Walking in wrath to the other end of the hall.

Marian (aside). I'll hold my tongue, and let the storm subside ;

For when he calls me Lady Achinmore,

Reply is worse than useless.

Dun. (returning). Methinks the lady taries in her chamber.

Marian. To lay aside her travelling attire,

And put her robe or fashion'd mantua on,

Requires some time. [be

Dun. And where is Malcolm ? Surely he should
In readiness, for very decency,

To bid a stranger lady welcome here.

Marian. He will appear ere long, and is, perhaps,

Attending on her brother.

Dun. No, he is not.

I saw young Denison walk forth alone,

As if to look for him.

Marian. Here comes the lady.

Enter ALICE.

Dun. Ah, gentle lady ! were I half the man
That once I was (how many years gone by
We shall not say), you should to this poor hold,—
To these old walls which your fair presence
brightens,

A rousing welcome have. But times are changed,
And fashion now makes all things dull and spirit-
less.

Alice. My welcome, as it is, gives me such
pleasure,

I will not think of what it might have been.
Your daughter has received me with a kindness
That has already freed me from restraint,
And given me courage to express my pleasure.

Marian (to her). Thanks to thee, gentle friend!
so may I call thee,

Knowing so well thy worth. Might we retain thee
Some weeks beneath our roof, then we might boast
That our poor welcome had not miss'd its aim.

Dun. Some weeks! We'll try to turn those
weeks to months,

And then, who knows but that our mountain soil
May e'en prove warm enough for Lowland flow'r
Therein to flourish sweetly.

Alice. Thanks, noble sir; but we must go to-
morrow.

Dun. So soon! the daughter of my early friend
Beneath my roof, seen like a Will o' th' wisp,
Glancing and vanishing! It must not be.
Were I but half the man that once I was,
I'd fight thy stubborn brother hand to hand,
And glaive to glaive, but he should tarry longer,
Or leave his charge behind him.

Alice. Nay, blame him not: it was his own good
will

That made him from our nearest homeward route,
Though press'd for time, start these long miles aside,
To pay his father's friend a passing visit;
For Malcolm, he believed, was still in Glasgow,
So rumour said.

Dun. I thank his courtesy;
But, if my name be Fergus of Dunarden,
Neither the morrow, nor next morrow's morrow
Shall see thee quit my tow'r. I'll go and find him,
And tell him thou thyself art captive here,
Though others be in thralldom of thy beauty,
And shalt not be released. [*Exit.*]

Marian. Thou seest how gallantly old hearts
will warm

At sight of winning youth. He almost woos thee:
And yet I would not pay a stepdame's duty,
Where I would rather yield a sister's love.

Alice. These words of kindness! Oh, you will
undo me

With so much kindness! [*Bursts into tears.*]

Marian. Dear, gentle creature! Have I given
thee pain?

I have unwittingly——

Alice. Done nought amiss.

I have a silly weakness in my nature:
I can bear frowning coldness or neglect,
But kindness makes me weep.

Marian. And can it be that coldness or neglect
Should e'er be thine to bear?

Alice. Better than I have borne it.

Marian. Better than thou! In all your stately
city,

Is there a lady fairer than thyself?

Alice. Yes, Lady Achinmore, there is a creature
Whose beauty changes every other face
To an unnoticed blank; whose native grace
Turns dames of courtly guise to household damsels;
Whose voice of winning sweetness makes the tones
Of every other voice intruding harshness.

Marian. And if there be, conceit will mar it all:
For too much homage, like the mid-day sun,
Withers the flower it brightens.

Alice. It may be so with others, not with her.

Marian. Thou lovest her, then?

Alice. O, yes! I love her dearly;
And if I did not, I should hate myself.

Heed not these tears, nor think, because I weep
In saying that I love her, aught lurks here,
Begrudging her felicity. O, no!

Marian (taking her hands affectionately). Sweet

Alice! why so moved?

Alice. 'Tis my infirmity: I am a fool,
And should not go from home, so to expose
A mind bereft of all becoming firmness.

Marian (embracing her). Come to my bosom;
thou hast but exposed

That which the more endears thee to my heart;
And, wert thou firmer, I should love thee less.
But, hush! let me kiss off those falling tears

From thy soft cheek. I hear thy brother coming.

Alice. Thy brother?

Marian. No; thine own,—thy brother Claude.
Ha! Malcolm, too, is with him! this is well.

*Enter MALCOLM and CLAUDE, whilst ALICE com-
poses herself, and endeavours to look cheerful.*

Mal. Fair Alice, welcome to our Highland moun-
tains!

Which, as your brother tells me, you admire,
In spite of all their lone and silent barrenness.

Alice. He tells you true: our fertile Lowland
dales,

With all their crofts and woodlands richly chequer'd,
Have less variety than their bare sides.

Mal. Yes, when fleet shadows of the summer
clouds,

Like stag-hounds on the chase, each other follow
Along their purple slopes; or when soft haze
Spreads o'er them its light veil of pearly grey,
Through the slight rents of which the sunshine
steals,

Showing bright colour'd moss and mottled stones,
Like spots of polish'd beauty,—they appear
Objects of varied vision most attractive.

Alice. Then, to behold them in their winter guise,
As I have never done!

Mal. You might then see their forms enlarged
and dark,

Through the dim drapery of drifted rain,
Like grim gigantic chieftains in array,
Bidding defiance to approaching host;
Or lifting their black shoulders o'er the mass
Of volumed vapour gather'd round their base,
Which seem like islands raised above the earth
In purer regions of the firmament.

Alice. And then how sweet the bushy glens be-
tween them,

Where waterfalls shoot from the rocks, and streams
Course on their wimpled way with brawling din!

Mal. Where low-roof'd cots, with curling smoke
arc seen,

Each with its little stack of winter fuel,
And scanty lot of furrow'd corn-land near;
And groups of hardy imps, who range at will,
Or paddle in the brook, while bearded goats
Browse on the rocky knolls, and kids are sporting
Among the yellow broom.

Claude. Pray thee have done, good Malcolm;
thou wilt fill

This girl's fancy with romantic visions,
Which may, perhaps, make the rich, fertile fields
Of her own country seem insipid things.

Marian (to *CLAUDE*). One thing, you would ob-
serve, he has omitted

In the description of his bonnie glen,—
The cottage matron, with her cumbrous spade,
Digging the stubborn soil; and lazy husband
Stretch'd on the ground, or seated by the door,
Or on his bagpipe droning some dull dinge.

Mal. Well, freely I confess our mountain matrons
In useful virtues do excel their mates;

And in what earthly region is it otherwise?

Claude. I dare not contradict thee, and be deem'd
Ungallant for my pains.

Enter a Servant, who delivers a packet to CLAUDE.

Alice. Is it from Glasgow?
Is there within the cover aught for me?

Claude. There is a letter with thy name upon it.
[*MALCOLM withdraws some paces from her.*

Alice. Which, ne'ertheless, thou keepest to thyself,
With eyes intently fix'd upon the writing.
Is it a stranger's hand to thee unknown?

Claude (giving the letter). No, not unknown.

Alice. It is from Emma Graham (to *MARIAN*),
and with your leave,

I'll read it by this window.

[*Turns round, and starts upon finding MALCOLM
close to her.*

Marian. Why do you start?

Alice. I knew not he was near me.

Mal. (in confusion). I crave your pardon: 'twas
unwittingly;

I scarcely know myself why I return'd.

[*Alice opens the letter, whilst CLAUDE and
MALCOLM stand gazing anxiously on her as
she reads it to herself.*

Mal. (to *ALICE*, who seems to have come to the
conclusion). Your friends are well, I hope;
all's well in Glasgow?

Alice. She says a deadly fever rages there,
And nought is seen along their dismal streets
But funeral processions; nothing heard
But death-bells tolling, and the hammer's sound
Nailing in haste the corse's narrow house.

Mal. (agitated). And she herself amidst this
wreck of life!

Alice. She is, ere this, removed from the con-
tagion;

For these concluding lines inform me plainly,
That she and all her family were prepared
To leave the town upon the following day
To that on which her letter has its date.

Mal. (eagerly). I thank thee, *Alice.* [her?

Claude (peevishly). Wherefore dost thou thank

Mal. (haughtily). Whate'er thou hast a right to
ask of me

Shall have its answer.

Marian (to *CLAUDE*). When Highland pride is
touch'd, some lack of courtesy

Must be excused. You have not from this window
Admired the falling of our mountain stream.

[*Leads him to the bottom of the hall, and detains
him there in apparent conversation.*

Mal. (in a softened voice). So, gentle *Alice*,
thou'rt in friendship knit [ye!

With *Emma Graham*! and meet companions are

[*Looking closer to the letter, which she still holds
open in her hand.*

Forgive me; Lowland ladies far surpass,
As fair and ready scribes, our mountain maids:
I ne'er before saw lines by her indited.

Alice (putting it up hastily; then hesitating, then
recovering herself.) No; why should I with-
hold it from thine eye;

For still the sweet expressions from her pen
Excel the beauty of its characters. [Gives it to him.
Peruse it then (aside, as she turns from him) while
I peruse myself.

Mal. (returning the letter, after having read it).
Thou art in tears, sweet *Alice*; has thy mind
Some boding apprehensions for her safety?

Alice. No, God forbid! I have a feeble body,
The worn-out case of a more feeble mind,
And oft will weep for nothing. Heed me not.

Mal. No, say not so: thy mind and body both
Are lovely yoke-fellows, and will together—
God grant it be so!—hold their prosp'rous course
For many years. (Seeing her endeavours to speak.)

Strive not to answer me;

This wish, though most sincere, deserves no thanks.

*Enter DUNARDEN, followed by Servants, carrying
dishes of meat, &c.*

Dun. Come, honour'd guests, the first dish of our
meal,

Poor though it be, is passing to the board ;
Shall we not follow it ? Although, in verity,
I am ashamed that such a poor reception
Is offer'd to such friends.

Marian. Dear sir, they will forgive what things
are lacking,

The heart's kind cheer not being of the number.

Dun. (to ALICE). Had I had timely notice of your
coming,

I had sent messengers for thirty miles,
Cross moor and mountain, to invite our neighbours ;
And tables had been cover'd in this hall,
Round which we should have held a merry feast.
And this same wedding, too, detains the clan :
So that our wings are clipt on every side.

Alice. Your courtesy is great : but surely, sir,
A merry wedding well may make amends
For a lost feast, e'en in Dunarden hall.

Dun. And so it shall, fair Alice. — Pardon me
That I should be so bold to name you thus !
At fall of eve we'll join their merriment ;
And thou shalt be my partner in the dance.

[*Taking her hand gallantly.*

I'll have thee all and solely to myself ;
Unless, perhaps, if these old legs should fail,
Thou wilt accept of this young Highlander

[*Pointing to MALCOLM.*

To be my substitute. — Come, gentles all !
By this soft lily hand let me conduct
The daughter of my old and honour'd friend ;
My trusty partner too. Aha ! aha !

[*Leading off ALICE gaily with a strathspey step.*
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

*A lobby or entrance-room, with fire-arms, swords, and
fishing-tackle hung on the walls. Servants are seen
passing to and fro with plaids and bundles of heath
in their hands.*

Enter Housekeeper.

House. Make all the speed ye may : in the long
chamber

There must be twenty bed-frames quickly set,
And stuff'd with heather for the tacksmen ; ay,
And for their women, in the further room,
Fourteen besides, with plaidings for them all.
The wedding folks have broken up their sport,
And will be here before we are prepared.

Enter the Butler.

Butler. And what are twenty beds, when all the
drovers,
And all the shieling herdsmen from Bengorach,
Must have a lair provided for the night.

House. And who says so ?

Butler. E'en the young laird himself.

House. 'Tis always so ; Dunarden's courtesy,

With all his honied words, costs far less trouble
Than young Dunarden's thoughtless kindncss doth.
The foul fiend take them all ! Have we got plaids
For loons like them !

Butler. Faith, we at least must try to find them
bedding.

House. Let each of them find on the green hill
sword

The breadth of his own back, and that, I trow,
Is bed enough for them. Herdsmen, indeed !

[*Several servants coming all about together.*

More plaids ! more plaids ! we have not yet enow.

Another servant. An Elspy says the gentlcfolks
must have

Pillows and other gear.

House. Out on you ! clamouring round me with
your wants,

Like daws about the ruin'd turret ! think ye

That I — I am distracted with you all !

Butler (*aside*). And with some cups of good
Ferntosh besides.

House. How'e'er the shieling herdsmen may be
lodged,

I have provided for the Lowland strangers
Right handsomely.

Butler. The bed of state, no doubt, is for the lady,
And for the gentleman the arras chamber.

House. Thou art all wrong : the arras is so
ragged,

And bat holes in the cornice are so rife,

That Lady Achinmore bade me prepare

His lodging in the north side of the tower,

Beside Dunarden's chamber. [only

Butler. They leave the house to-morrow, waiting

To take a social breakfast. My best wine

And good Ferntosh must be upon the table,

To which the beef, and fish, and old ewc cheese

Will give a relish. And your pretty playthings

Of china saucers, with their fairy cups,

In which a wren could scarcely lay her egg, —

Your tea-pot, pouring from its slender beak

Hot water, as it were some pccious drug,

Must be, for fashion's sake, set in array

To please the Lowland lady.

House. Mind thy concerns, and I will look to
mine.

My pretty playthings are in daily use,

As I hear say, in the great town of Edinburgh ;

And 'tis a delicate and wholesome beverage

Which they are filled withal. I like, myself,

To sip a little of it.

Butler. Dainty dear !

No doubt thou dost ; aught stronger would offend
thee.

Thou wouldst, I think, call rue or wormwood sweet,
Were it the fashion in your town of Edinburgh.

But, hark ! the bridal folks are at the door ;

We must not parley longer. [*Music without.*

I hear their piper playing the " Good-night."

Enter ALLEN.

Butler. They are at hand, I hear: and have ye had

A merry evening, Allen?

Allen. That we have.

Dunarden danced with that sweet Lowland lady,
As though it made him twenty years the younger.

House. Dunarden! Danced she not with young Dunarden,

Who is, so says report, her destined husband?

Allen. Yes; at the end, for one dull reel or two They footed it together. But, believe me,

If this rich Provost's daughter be not satisfied With being woo'd by substitute, which homage

The old laird offers her abundantly,

She'll ne'er be lady of this mansion; no,

Nor of her many, many thousand marks,

One golden piece enrich Dunarden's house.

House. Woe's me! our Malcolm is a wilful youth!
And Lady Achinmore would dance with Claude?

Allen. She danced with him, and with the bridegroom also.

House. That, too, would be a match of furtherance To the prosperity of our old house.

Butler. But that she is a widow, and, I reckon, Some years his elder, it might likely be.

House. And why should that be such a mighty hindrance?

Allen. Fie, butler! dost thou utter, in such presence,

Disqualifying words of age and widowhood?

House. You are mislearn'd and saucy, both of you.—

But now they are at hand.

SONG *without, of several voices.*

The sun is down, and time gone by,
The stars are twinkling in the sky,
Nor torch nor taper longer may
Eke out a blithe but stinted day;
The hours have pass'd with stealthy flight,
We needs must part: good night, good night!

The bride unto her bower is sent,
And ribald song and jesting spent;
The lover's whisper'd words and few
Have bid the bashful maid adieu;
The dancing floor is silent quite,
No foot bounds there: good night, good night!

The lady in her curtain'd bed,
The herdsman in his wattled shed,
The clansmen in the heather'd hall,
Sweet sleep be with you, one and all!
We part in hopes of days as bright
As this gone by: good night, good night!

Sweet sleep be with us, one and all!
And if upon its stillness fall

The visions of a busy brain,
We'll have our pleasure o'er again,
To warm the heart, to charm the sight,
Gay dreams to all! good night, good night!

House. We've listened here too long: go all of you
And get the rooms prepared! My head's distracted!
[*Exeunt all, different ways.*]

SCENE IV.

A bed-chamber.

Enter ALICE and MARIAN, with a Servant before them, carrying lights.

Marian. You must be tired with all this noisy merriment

So closely following a lengthen'd journey.

Alice. To be among the happy and the kind

Keeps weariness at bay; and yet I own

I shall be glad to rest.

Marian. And may you find it, sound and undisturb'd!

There is among our household damsels here,

A humble friend of yours, the child of one

Who was your father's servant.

Alice. Ha! little Jessie, once my playfellow,

And since well known to me, as the attendant

Of a relation, in whose house I found her,

Some two years past: a gentle, faithful creature.

Marian. The same, she will attend upon you gladly,

And do what you require. See, here she is.

Enter JESSIE.

Alice. Jessie, my old acquaintance! I am glad

To find thee thus, domesticated happily.

In such a home. I hope thou hast been well,

Since I last met with thee.

Jessie. I thank you, madam;

I am right well; and, were I otherwise,

To see you here would make me well again,

Marian (to ALICE). The greatest kindness I can show thee now

Is to retire, and leave thee to prepare

For what thou needst so much. [*Kissing her.*]

May sweet sound sleep refresh thee! Oh! it grieves me

To think that we must part with thee so soon;

And that ye are determined to return

To that infected city.

Alice. Be not afraid for us. We shall pass through it,

And only tarry for an hour or two.

Good night, and thanks for all your gentle kindness!

Thanks, in few words, but from my inmost heart!

[*Exit MARIAN.*]

And thou art here, good Jessie. I am glad,—
Right glad to see thee; but I'm tired and spent,
And (take it not unkindly) cannot speak
As I was wont to do.

[*Throws herself into a chair, whilst JESSIE begins to uncoil her hair, and take out the ornaments.*

Jessie. I will prepare you for your bed, dear madam,

As quickly as I can. To-morrow morning
Your strength and spirits too will be restored.

Alice. Thou'rt a good creature. Dost thou still
remember

The pretty songs thou used to sing so sweetly?

SONG.

Jessie (singing gaily).

My heart is light, my limbs are light,
My purse is light, my dear;
Yet follow me, my maiden bright,
In faith! thou needst not fear.

The wallet on a rover's back
Is scanty dower for thee,
But we shall have what lordies lack
For all their golden fee.

The plume upon my bonnet bound,
And broadsword by my side,
We'll follow to the war-pipe's sound,
With fortune for our guide.

Light are my limbs, my purse, my heart,
Yet follow me, my dear;
Bid Care good-bye, with kinsfolk part;
In faith! thou needst not fear.

Alice. I thank thee: that was once a favourite
song.

I know not how it was; I liked it then
For the gay reckless spirit of the tune.
But there is one which I remember well,
One my poor aunt was wont to bid thee sing;
Let me have that, I pray thee.

SONG.

They who may tell love's wistful tale,
Of half its cares are lighten'd;
Their bark is tacking to the gale,
The sever'd cloud is brighten'd.

Love like the silent stream is found
Beneath the willows lurking,
The deeper, that it hath no sound
To tell its ceaseless working.

Submit, my heart; thy lot is cast,
I feel its inward token;
I feel this mis'ry will not last,
Yet last till thou art broken.

Alice. Thou singest sweetly, ay, and sadly too,
Even as it should be sung. I thank thee, Jessie.

Jessie (*after having entirely undone her hair, and taken the fastenings from other parts of her dress*). Now, madam, let me fetch your gown
and coil.

Alice. I want no further service, my good Jessie,
I'll do the rest myself: and so, good night;
I shall be soon in bed. Good night, and thanks.

Jessie. Not yet good night; I will return again,
And take away the light.

Alice. Well; as thou wilt: but leave me for a
while. [*Exit JESSIE.*

This day, with all its trials, is at length
Come to an end. My wrung and wrestling heart!
How is it with thee now? Thy fond delusions
Lie strew'd and broken round thee, like the wrecks
Of western clouds when the bright sun is set.
We look upon them glowing in his blaze,
And sloping wood, and purple promontory,
And castled rock distinctly charm the eye:
What now remains but a few streaky fragments
Of melting vapour, cold and colourless?

[*After a thoughtful pause.*

There's rest when hope is gone—there should be
rest.

And when I think of her who is the cause,
Should I complain? To be preferr'd to her!
Preferr'd to Emma Graham, whom I myself
Cannot behold but with an admiration
That sinks into the heart, and in the fancy
Goes hand in hand with every gentle virtue
That woman may possess or man desire!—
The thought was childish imbecility.

Away, away! I will not weep for this.
Heaven granting me the grace for which I'll pray
Humbly and earnestly, I shall recover
From this sad state of weakness. If she love him,
She'll make him happier far than I could do;
And if she love him not, there is good cause
That I should pity him; not selfishly
On my own misery dwell.—Ay, this should be;
But will it be?—Oh, these rebellious tears!

[*Covering her face with her hands, and throwing herself back in her chair, in a state of abandonment.*

Enter, by the other end of the chamber, the phantom of a beautiful young woman, which advances a few paces, and then remains still.

Alice (*raising her face*). Who's there?—Is there
true vision in mine eyes?

[*Rising quickly, and going with open arms towards the phantom.*

Dear Emma! dear, dear Emma! how is this,
That thou art here, unlook'd for at this hour,
So many miles from home? Alas! that face
Of ghastly paleness, and that alter'd look
Of sad solemnity!—Speak to me quickly;

I dare approach no nearer, till I hear
Words of thy natural voice. Art thou alive?

Phantom. A term, short as the passing of a
thought,
Hath brought me from the chamber where my
friends

Are now lamenting round my lifeless body.

Alice. And 'tis thy spirit which before mine eyes
Thy body's semblance wears: and thou art nothing
That mortal hands may touch or arms encircle!
O look not on me with that fixed look!
Thou lovest me still, else thou hadst not been here,
And yet I fear thee.

Phantom. Fear me not, dear Alice!
I yearn'd to look upon thee ere I pass
That gulf which parts the living from the dead:
And I have words to utter which thine ear
Must listen to, thy mind retain distinctly. [*spirit.*]

Alice. Say what thou wilt; thou art a blessed
And canst not do me harm.—
I know it well: but let thy words be few;
The fears of nature are increasing on me.

[*Bending one knee to the ground.*]

O God! Lord of all beings, dead and living!
Strengthen and keep me in this awful hour!

Phantom. And to thy fervent prayer I say,
Amen.

Let this assure thee, that, though diff'rent natures
Invest us now, we are the children still
Of one great Parent; thou in mortal weeds
Of flesh and blood; I in a state inexplicable
To human comprehension.—Hear my words.

Alice. I listen most intently.

Phantom. The room in which I died, hath a recess
Conceal'd behind the arras, long disused
And now forgotten; in it stands a casket,
The clam shell of our house is traced upon it;
Open, and read the paper therein lodged.
When my poor body is to earth committed,
Do this without delay. And now, farewell!
I must depart. [*moment*]

Alice. Ah! whither, dearest Emma? Will a
Transport thee to heaven's court of blessedness,
To ecstasy and glory?

Phantom. These are presumptuous words. My
place, appointed

In mercy to a weak and sinful creature,
I soon shall know. Farewell, till we shall meet,
From sin, and fear, and doubt, released for ever!

[*Exit.*]

[*ALICE stands trembling and gazing, as the
phantom disappears, and then falls on the
ground in a swoon. Presently re-enter JESSIE.*]

Jessie. Mercy upon us! lying on the ground!
Life is not gone; God grant it be not so!
Lady, dear lady! No; she does not hear.

[*Endeavours in vain to raise her, then runs off
in great alarm, and is heard without, knocking
and calling at the door of another chamber.*]

(*Without.*) Open the door! Rise, Lady Achin-
more.

Marian (*without*). I am not yet undress'd: what
is the matter?

Jessie (*without*). Come to the lady's chamber:
follow me.

Mal. (*without, opening the door of his apartment*).
What has befallen? Is any one unwell?

*Re-enter JESSIE, followed by MARIAN, who both run
to ALICE, raising her from the floor, and one sup-
porting her head, while the other chafes her temples
and the palms of her hands, &c.*

Marian. Support her drooping head, while from
my closet

I fetch some water, and restoring drugs,
Whose potent smell revives suspended life.

Mal. (*looking in upon them from the door*). O
leave her not! I'll find what'er is wanting.

[*Exit.*]

Marian. There is a little motion of her lip;
Her bosom heaves: thank God! life is not fled.

How long hadst thou been absent from the room?
Jessie. Some little time; and thought, on my
return,

To find her gone to bed.

Marian. How was she when thou leftst her?

Jessie. She was well then.

Marian. It hath been very sudden.

Re-enter MALCOLM, with phials, &c.

Mal. (*applying herbs to her nostrils, while MARIAN
pours out essence from the phial, and rubs her
temples and hands*). Life is returning; she
is laid uneasily;

Let me support her on a stronger arm.

[*Taking her from MARIAN, and supporting her.*]

There's motion on her lips, and on her eyelids.
Her eyes begin, through their soft raven lashes,
To peer like dew-drops from the harebell's core,
As the warm air of day by slow degrees

The closed leaves gently severs.—Yes; she moves.
How art thou now, sweet Alice?

Marian. See, she looks up, and gazes on us too;
But, oh, how strangely!

Mal. Why do her eyes thus wander round the
chamber?

(*To ALICE.*) Whom dost thou seek for, Alice?

Alice. She's gone; I need not look; a mortal
eye

Shall never, never look on her again.

[*A peal of thunder heard.*]

Hear ye that sound? She is upon her way.

Marian. What does she mean? It was a sultry
night,

And threaten'd storm and lightning.

Mal. (*to ALICE*). Thou'st been asleep, and scarcely
yet art waking,

Thy fancy is still busied with its dream.

Alice (raising herself more, and looking towards the place where the phantom disappeared). It was no dream : upon that spot it stood ;

I saw it,—saw it for a lengthen'd time,—
Saw it distinctively.

Mal. Whom didst thou see ?
No living creature could have enter'd here.

Alice. O would that it had been a living creature !
Her beauty was the beauty of a corpse
Newly composed in death ; yet her dark eyes
Were open, gazing wistfully upon me.

Mal. (hastily withdrawing his arms from her, and clasping his hands together in agony). Thou hast seen Emma Graham !

Alice (rousing herself). Is Malcolm here ? I am confused,—bewilder'd ;
I know not what I've seen, or what I've said :
Perhaps it was a dream.

Mal. It was no dream ;
Or if it was, 'twas one of sad import.
Oh, if it be !—there is distraction in it.

[*Tossing his arms, &c.*]

Marian. Dear brother ! such wild gestures of
despair

For the mere shapings of a sleepy brain !

Mal. It was not sleep from which we have revived
her.

Marian. And grant it were not, swooning, I've
been told,

Will sometimes have its dream as well as sleep.

Alice. I was not well ; I have been long unwell ;
Weakness and wretchedness disturb the brain ;
Perhaps it was the vision of a swoon.

Be not so miserable, gentle Malcolm !
O that this vision did foretell my death,
If she were well and happy !

Mal. Forgive me, dearest Alice ! O, forgive me !
When paining thee, I'm hateful to myself.

[*Taking both her hands, which he presses to his lips.*]

Marian. Leave us, dear brother ! go to thine
apartment.

Mal. I'll go where yearning nature urges me.

[*Going, then returning again to ALICE.*]
And didst thou hear her voice ?

Enter CLAUDE.

Claude. Is Alice well ? I heard a busy noise.
How art thou, sister ?

Alice. I have had a swoon,
But am recover'd from it. Go to rest.

[*Aside to MARIAN and MALCOLM.*]

Say nothing of the vision. O, be silent !

Mal. (aside to himself, as he goes off). Is he so
much concern'd ? No, no, he is not :

He does not,—cannot feel what tortures me.

Claude. Dost thou avoid me, Malcolm ? Dost
thou think

That kindness to my sister can offend me ?

Mal. I've other thoughts, which do no wrong to
thee,
And owe thee no account. [*Exit.*]

Claude (aside). He is offended. (*Aloud to MARIAN.*) Thanks to you, dear madam !
For your kind care of Alice. Rest, I hope,
Will perfectly restore her. The fatigue
Of her long journey, and the evening pastime
Have been too much for one so delicate.
(*To ALICE.*) Undress and go to bed, poor harass'd
creature !

I trust to-morrow thou wilt wake refresh'd.

Alice. I hope so too, dear Claude ; and so good
night.

Remain no longer here. (*Exit CLAUDE.*) I'm glad
he's gone. [*A peal of thunder as before.*]
That awful sound again ! she's on her way :
But storm or thunderbolt can do no harm
To disembodied spirits.

Marian. I may not leave thee here, my gentle
friend ;

In my apartment thou shalt pass the night.

Come then with me : I dare not leave thee here,
Where, sleeping or awake, thou hast received
Some painful shock—Rise : lean upon my arm.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

*A rudely paved court, with a low building in front.
The stage perfectly dark, and thunder heard at a
distance.*

*Enter MALCOLM, who goes to the door of the building,
and knocks.*

Mal. Ho ! Culloch ! art thou waking ? Rouse
thee, Culloch !

I hear him snoring in his heavy sleep,
Press'd with the glutton feasting of the day.

[*Knocking louder than before.*]
Canst thou not hear ? Holla ! ho ! rouse thee,
Culloch !

The heavy sluggard ! Ha ! he's stirring now.

[*Laying his ear close to the door.*]

Cul. (within). Who's there ?

Mal. It is thy master.

Cul. What is wanted ?

It is not morning yet.

Mal. That drawling voice !

He is not yet awake. (*Very loud.*) Rise, man, im-
mediately :

Open the door, and do what I desire thee.

[*To himself, after a short pause.*]

Six hours upon my gallant steed will end
This agony of doubt.—I'll know my fate—
Joy or despair.—He is asleep again.

[*Knocking as before.*]
Make haste, make haste, I say ! inert and sluggish !

O that, like spirits, on the tempest borne,
The transit could be made! Alas! alas!
If what I fear hath happen'd, speed or stillness,
Or day or midnight,—every circumstance
Of mortal being will to me be nothing.
Not ready yet!—Ha! now I see the light.

[*Light seen from the window.*]

Six hours of my brave steed, and if my fears
Are then confirm'd—forgive me, noble creature!
We'll lay our burdens down and die together.

Enter CULLOCH slowly from the building, rubbing his eyes with one hand, and holding a candle in the other.

Haste, tardy creature! art thou sleeping still?
Cul. What is your honour's will? O hone! O hone!

It is a murky night.

Mal. I know it is.

Unlock the stable door, and saddle quickly
My gallant Oscar. [*Thunder again.*]

Cul. Does your honour hear it?

Mal. Hear what?

Cul. The thunder growling o'er Benmore:
And that was lightning too that flared so fleetly:
The welkin's black as pitch.

Mal. And let it growl; and be the welkin pall'd
In sackcloth! To the spot where I am going
We'll find the way by instinct.—Linger not:
Do what I have desired thee instantly.

Cul. Ay, ay! the saddle upon Oscar's back.
The bran new saddle would your honour have?

Mal. Yes, fool, and set about it instantly.

[*Exit CULLOCH.*]

These dark and heavy bodings of my mind
Come from no natural bent of apprehension.
It must be so. Yet, be it dream or vision,
Unmeaning chance, or preternatural notice,
As oft hath been vouchsafed, if living seers
Or old tradition lie not,—this uncertainty
Ere morning dawn would drive my brain dis-
tracted,

Were I inactively to wait for day;
Therefore, to horse! [*Thunder louder than before.*]
That sound is in accordance with the storm
In this perturbed breast. Is it not ominous
Of that which soon shall strike me to the dust,
A blasted lonely remnant?—
Methinks he should ere this—time flies apace;
The listless saggard must be urged to hasten
His so unwilling task. [*Exit hastily.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The cross of Glasgow. A great crowd of people are discovered, and bells heard tolling occasionally from the neighbouring churches.

1st crowd. Ah! woe is me! so bonnie and so young!

Of all that death hath ta'en in this fell ravage,
None hath he ta'en that seem'd so ill to suit
The coffin and the mould. Ah! woe is me!

2d crowd. Ay, neighbour, she was one mark'd
from them all.

Though we have many fair and gracious ladies,
We had not one who could be pair'd with her:
The bonniest lass in all the west of Scotland.

1st crowd. Ay, thou mayst say, the bonniest and
the best. [*goodness,*]

3d crowd. Nay, softly, David! for the point of
That is a matter, on her burial day,
We may not question; yet, if it be true—

1st crowd. If it be true! It is not: nought is
true

That can throw speck or spot upon her virtue.

1st crowd woman (to 1st crowd). Be not so angry,
man; my husband means

Against her maiden virtue no reproach,
E'en if her faith was papishly inclined.

1st crowd. She was no Papish; I'll take oath
upon it.

The cloven foot of Satan in my shoe
Is at this point of time as surely buckled,
As that she was aught but a pure believer—
A good and godly lady. [*soldierly,*]

1st crowd woman. That gentleman, so brave and
Who lately has return'd from foreign wars,
Is a rank Romanist, and has been oft
Received by her. But, Lord preserve us all!
We, by God's grace, may sit by Satan's side,—
Ay, on the self-same settle, yet the while,
Be ne'er one whit the worse.

3d crowd. And I should guess—

2d crowd. Hist, hist! the funeral's coming:
I hear the heavy wheels, and o'er the top
Of all those cluster'd heads I see the feathers,—
The snow-white feathers of the high-coped hearse
Move slowly. Woe the day! oh, woe the day!
How changed her state! She was on milk-white
steed

Mounted right gallantly, with cap and plume,
When I beheld her last.

Voice (without). Make way, good folks, and let
the ladies pass.

2d crowd (to him without). None can pass here on
horseback.

Voice (without). It is the Provost's family: make
way.

2d crowd (as before). An 'twere the king's, they must dismount, I trow,
Or wait till the procession be gone by.

Enter ALICE, MARIAN, and CLAUDE.

Claude (to crowd). What makes so great a course; and those bells

To toll so dismally? Whose funeral

Are ye convened to see?

1st crowd. Ah, sir! the fairest lady of the place.

I warrant you have seen her many a time;

They call'd her Emma Graham.

Claude. It cannot be! What didst thou call her? Speak;

Repeat her name.

1st crowd. Her name is Emma Graham; her father is—— [hend it.

Claude. No more! no more! too well I comprehend death hath dealt his blow on what was life's Completest, dearest, best.

[*Covers his face with his cloak.*

Marian (turning to ALICE, and supporting her).

Dear Alice, thou art pale, and faint, and ill; Lean upon me, my friend.

Alice. Think not of me: poor Claude! my heart-struck brother!

His wound is deep and sudden: for this stroke I was prepared.

Voices (without). Stand back; stand closer: it is now at hand.

[*A funeral procession crosses the stage: the mourners following the hearse on foot.*

1st crowd. Ah! never corse was follow'd to the grave

With deeper sorrow!

1st crowd woman. Ay, tears are following tears down manly cheeks,

As gouts fall in Saint Mungo's dripping aisle, Near which the grave is dug that shall receive her.

1st crowd. That is her grey-hair'd father, so bow'd down;

And those her brothers walking by his side. [two. *2d crowd.* Then all the kindred walking, two and

3d crowd. But who is he that follows after all,

In mourner's cloak so muffled to the eyes?

He walks alone, not mated like the rest;

And yet, methinks, his gait and motion say

The greatest weight of grief falls to his share.

Claude. God knows who hath the greatest share!

Not he. [*Pushing eagerly through the crowd.*

Alice. Where goest thou, Claude?

[*Endavouring to hold him.*

Claude. Prevent me not. Shall mourning weeds alone

Have privilege, and sorrow be debar'd.

[*Exit hastily after the funeral, and the crowd disperses different ways, ALICE, MARIAN, and their servants alone occupying the front of the stage.*

Marian. Dear Alice! how thou tremblest every limb,

As in an ague fit!

Alice. It was no dream;

It was no strong delusion of the fancy.

Marian. This is indeed an awful confirmation.

But stay no longer here: go to thy home;

Thou hast great need of rest.

Alice.

I have more need, Within my closet, on my bended knees,

To pray for mercy on my sinful self,

And those to me most dear,—poor sinners all.

This is a sad and awful visitation.

Marian. But didst thou not expect to find it so?

I thought thou wast prepared.

Alice.

I thought so too;

But certainty makes previous expectation

Seem, by comparison, a state of hope.

Marian. We now are free to hold upon our way.

Let us proceed: come on with me, dear Alice!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The house of the provost, and the apartment of CLAUDE, who enters, followed by CRAWFORD, and throws himself back into a chair with the action of deep distress.

Claude. Follow me not, my friend; it is in vain That friendly soothing would assuage my grief.

Craw. Grieve not for that which is, indeed, most grievous,

Beyond all measure.

Claude.

Can we measure grief,

And say, so much of it shall be my portion,

And only this? A prudent, lesson'd sorrow,

Usurps the name it bears.—She was the light

That brighten'd every object; made this world

A place worth living in. This beautiful flame

Hath in the socket sunk: I am in darkness,

And no returning ray shall cheer my sight.

This earth, and every thing that it contains,

Is a dull blank around me.

Craw.

Say not so!

It grieves my heart to hear thee. Say not so.

Claude. I will not grieve thee then; I'll hold my tongue;

But shall I feel the less?—Oh, had she lived!

Craw. Perhaps she had but caused thee greater sorrow;

For how wouldst thou have brook'd to see her hand,

Had it so been, bestow'd upon another?

Claude. Why should I entertain a thought so painful?

[*Raising his head proudly, after a thoughtful pause.*

Yes, I can entertain it, and believe

That, even as another's, it were happiness

To see her yet alive ; to see her still
Looking as never eyes but hers did look ;
Speaking such words as she alone could speak,
Whose soften'd sounds thrill'd through the nerves,
and dwelt,

When heard no more, on the delighted fancy,
Like chanted sweetness ! — All is now extinct ! —
Like some base thing, unmeet for mortal eye,
The sod hath cover'd all.

[After a thoughtful pause.

Hath cover'd all !

Craw. Dear Claude ! why wilt thou dwell on
things so dismal ?

Let me read to thee from some pious book ;
Wilt thou permit me ?

[He remains silent and thoughtful.

Dost thou hear me, Claude ?

Claude (muttering to himself, without attending to
CRAWFORD). The sexton has the key ; and
if he had not,

The wall may yet be clear'd. —

The banded mourners scatter to their homes,
Where kinsfolk meet, and social hearths blaze
bright,

And leave the grave in midnight loneliness !
But should it be ?

Craw. (listening to him). I understand these
words :

But if he go, he shall not go alone.

Enter a Servant.

Claude (impatently). What brings thee here ?

Serv. A gentleman desires to see you, sir.

Claude. Tell him I am gone forth. — Such ill-
timed visits !

Is the sore heart a sear'd and harden'd thing

For every fool to handle ? [Exit.

Craw. I'll follow him : he should not be alone. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A large room, with rich furniture, and the walls hung
with pictures.

Enter the Provost and MARIAN, by different doors.

Provost. How is poor Alice ?

Marian. She is more composed ;
For tears have flow'd uncheck'd, and have relieved
her.

I have persuaded her to take an hour
Of needful rest upon her bed ; and Jessie,
That kindly creature, watches her the while.

Provost. Ay, that is right. And now, my right
good lady,

Let me in plain but grateful words repeat,
That your great kindness, leaving thus your home,
And taking such a journey for the comfort
Of my poor child, is felt by me most truly,
As it deserves. May God reward you for it !

Marian. I will not, sir, receive such thanks un-
qualified ;

They are not due to me. Regard for Alice, —
And who that knows her feels not such regard, —
Was closely blended with another motive,
When I determined on this sudden journey.

Provost. Another motive !

Marian. Has not Claude inform'd you
That Malcolm left Dunarden secretly,
The night before we did ourselves set forth ?

Provost. He has not. Ha ! and wot you where
he went ?

Marian. I wot not, but I guess : and it was he,
As I am almost confident, who walk'd
The last of all the mourners, by himself,
In this day's sad procession.

Provost (pulling a letter hastily from his pocket).

Madam, sit down ; I'll cast mine eyes again
O'er this your father's letter. Pray sit down !
I may not see you thus.

[Setting a chair with much courtesy, and obliging
her to sit, whilst he goes aside and reads a
letter earnestly. He then returns to her.

My friend has many words of courtesy ;
It is his habit ; but subtracting from them
The plain unvarnish'd sense, and thereto adding
What, from this secret journey of your brother,
May be inferr'd, — the real truth is this —

At least it so appears to my poor reason —

[Preventing her as she rises from her seat.

Nay, sit, I pray you, Lady Achinmore ;

We'll talk this matter over thoroughly,
And leave no bashful doubts hid in a corner,
For lack of honest courage to produce them.

[Sits down by her.

Marian. Proceed, good sir, I listen earnestly.

Provost. As it appears to me, the truth is this,
That Malcolm, whom your father doth admit,
Albeit a great admirer of my daughter,
To be at present somewhat disinclined
To give up youthful liberty so early,
As he from more acquaintance with her virtues
Ere long will of his own accord desire, —
(Pointing to the letter) — so he expresses it.

Marian. And with sincerity.

Provost. Well, grant it, lady !

The truth doth ne'ertheless appear to be,
That this young gallant, Malcolm of Dunarden,
With all her virtues, loves not Alice Denison,
And loves another.

Marian. Rather say, *hath* loved.

Provost. I'll not unsay my words. His heart is
with her,

Low as she lies : and she who won his heart
From such a maid as Alice Denison,
Will keep it too, e'en in her shroud. No, no !
We've spread our vaunting sails against the wind,
And cannot reach our port but with such peril
As will o'ermatch the vantage.

Marian. Say not so.
Time will make all things as we wish to have them.

Provost. Time works rare changes, which they may abide

Who are intent upon them. Shall I carry My vessel where her cargo is not wanted? — Tobacco to th' Antipodes, and wait Till they have learn'd to use and relish it? — Shall I do this, when other marts are near With open harbours ready to receive her?

Marian. Dear sir, you must not think I will assent To what would mar the long and cherish'd wish Of me and mine. And we had fondly hoped That you had been desirous of this union Between our families.

Provost. Your father won my friendship years ago, When with his goodly mien and belted plaid, His merry courtesy and stately step, He moved amongst our burghers at the Cross, As though he had been chieftain o'er us all; And I have since enjoy'd his hospitality, In his proud mountain hold.

Marian. I recollect it: proud and glad he was Of such a guest.

Provost. Dost thou? Ay, then it was, That, seeing his fair stripling by his side — A graceful creature, full of honest sense And manly courage — I did like the notion, That Alice, then a little skipping child, With years before her still to play about me, Should in some future time become the lady Of that young Highland chief. But years bring thoughts

Of a more sober and domestic hue. Why should I covet distant vanities, And banish from my sight its dearest object? (*Rising from his chair.*) Have you observed those pictures?

Marian (rising also). I have. They are the portraits of your parents: Their features bear resemblance to your own.

Provost. My mother's do: and look at her, dear madam!

With all the bravery of that satin dress Clasp'd up with jewels, and those roses stuck Amongst her braided hair, she was the daughter And sober heiress of a saving burgher, Whose hoarded pelf in my brave father's hands Raised such industrious stir in this good city, As changed her from a haunt of listless sluggards To the fair town she is. What need have I To eke my consequence with foreign matches? Alice shall wed, I hope, some prosperous merchant, And live contentedly, my next door neighbour, With all her imps about her.

Marian. Wed whom she may, I hope she will be happy.

Provost. I do believe that is your hearty wish:

And having plainly told you what I think Of this projected match, as it concerns My daughter and myself, — I will proceed To that which may concern my ancient friend. Should any mortgage press on his estate, Or any purchase of adjoining lands Make money a desired object with him, He need but speak the word; at easy int'rest He shall receive what sums he may require, And need not fear that I shall e'er distress him With hard ill-timed demands. In faith, he need not!

Marian. Dear sir, he knows full well your gen'rous Hath for its minister a liberal hand: In truth, he would not fear to be your debtor.

Provost. Not all the rum and sugar of Jamaica, In one huge warehouse stored, should make me press him,

Though apt occasion offer'd e'er so temptingly. Then why should Malcolm bend his youthful neck To wedlock's yoke for sordid purposes? The boy shall be my friend; and when his mind Is free to think upon another love, I'll guide him to a very comely lady — Yea, more than one, that he may have a choice — Who may prove both a match of love and profit; But hear you plainly, not to Alice Denison.

Marian. Oh, you are kind and noble! but my father — [himself:]

Provost. Say nought for him; he'll answer for And through his maze of friendly compliments, I'll trace at last his veritable thoughts.

[*Taking her hand kindly.*]
Now, having thus so plainly told my mind, Look on me as a man to whom again You may as freely speak.

Marian. And so I will: The happiness of one, dear to us both, Requires that I should do it.

Provost (surprised). How so? is it of Alice you would speak? [Jessie.]

Marian. Yes, but another time; for here comes

Enter JESSIE.

(*To JESSIE.*) How is she now? I hope she is asleep. [easy,]

Jessie. She has not slept, but lies composed and And wishes now to see you. [Exit MARIAN.]

Provost. How art thou, Jessie?

Jessie. Well, an' please your honour.

Provost. I hear thou hast become a Highland lass;

But, if thou really like the Lowlands better, Thy native country, tell me honestly: I'll make thy husband, whomso'er thou choose, A freeman of this town. If he have brains, And some few marks beside, he'll thrive upon it.

Jessie. I thank you, sir: his marks are few indeed.

Provost. Well, never mind; let us but have the brains,

And we will make the best of it. — Poor Jessie! I well remember thee a barefoot girl, With all thy yellow hair bound in a snood: Thy father too.

Jessie. Do you remember him?

Provost. Yes, Saunders Fairlie. Better man than Saunders
In factory or warehouse never bustled.

Enter Servant.

Provost. What is the matter, Archy? On thy face

Thou wearest a curious grin: what is the matter?

Serv. The baillie bid me to inform your honour, The country hucksters and the market wives Have quarrell'd, and are now at deadly strife, With all the brats and schoolboys of the town Shouting and bawling round them.

Provost. Good sooth! whene'er those wives with hands and tongue

Join in the fray, the matter must be look'd to.

I will be with them soon. [*Exit servant.*]

To think now of those creatures!
E'en at the time when death is in the city
Doing his awful work, and our sad streets
Blacken'd with funerals, that they must quarrel
About their worldly fractions! Woe is me!
For all our preachings and our Sabbath worship,
We are, I fear, but an ungodly race.

Enter another Servant.

And what has brought thee, too?

Serv. There is a woman come from Anderston, Whose neighbour, on pretence of some false debt, Has pounded her milch cow,—her only cow.

Provost. Is that a case to occupy my time? Let her go with it to the younger baillie.

Serv. I told her so, your honour, but she weeps, And says the younger baillie is so proud, She dare not speak to him.

Provost. Poor simpleton! Well, then, I needs must see her.

Re-enter 1st Servant.

Tut! here again! What is the matter now?

1st serv. A servant all cross'd o'er wi' livery lace, As proud and grand as any trumpeter, Is straight from Blantyre come, and says, my lord Would greatly be obliged, if that your honour Would put off hearing of that suit to-morrow, As he must go to Edinburgh.

Provost. Tell the messenger To give my humble service to his lordship, And say, I could not, but with great injustice To the complaining party, grant delay, Who, being poor, should not be further burden'd

With more attendance; I will therefore hear The cause to-morrow, at the hour appointed.

Exit 1st, and re-enter 2d Servant.

Still more demands! For what foul sin of mine Was I promoted to this dignity?

From morn till eve, there is no peace for me.

[*Exit Provost, speaking to the servants as they go out.*]

SCENE IV.

Before the walls of a churchyard, a narrow iron gate at the bottom of the stage, behind which the gleaming of a torch is faintly seen; the front of the stage entirely dark. Solemn music is heard, as the scene opens.

Enter a Sexton, with keys, followed by CLAUDE and CRAWFORD.

Claude. Music! and from the spot! what may it be?

Sexton. Leave was requested that a solemn dirge

Should be this night sung by some grave; but whose,

Or e'en by whom requested, I am ignorant.

Some Papist, like enough: but what of that?

Craw. (to sexton). How many graves thou'st made in one short week!

Thou hast been busy in thy sad vocation.

Sexton. I have, good sooth, and knew it would be so,

A month before the fell disease began.

Craw. How knew it?

Sexton. He, the sighted man from Skye, Was in the town; and, at the crowded cross, Fell into strong convulsions, at the sight Which there appear'd to him.

Craw. What did he see?

Sexton. Merchants, and lairds, and deacons, making bargains,

And setting trystes, and joking carelessly, Swathed in their shrouds; some to the very chin, Some breast-high, others only to the loins.

It was a dismal, an appalling sight;

And when I heard of it, I knew right well

My busy time was coming.

Claude (to sexton, impatiently). Didst thou say

That leave has been requested for a dirge

To be this night sung by some Papist's grave?

Sexton. Papist or not I cannot surely say, I ask'd no questions.

Craw. Having cause, no doubt,

To be well satisfied no harm would ensue.

Sexton. No harm. In this retired nook it cannot Annoy the living; and for the departed, Nought can disturb their rest.

Craw. Hast thou not heard of restless souls returning ?

Perhaps thou'st seen it, during thirty years
In which thou hast been sexton of this parish.

Sexton. In all that time I ne'er could say with certainty

That aught of such a nature pass'd before me ;
But I have seen uncertain shadows move
As 'twere confusedly, and heard strange sounds, —
Stranger than wind or natural cause could utter.

Craw. And thou wast sure they were unnatural sounds ?

And hast thou heard them often ?

Sexton. Many times :

But that was in the first years of mine office.
I am not now alarm'd : use makes me feel
As if no harm could e'er befall the sexton :
And e'en my wife will in dark winter nights
Enter the church alone and toll the bell.

Craw. And ne'er has been alarm'd by any sight
Of apparition or unearthly thing ?

Sexton. Yes ; she was once alarm'd.

Craw. (*eagerly*). And what appear'd ?

Sexton. It was, as nearly as I can remember,

Upon a Friday night —

Craw. (*quickly*). Ne'er mind the night : what was it that she saw ?

Sexton. Nay, she herself saw nothing ; but the dog

That follow'd her bark'd briskly, then stopp'd short,
And, with a kind of stifled choking howl,
Look'd in her face, then cower'd by her side,
Trembling for fear ; and then right well she knew
Some elrich thing was near her, though its form
Was only visible to the poor brute.

Craw. You think the dog saw something.

Sexton. Certes did he !

And had he not been dumb, he could, no doubt,
Have told a tale to set our hair on end.

Claude (*who, during their discourse, has been pacing to and fro impatiently, to sexton*). You know not who it was ?

Sexton. The Lord preserve us, sir ! for she saw nothing.

Claude. What dost thou mean ? Couldst thou not guess, at least,

Who 'twas who made request to chant the dirge ?

Sexton. Ay, ay ! the dirge. In truth I cannot say.
It was a man I never saw before.

Claude (*eagerly*). Stately, and of a stature somewhat taller

Than middle size, of countenance somewhat younger
Than middle age ?

Sexton. No ; short, and grave, and ancient, like a priest

From foreign parts. [*Music sounds again.*]

Craw. Be still and hear the dirge.

DIRGE, sung by several voices without.

Dear spirit ! freed from earthy cell,
From mortal thralldom freed ;
The blessed Virgin keep thee well,
And thy dread passage speed !

Quick be thy progress, gentle soul !
Through purifying pain,
To the saved Christian's happy goal,
Thy Father's bright domain !

Beloved on earth ! by love redeem'd,
Which earthly love transcends,
Earth's show, — the dream that thou hast dream'd,
In waking transport ends.

Then, bathed in fountains of delight,
Mayst thou God's mercy prove,
His glory open'd to thy sight,
And to thy heart His love !

There may thy blessed dwelling be,
For ever to endure
With those who were on earth like thee,
The guileless and the pure !

Dear spirit ! from thy earthy cell,
From mortal thralldom freed, &c. &c.

Claude (*seeing the light disappear*). They are all gone at last : unlock the gate.

[*The sexton applies the key, but in vain.*]
Canst thou not open it ? what is the matter ?

Sexton. I've brought a key made for another gate ;

Woe worth my stupid head !

Claude. I'll climb the wall.

Sexton. Be not so very hasty, please your honour.
This key unlocks the southern gate : I pray you
To follow me, and you will soon have entrance.

Woe worth my stupid head ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

The churchyard, near the walls of St. Mungo's church, which occupies the bottom of the stage. A newly covered grave is dimly seen near the front; the stage darkened, but not entirely so; a degree of light, as from a new-risen moon in a cloudy night, showing objects imperfectly.

Enter MALCOLM, who bends over the grave for some time in silence.

Mal. And here beneath this trampled sod she lies,
Stiffen'd and cold, and swathed in coffin-weeds,
Who, short while since, moved like a gleam of
brightness,

Lighting each face, and cheering every heart.
Oh, Emma, Emma Graham, is this thy place ?
Dearer than thou a lover's soul ne'er worshipp'd ;

Fairer than thou a virgin's robe ne'er wrapt ;
 Better than thou a parent's tongue ne'er bless'd.
 Oh, Emma Graham, the dearest, fairest, best !
 Pair'd with thee in the dance, this hand in thine,
 I've led thee through the whirl of mazy transport,
 And o'er thy chair have hung with wistful ear,
 Catching thy words like strains of melody,
 To be with fancy's treasures stored for ever.
 I've waited near thy portal many an hour,
 To see thy hasty transit from its steps
 To the grim gaping coach, that seem'd to swallow,
 Like a leviathan, its beauteous prey.
 And now alas ! I come to seek thee here !
 I come to seek thee here, but not to find.
 This heart, which yearns through its ribb'd fence to
 break

Into the darken'd cell where thou art laid
 In Nature's thralldom, is from thee divided
 As by a gulf impassable. Oh, oh !
 So short a time ! such fearful, sad transition !
 My day is turn'd to night ; my youth to age ;
 May life to death be the next welcome change !
 [*Throws himself on the grave in a burst of sorrow.*]
 Sweet love, who sleepest beneath, canst thou not hear
 me ?

Oh, if thou couldst ! Alas ! alas ! thou canst not !
 [*After a pause, and half-raising himself from
 the grave.*]

But is it well, and is it holy, thus,
 On such a sacred spot, to mourn the dead,
 As lost and perish'd treasure ? God forgive me !
 The silver lamp, with all its rich embossments
 Of beauteous workmanship, is struck and broken,
 But is the flame extinguish'd ? God forgive me !
 Forgive a wretched and distracted man,
 And grant me better thoughts !—The unclothed
 spirit

In blessed purity hath still existence.
 Perhaps, in its high state is not unconscious
 Of what remains behind ; perhaps, beholds
 The very spot. Oh, if she does ! her pity—
 Her pity, yea, her love now rests upon me.
 Her spirit, from the body newly freed,
 Was in my father's house, ere it departed
 To its celestial home ; was it not sympathy ?
 O ! Emma, Emma ! could I surely know
 That I was dear to thee, a word, — a token
 Had been to me a cherish'd, rich possession,
 Outvaluing all that martial chiefs contend for
 On their embattled fields. — Ha ! who approaches ?

Enter CLAUDE.

Come not, I warn thee, near this sacred spot.
 [*Springing up from the ground.*]

Claude. A sacred spot, indeed ! but yet to all
 Who loved in life the dead whom it contains,
 Free as the house of God.

Mal. I say it is not.
 In this, her first night of the grave, the man

Who loved her best when living, claims a right
 To watch the new-closed tomb, and none beside.

Claude. Then yield to me that right, for it is
 mine ;

For I have loved her longest, — long ere thou
 Hadst look'd upon her face, or heard her name.

Mal. 'Tis not the date, but potency of love
 Which bears account : I say, approach no nearer.

Claude. Must I endure such passion ? Frantic
 man !

Are we not both in grief smitten to the earth ?
 May we not both weep o'er this sacred spot,
 Partners in wretchedness ?

Mal. Away, away ! I own no partnership ;
 He who hath spok'n such word hath thereby proved
 The poorness of his love. Approach no nearer.
 I'll yield my heart's blood rather than resign
 This my sad eminence in widow'd sorrow.

Claude. Dar'st thou to hinder me ?
Mal. I dare and will.
 [*They grapple fiercely.*]

Enter CRAWFORD.

Craw. (*separating them.*) For shame ! for shame !
 to hold contention here !

Mutual affliction should make friends of foes,
 Not foes of friends. The grave of one beloved
 Should be respected e'en as holy ground, —
 Should have a charm to smother all resentment.

Mal. And so it should, and shall. — Forgive me,
Claude ;
 I have been froward in my wretchedness.

Claude. And I, dear Malcolm, was to blame, so
 suddenly

To break upon thy sorrow.

Craw. The provost hath despatch'd a messenger
 Upon our track, who found me out e'en now,
 Requesting both of you to give your presence
 On an occasion solemn and important.

Claude. What may it be ?

Craw. Within the late apartment of the dead,
 Your sister has a duty to perform,
 Enjoin'd her by the dead. And 'tis her wish
 That ye should both be present.

Claude and Mal. (*together.*) We will obey her
 shortly. Go before us.

[*Exit* CRAWFORD and MALCOLM ; and
 CLAUDE, after bending in silence for a few
 moments over the grave, follows them.

SCENE VI.

An apartment, the walls of which are lined with oak,
 and partly hung with arras.

Enter a Maid Servant, carrying a lamp and a bas-
 ket, &c.

Maid (*speaking as she enters.*) I trow, when we
 have burnt this second parcel,
 The sickly air must needs be purified.

But what does all this fuming signify,
 Since we must die at our appointed time?
 What dost thou think—(*looking round and seeming
 alarmed*)—She has not follow'd me.

I thought she was behind me. Lord preserve us!
 Here in this ghastly chamber all alone!

[*Going to the door and calling.*]

Art thou not coming, Marjory? Where art thou?
 I say, where art thou? I have need of thee.

Enter a 2d Maid.

2d maid. Why didst thou call so loud? What is
 the matter?

1st maid. I thought thou wast behind me: mercy
 on us!

A kind of qualm came o'er me, when I look'd
 On all within this silent dismal room,
 And to that corner where the death-bed stood,—
 A sudden qualm came o'er me.

2d maid. Let us be busy—there's no time to lose;
 The provost and his daughter will be here
 Ere we have done our work.

[*They take gums and dried herbs from the
 basket, which they set fire to by the lamp, and
 fumigate the chamber, speaking the while oc-
 casionally.*]

1st maid. The Lord preserve us! 'tis an awful
 thing.

2d maid. It was a sudden call: so young,—so
 good!

1st maid. Ay, many a sore heart thinks of her
 this night.

2d maid. And he, the most of all, that noble
 gentleman:

Lord pardon him for being what he is!

1st maid. And what is that?

2d maid. A rank and Roman papist.

1st maid. The Lord forgive him that, if it be so!—
 And quickly, too; for this same deadly fever,
 As I hear say, has seized upon him also.

Enter Provost.

Provost. That's well, good damsels; you have
 done your task

Right thoroughly: a wholesome, fragrant smell
 Is floating all about. Where is your master?

1st maid. In his own chamber. When he knows
 your honour

Is in the house, he will attend you presently.

2d maid. And it will do him good to see your
 honour.

Provost. I fear, my joe, the good that I can do
 him,

Or e'en the minister, if he were here,
 Would be but little. Grief must have its time.
 Some opiate drug would be to him, I reckon,
 Worth all my company, and something more.
 Howbeit, I'll go to him. My good old friend!

My heart bleeds for him.—Ye have done enough;
 The ladies are at hand. [*Exit by the opposite side.*]

Enter ALICE and MARIAN.

Marian. Take hold of me; thy summon'd
 strength, I fear,

Forsakes thee now.

[*She supports ALICE, and they walk slowly to
 the middle of the room.*]

Ay, thou lookst round, as if in search of something?

Alice. They have removed it.

Marian. What have they removed?
Alice. The bed on which she lay. Oh, woe is
 me!

The last time I was in this chamber, Marian,
 Becoming suddenly, from some slight cause,
 A passing sufferer, she laid my head
 On her own pillow, and her own soft hand
 Press'd me so gently; I was then the patient,
 And she the tender nurse. I little thought
 So short a time—Alas! my dear, dear friend!

Marian. Short time indeed for such a dismal
 change:

I may not chide thy tears.

Alice. Here are the virginals on which she play'd;
 And here's her music, too.

[*Taking up a book from the virginals, and
 opening it.*]

Ah, woe is me!

The very tune which last she play'd to me
 Has open'd to my hand, and 'twixt the leaves
 The little flower lies press'd which then I gave her!

Marian. 'Tis sweet to find it so.

Alice. But, oh! how sad!

She was—she was—— [*Bursting into tears.*]
 Well may I weep for her!

Marian. Be comforted, dear Alice! she is gone
 Where neither pain nor woe can touch her more.

Alice. I know—I know it well; but she is gone!
 She who was fair, and gifted, and beloved:
 And so beloved!—Had it been heaven's blest will
 To take me in her stead, tears had been shed,
 But what had been their woe, compared to this?

Marian. Whose woe, dear Alice?

Alice. His woe—their woe; poor Claude's, and
 Malcolm's too.

Death seizes on the dearest and the best!

Marian (embracing her). I will not hear thee say
 so, gentle Alice.

A dearer and a better than thyself

'Twere hard to find. No; nor do I believe
 That she whom thou lamentest did surpass thee.

Alice. Hush! say it not!—I pray thee, say
 not so:

In pitying me thou must not rob the dead.
 That he prefer'd a creature of such excellence,
 Took from the wound its sting and bitterness.
 Thou mayst not wrong the dead!

Marian. I will not, then,

Alice (looking round). There is the arras that conceals the place :

Her awful words are sounding in my ears,
Which bade me search. I feel a secret awe !
But that her spirit from the earth has ta'en —
As I am well assured — its final leave,
I could believe that she is near me still,
To see the very act ! [*Looking round her fearfully.*]

Marian. Nay, check thy ardent fancy : 'tis not good

To let such dismal notions haunt thee so —
Thy father comes, with his afflicted friend.

Enter Provost, leading GRAHAM by the hand.

[*ALICE advances affectionately to GRAHAM, who opens his arms to receive her, and she weeps upon his neck, without speaking. She then leads him to a chair, and seats herself upon a stool at his feet, taking his hand in hers, and bending over it, while the Provost and MARIAN remain in the front.*]

Provost (looking at them). That poor old man ! he utters not a word

Of sorrow or complaint ; and all the more I grieve for him. God help him ! in whose hands The hearts of men are kept.

Marian. And he is help'd, for he is weeping now.

Provost. He did not weep when we for him were weeping,

And he will weep when all our tears are dried.

— Our two young men, methinks, are long of coming.

Marian. But are you sure your messenger hath found them ?

Provost. I scarcely doubt it. I have those in pay,

But little better than the prey they follow,
Who are expert in dogging stealthy rogues ;
And it were strange indeed if artless men
Should foil their skill. —

And I am right — I hear their coming steps !

Enter MALCOLM and CLAUDE.

Mal. (after doing silent obeisance to the Provost and GRAHAM, who, with ALICE, come forward to meet them, speaks in a low voice to CLAUDE). And here, night after night, in all her beauty,

She took her curtain'd rest, and here she died !

But that which I expected is not here :

Is this the very chamber ?

Alice (overhearing him, and in a low voice). It is : but what thou lookst for is removed.

(*Pointing.*) Upon that spot it stood.

Mal. Yes, thou hast read my thought, most gentle Alice !

[*Goes to the spot, where he remains in silence, covering his face with his hands.*]

Provost. Shall we not now proceed upon the business

For which we are convened ?

(*To GRAHAM.*) To you, my ancient friend, I have explain'd it.

Malcolm and Claude, know ye why in this chamber Your presence has been solemnly requested.

Claude. I guess it well. My sister has inform'd me

Of Emma's last request ; and I to Malcolm,

As we came hither, have repeated it.

Provost (*to ALICE*). Now, dearest child ! it is for thee to act.

[*Leads ALICE to the bottom of the stage, where, taking aside the arras which covers the wall, a small door is discovered.*]

Claude (*to MALCOLM, seeing him take a book from a book-case*). Why dost thou snatch that book so eagerly ?

Malcolm. It is the book I praised to her so much A short while since ; and see, she has procured it !

Claude. Ah ! thou mayst well be proud. But how is this ?

Thy countenance all o' the sudden changed !

[*MALCOLM lets the book drop from his hand, and CLAUDE takes it up eagerly, and opens it, reading.*]

“ The gift of one most dear.” — Of one most dear !

Thou didst not give it to her ?

Mal.

Nay, nor thou !

Marian. Hush, hush ! words of ungentle rivalry Do ill become this solemn place. Be calm.

See ! Alice in the cabinet hath found

That which the vision'd form so earnestly

Directed her to search for.

[*ALICE, returning to the front with a small box in her hands, places it on a table, the rest gathering eagerly round her, and endeavours to open it.*]

Alice. I know this box : alas ! I know it well, And many a time have open'd it ; but now —

Provost. Thy hands have lost all power, thou tremblest so.

[*Taking it from her and from GRAHAM, who attempts to assist her.*]

Nay, friend, thou tremblest also : I will do it.

[*Opens the box, and takes out a written paper.*]

Omnes. What is it ?

Provost. Give me time to look upon it. *Gra*. Some deed or testament. Alas, poor child !

Had she prepared for such an early death ?

Provost. It is no testament.

Mal. (impatiently). What is it then ?

Claude. Nay, father, do not keep us in suspense !

Provost. It is a formal contract of betrothing ;

Vows sworn between herself and Basil Gordon.

Gra. That popish cadet of a hostile house

To me and mine ! — Let mine own eyes examine it.

Contracted secretly ! to him contracted !
But she is in her grave, and I——O God !
Grant me with patience to endure Thy chastening !
Contracted ! married !

Provost. Not married ; no,—a mutual solemn
promise,

Made to each other in the sight of heav'n.

Thus run the words :—

(*Reads.*) " I, Basil Gordon, will no woman wed
But Emma Graham."—Then follows her engage-
ment :—

" I, Emma Graham, will wed no other man
Than Basil Gordon : yet will never marry
But with consent of my much honour'd father,
When he, less prejudiced, shall know and own
The worth of him I love." [*Spreading out the paper.*
This is her writing, as you plainly see ;
And this is Gordon's, for I know it well.

Gra. (*beating his breast.*) This blow ! this blow !
a Gordon and a papist !

Provost. True, he is both : the last, I must con-
fess,

No trivial fault. Howbeit he is, in truth,
A brave and noble gentleman.

Alice. Indeed he is, dear sir. Your gentle Emma
Could love no other. Valiant in the field,
As frequent foreign records have attested :
In private conduct good and honourable ;
And loving her he loved, as he has done,
With ardent, tender constancy——

Mal. Hold ! hold !

He loved her not—by heav'n he loved her not !
When all who ever knew her, drown'd in sorrow,
Follow'd her hearse, he—alone was absent.
Where was he then, I pray ?

Provost. I'll tell thee where :
Stretch'd on a sick-bed—smitten by the same
Most pestilent disease that slew his mistress.

Mal. Ha ! is it so ! (*Turning to CLAUDE.*) Then
we must hold our peace.

Claude. And with each other be at peace, dear
Malcolm :

What is there now of rivalry between us ?

Mal. Speak not so gently to me, noble Claude !
I've been to thee so wayward and unjust,
Thy kindness wrings the heart which it should
soften.

(*After a pause.*) And all our fond delusion ends in
this !

We've tack'd our shallow barks for the same course !
And the fair mimic isle, like Paradise,
Which seem'd to beckon us, was but a bank
Of ocean's fog, now into air dissolved !

Alice. No ; say not *beckon'd*. She was honourable
As she was fair : no wily woman's art
Did e'er disgrace her worth :—believe me, Mal-
colm.

Mal. Yes ; I believe thee, and I bless thee too,

Thou best and loveliest friend of one so lovely !
Pardon me, dearest Alice ! generous Alice !
Pardon the hasty error of a word
Which had no meaning—no intended meaning
To cast one shade of blame on thy dear friend ;
For henceforth by no other appellation
But thy dear friend shall she be named by me.

[*Turning to GRAHAM.*

And you, dear sir ! look not so sternly sad.
Her love outran her duty one short step,
But would no farther go, though happiness
Was thereby peril'd. Though his house and yours,
His creed and yours, were so at variance, still,
She might expect his noble qualities
In the end subdue a father's heart,
Who did so fondly love her.

Gra. Cease ! I am weak, bereft, and desolate,—
A poor old man, my pride of wisdom sear'd
And ground to dust : what power have I to judge ?
May God forgive me if I did amiss !

Claude (*to Provost*). Did Gordon see her ere she
breathed her last ?

Provost. He did. 'The nurse, who was her close
attendant,

Says, that he came by stealth into her chamber,
And with her words and looks of tenderness
Exchanged, though near her last extremity.
And there he caught the fatal malady.

Claude. A happy end for him, if it should prove
so.

Enter a Servant, who draws the Provost aside.

Provost (*aside to servant*). Thou hast a woeful
face ! what has befallen ?

[*Servant speaks to him in a whisper.*

Marian (*to ALICE*). Thy father has received
some woeful tidings.

Alice. I fear he has ; he stands in thoughtful
silence.

Father, how is't ? your thoughts are very sad.

Provost. Ay ; were this span of earthly being all,
'Twere sad to think how wealth and domination,
Man's valour, landed pride, and woman's beauty,
When over them the blighting wind hath pass'd,
Are turned to vanity, and known no more !

[*The bell of a neighbouring church tolls five
times.*

Mal. What bell is that ?

Claude. Some spirit is released from mortal
thralldom.

Alice. And passing on its way, we humbly hope,
To endless happiness.

Provost. I trust it is, though stern divines may
doubt :

'Tis Basil Gordon's knell !

[*The bell tolls again at measured intervals, and,
after a solemn pause, the curtain drops.*

ENTHUSIASM:

A COMEDY, IN THREE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

LORD WORRYMORE.
 COLONEL FRANKLAND.
 BLOUNT.
 SIR JOHN CROFTON.
 CLERMONT.
 HUGO, a boy.
 PATERSON, *servant of COLONEL FRANKLAND.*
 MANHAUNSLT, a *German vagrant.*
 Visitors, servants, &c.

WOMEN.

LADY WORRYMORE.
 LADY SHREWDLY.
 MISS FRANKLAND.
 MRS. BROWN.
 BARBARA, *the attendant of MISS FRANKLAND.*
 Visitors, servants, &c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A saloon, with a glass door opening into a garden at the bottom of the stage. LORD WORRYMORE and LADY SHREWDLY are seen walking towards the house in earnest conversation, and enter by the said door, speaking as they enter.

Lady Shrewdly. But, my dear Lord Worrymore, did you not know all this before you married her? and did you not admire the charming ardour of her character?

Lord Wor. Yes, madam; for things worthy of that ardour did then engage her attention. The first time I beheld her,—I believe I have told you before.

Lady Shrewdly. True, my lord; I have heard you say that the first time you beheld her was in the painting gallery of Mr. Rougeit, where she stood riveted with admiration before the portrait of your lordship; and that grace and expression attracted her at that moment, I am not disposed to question.

Lord Wor. Yes, my dear friend; and in poetry also, and the graver works of composition, nothing that was excellent escaped her. My speech upon

the former Corn Bill delighted her: not an argument or happy expression in the whole, that she could not repeat with a spirit and action appropriate. She had a sound taste for eloquence; nobody admired it like her.

Lady Shrewdly. How should they? She must have had a capacity made on purpose to admire that speech; and a very rare one too, I assure you.

Lord Wor. Not a word or observation fell from my lips, but she understood the sense and spirit of it so quickly.

Lady Shrewdly. Leaving any other listener far behind, I dare say.

Lord Wor. And now, every learned oddity, every foolish coxcomb who has gathered up in the world but a shred of reputation for any thing, engrosses exclusively, for the time, her thoughts and admiration; and what *I* do, what *I* speak, what *I* write, is no more attended to, than if I had changed into a common-place person on her hands.

Lady Shrewdly. And that is what *change* could never make your lordship.

Lord Wor. (*bowing with affected modesty.*) To be sure, I then thought enthusiasm a very charming quality.

Lady Shrewdly. But not very constant to its object, my lord; you surely could not think that. You have had your turn, and should now with a better grace give up some portion of her admiration to the other sages, orators, and poets with which this happy metropolis abounds.

Lord Wor. Sages, orators, and poets, Lady Shrewdly! She has been tearing the clothes off her back in squeezing through the crowd of a city conventicle, to hear the long-winded sermons of a presbyterian parson. She has knocked up two sets of horses driving over the town after Italian improvisatori and German philosophers. Her boudoir is studded round with skulls like a charnel-house; and bold dirty creatures from St. Giles's come into her very dressing-room, with their rickety brats in their arms, to put their large misshapen heads under her inspection, as the future mighty geniuses of the land. Speaking birds, giraffes, and lectures upon Shakspeare have followed one another in succession, to say nothing of her present little imp of a juggler; and all in their turn are the sole occupiers of her ardent admiration. What a change! what a change for me! With my poor deceased Magdalene how different it was!

Lady Shrewdly. To be sure, in the first Lady Worrymore's time it was very different; but you compared her, not long ago, to a dull foggy day in November, and the present to a bright morning in spring.

Lord Wor. So I did, so I did, my good cousin! but there are bright mornings in spring, when the wind blows from every point of the compass in the course of ten minutes, bringing sand, dust, and straws from every lane and corner, to blind one's poor eyes and annoy one. I am a miserable man! What can be done to reclaim her?

Lady Shrewdly. Very little, I believe.

Lord Wor. Oh, oh!

Lady Shrewdly. But do not despair; she may get tired of this hurricane of enthusiasm, after two or three tricks have been played upon her credulity.

Lord Wor. You think so.

Lady Shrewdly. And it would not, perhaps, be amiss for you to lie by for a time, and make no more attempts to bring back her attention to your own merits. Or if you cannot forbear doing so, do it covertly.

Lord Wor. How covertly?

Lady Shrewdly. Write another eloquent speech upon some approaching parliamentary question, and let it be submitted to her criticism, as the composition of some young Irish orator of amazing genius, who has hitherto, from modesty, given silent votes in the house, and you will see how prodigiously she will be struck with the depth, the force, the brilliancy of the dear, delightful oration.

Lord Wor. Now, my dear good cousin, are you serious?

Lady Shrewdly. Serious or not, I can think of nothing so likely to serve your ends, under the present untoward circumstances. But somebody is coming.

Enter BLOUNT.

O, 'tis a gay young sailor returned from a three years' station in the Mediterranean.—You're welcome, dear Frank! let me see you as often as you can while you remain in town; it always gives me pleasure. Permit me to present Mr Francis Blount to your lordship: the son of an old friend and schoolfellow of mine.

Lord Wor. I am glad to have the honour of meeting any friend of yours; and hope he has returned safe and sound from the sabres of the Greek pirates.

Blount. I boast of no honourable scars as yet, my lord.

Lord Wor. All in good time, young gentleman.

Blount. Has your ladyship any commands for Herefordshire?

Lady Shrewdly. Are you going so soon?

Blount. In a few days, I believe.

Lady Shrewdly. What takes you there so soon?

Your native place is changed since you left it; scarcely a family remains of the old set.

Blount. Nay; my good aunt Hammond still holds her state in the old mansion-house, and Squire Gozling, with his pretty daughter, I suppose, is there still.

[*LADY SHREWDLY frowns to him significantly.*]

Lord Wor. (*smiling*). You will find your bird flown from that nest, I believe.

Blount. Is little Kate married?

Lady Shrewdly. No, she is not; but Arabella—

Blount. O, as to her, she is welcome to marry for me, as soon as she can find any wiseacre to have her.

Lady Shrewdly (*who has been frowning and making faces to him behind LORD WORRYMORE'S back, but in vain*). Out upon thee, Frank, for a very spiteful creature! Thou hast paid thy devoirs to her, I dare say, and she has scorned such a stripling as thou wast at that time.

Blount. My devoirs, to a dull formal prude, who spoke two words in half a day, and those uttered as slowly and deliberately as if she were reading them from the spelling-book!

Lady Shrewdly. We must be at cross purposes now, surely; we are not speaking of the same lady.

Lord Wor. Don't mind it, Lady Shrewdly; it is clearly a mistake, and is of no consequence whatever.—I wish you good morning. Good morning, sir. [*Exit.*]

Lady Shrewdly. O Francis Blount! what hast thou done?

Blount. Nothing very bad, I hope.

Lady Shrewdly. Didst thou not see me making faces to thee to stop thy foolish tongue?

Blount. And how was I to know what all those grimaces were meant for, when ladies, now-a-days, twist their features all manner of ways, as I am told, for the sake of expression?

Lady Shrewdly. Arabella Gozling, whom thou hast made so free with, is now the wife of Lord Worrymore, and a peeress of England.

Blount (*holding up his hands, and laughing heartily*). Every man to his own fancy! This good peer must have admired her as the most prudent piece of still life that ever wore mantua and petticoat.

Lady Shrewdly. Quite wrong again, friend; he married her as a high-toned, ardent enthusiast.

Blount. When my grandmother links herself to a third husband, I may believe that he marries her as a round, dimpled Hebe of fifteen. An imaginative ardent enthusiast! How could the creature so transmogrify herself? ay, or think of such a change?

Lady Shrewdly. That, it must be owned, is difficult to explain.

Blount. O, now I have it! She became tired of sitting in the corner unnoticed, and has heard no

doubt of some lady captivating every heart by her lively and generous enthusiasm; so she has rushed from her tackle of footstools and decorum, like a brig cut from the stocks, and set herself afloat on the ocean of fashion. By my faith, and she has made a good cruise of it too!

Lady Shrewdly. Perhaps your conjecture is not far from the truth.

Blount. How came this goose of a lord to be taken in by it?

Lady Shrewdly. By that which has taken in many, both lords and commoners, ere now;—his own obtrusive eagerness for praise, which had tired out every body.

Blount. And received this new stream of flattery like rain upon the parched sands of Araby.

Lady Shrewdly. Even so: to say nothing of a wife lately dead, who would never say one civil thing of all the clever writings that his persevering talents produced.

Blount. He must be a happy dog now, I think: up in the seventh heaven.

Lady Shrewdly. Nay, nay! fallen from that exaltation deplorably. And if thou hast a mind, I'll engage thee in a plot to restore the poor man to some part of his lost felicity, and mortify his affected spouse at the same time. Canst thou put a Brutus-wig on thy head, and become a great orator for a season?

Blount. Can I not? I have danced upon deck, ere now, with a turban on my head, as a sultana of the royal harem.

Lady Shrewdly. Come, then; thou art just the man I want. Let us go to my closet, where we may concert the whole matter without interruption. (*As they are going off, he stops and laughs heartily.*) What tickles your fancy so? Don't stop here.

Blount. Methinks she is now before my eyes, this same ardent peeress who makes such commotion among you, seated on a high-legged drawing-room chair, the back of which she would not have touched on any account, for the ruffling of her pinched frill and collar. And when you showed her a butterfly or flower from the garden, and said, "Is not that beautiful?" she would draw herself up most precisely, and say, "I believe it is considered so." (*Laughing again.*)

Lady Shrewdly. Move on, foolish boy.

Blount. She would not give her opinion, but with prudent reserve, on the merits of a beetle or a cockchafer.

Lady Shrewdly. Go, go!

Blount. And that too was affectation; for she was a careless hoyden first of all, and took to sense and preciseness afterwards.

Lady Shrewdly. Move on, I say. We are losing time here, and may be prevented.

[*Exeunt, she pushing him gently off the stage, and he still continuing to laugh.*]

SCENE II.

COLONEL FRANKLAND'S house.

Enter CLERMONT, looking round as if disappointed.

Cler. No, she is not here. She is with her uncle, I suppose, reading to him some dull book or other — the Sportsman's Guide, or the plans of Marlborough's battles, as cheerfully and contentedly as if it were the most interesting story or poem that ever was written.

Enter MISS FRANKLAND.

I have interrupted some pleasant reading, I'm afraid.

Miss Frank. Not at all: we have got to the end of our battles, and he is now teaching me to play chess.

Cler. I have brought you a book that will delight you.

Miss Frank. Are you sure of that? I am no great admirer of poetry, — of what is called sentimental poetry, at least.

Cler. Did you not like my friend's sonnets, which I brought you yesterday?

Miss Frank. O dear, no! I did not understand them.

Cler. Surely some of the thoughts they express are beautiful and tender.

Miss Frank. I dare say they are; but why should beautiful thoughts be cramped up in such patterned shapes of versification, — all rule and difficulty? I have neither ear for the measure, nor quickness of comprehension for the meaning.

Cler. Don't say so, Fanny. Neither ear nor comprehension are in fault with you. — I should rather fear — I should rather say — no matter!

Miss Frank. What would you say?

Cler. Nothing.

Miss Frank. Nay, a blush passes over your face. Were any of those sonnets written by yourself?

Cler. Not one of them, I assure you. I wish some of them were.

Miss Frank. Now I'm sure you have been writing something of the kind. I see it in your face.

Cler. Well, then, since you guess so quickly, I confess that I have; but it shall never be put into your hands.

Miss Frank. O, do let me see it, Clermont! Give it me now.

Cler. I have it not about me.

Miss Frank. Has any body seen it?

Cler. Only one imprudent friend, who has mentioned it to Lady Worrymore.

Miss Frank. I'm sorry for it.

Cler. Is it a great misfortune, that you should look so grave upon it? May I request to know —

Miss Frank. Say nothing more about it: there is company at hand.

Enter SIR JOHN CROFTON.

Sir John. But not disagreeable company, I hope. If it be so, tell me frankly (*looking significantly at them both*), and I will retire.

Cler. You are too well aware, Sir John, that your company is always agreeable.

Miss Frank. In this house I am sure it is.—And you arrive at a lucky moment, too; for I hear Lady Worrymore coming.

Enter LADY WORRYMORE.

Good morning, Lady Worrymore: how kind you are to call upon me, occupied as you are with so many objects of interest.

Lady Wor. Don't speak to me, dear creature.

Sir John (to LADY WOR.). May I presume to say how—

Lady Wor. Don't speak to me, Sir John; where is pen and paper? (*Running to a writing-table.*) I must write immediately; I have been prevented by a hurry of engagements all the morning. (*Sits down and writes very fast, speaking to them at the same time.*) The sweet, heavenly creature! it is two long hours since I heard of him.

Sir John (aside to MISS FRANKLAND). The juggling boy, I suppose, who is sick with eating plum cake.

Lady Wor. (still writing as before). The dear little darling; and he leans his aching head on the pillow—with such languid softness—the 'kerchief twisted round it, too—no model for an artist was ever so beautiful!

Sir John. Your ladyship must have him painted so; and take care to keep him sick till the picture is finished.

Lady Wor. Unfeeling savage!

Sir John. A little more cake will do the business.

Lady Wor. Don't speak to me. (*Motioning him off with her hand, and muttering aloud as she looks over the note she has finished.*) Let me know instantly—the health of the suffering angel—every minute particular since I saw him last. (*Folds it up.*) Who waits there?

Enter a Servant.

Give this to my servant; it is for the mistress of the house where Master Manhaunslet lodges. He must go with it immediately, and wait for an answer.

Serv. (taking the note). And bring the answer here, my lady?

Lady Wor. Yes.—No; to the exhibition of antiques in Piccadilly. No, no! to the lecture-room of Mr. Clutterbuck; there will be friends there almost as anxious as myself to hear how the little angel docs.

Sir John. Mr. Clutterbuck must be a superlative critic, indeed, to attract your ladyship at so anxious a moment as the present.

Lady Wor. Have you not heard him? You are incapable of appreciating two lines of our immortal bard, if you have not attended Mr. Clutterbuck.

Sir John. I am in very truth, then, an ignorant fellow; and so are you, Clermont, I believe.

Lady Wor. Clermont! Have I the pleasure of beholding the writer of that beautiful sonnet, which has been mentioned to me with so much praise?

Sir John (presenting CLERMONT). A poet who will think himself honoured indeed by the notice of such a critic as Lady Worrymore.

Lady Wor. O no, Sir John! an ardent admirer of the Muses, but no critic.—To what a charming department of poetry, Mr. Clermont, you have devoted your pen! The sonnet!—the refined, the tender, the divine sonnet! O how it purifies and separates the mind from all commonness and meanness of nature! Methinks the happy spirits in Elysium must converse with one another in sonnets.

Sir John. What a happy time they must have of it, if they do!

Cler. It is a new and bright fancy of your ladyship's, and never entered my mundane imagination before.

Lady Wor. Has it not? O, I have worshipped Petrarch, dreamt of him, repeated in my sleep all his beautiful conceptions, till I have started from my couch in a paroxysm of delight!

Sir John. Ah, Lady Worrymore! you should have lived some centuries earlier, and been the Laura of that impassioned poet yourself.

Miss Frank. (aside to SIR JOHN). I wish she had, with all my heart.

Lady Wor. But I have not yet seen your sweet composition, Mr. Clermont; pray, pray, give it to me! this very moment—O this very moment! I die to peruse it! I am miserable till I see it! it will haunt my thoughts the whole day!

Miss Frank. Dear Lady Worrymore, will you shame the divine Mr. Clutterbuck's lecture so much as to think of it then?

Lady Wor. Ah! my dear Miss Frankland, you are too severe: Shakspeare should indeed be paramount to every thing. Dear Shakspeare! dear Petrarch! I doat on them both. (*Looking at her watch.*) Bless me! I am behind my time. Adieu, adieu! (*To CLERMONT.*) And you will send me your sonnet? you will do me that honour? you will confer upon me that infinite obligation? Adieu, adieu!

[*Exit, hurrying off, and passing BLOUNT without notice, who has entered towards the end of her rhapsody, and drawn himself up by the wall to let her pass.*

Blount (coming forward). It is best to reef one's sails when a hurricane is abroad.

Sir John. Why did you not speak to her, Blount? She is your old acquaintance.

Blount. I have known a lady called Miss Goz-

ling, in whose presence I have stood undismayed ; but I must take to my studies, I trow, before I accost my Lady Worrymore.

Sir John. That is prudent, Frank ; you are rather far behind in book-learning.

Miss Frank. (*glancing at CLERMONT.*) And have not yet penned a sonnet, I believe.

Blount. Faith, I don't know a sonnet from a roundelay ; but I shall qualify myself to compose both very expertly, before I become a candidate for her favour.

Sir John. You look grave, Clermont.

Cler. I confess you seem to me too severe on this lady. The ardour of her character very naturally betrays her into exaggerated expressions ; but surely (*glancing at Miss FRANKLAND*) it is preferable to the cold decorum of insensibility or indifference.

Blount. Of course, Clermont, this fine sonnet of yours is to be put into her fair hands.

Cler. I shall put it under cover, and leave it at her door in the evening.

Blount. It is out of your way ; I am sailing on the right tack for that point ; give the packet to my charge, and I will leave it at Worrymore House as I pass.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Colonel Frankland begs to have the honour of seeing the gentlemen in his dressing-room.

Sir John. Does the gout still confine him upstairs ?

Miss Frank. Indeed it does ; and it will be charitable in you all to sit with him as long as you can. [*Exeunt SIR JOHN, CLERMONT, and BLOUNT.*]

Miss Frank. (*alone, after a thoughtful pause.*) That he should be so taken in !—But is he so ?—In some degree, I fear.—Perhaps it is only to vex me. (*Walking up and down with a hurried step.*) No, no ! he is taken in.—Is he a vain, conceited man, and have I never discovered it till now ?—It cannot be : he has read me many compositions of his friends ; one of his own, scarcely ever.—Oh, oh ! I wish there was not such a thing as a sonnet in the world !

Enter BARBARA.

Bar. The jelly is ready, madam, that you mean to carry to the sick boy ; and the carriage is waiting.

Miss Frank. I thank you, Barbara, for reminding me. Fetch my scarf, and we'll go.

Bar. You're very right, ma'am, to look after him, for he's a poor peeping chit ; and Lady Worrymore, his landlady tells me, will be the death of him. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A poor-looking chamber, with a sofa near the front of the stage.

Enter MRS. BROWN, with HUGHO, whom she leads to the sofa, then lays him along, and spreads a shawl over him, and then takes a note from her pocket.

Hugho. Thank you, good moder. What is dat ?

Mrs. Brown. Something to divert you, my dear ;—a note from Lady Worrymore.

Hugho. Something to torment me.

Mrs. Brown. She is too good to you, indeed.

Hugho. Not good—not good. I was well ; she stuff me wid cream and comfeit, and make me sick, and now she leave me no rest in my sickness.

Mrs. Brown. Don't be disturbed, dear child ; she won't come near you to-day. I bade the servant tell his lady not to come.

Hugho. You speak message to him ?

Mrs. Brown. To be sure I did. Heaven help me ! where was I to find time, and words, and spelling to write her an answer to all the particlers she axed to know about ? I just bade him say to her that you were no better, and must not be disturbed.

Hugho. She will disturb me de more, and call it comfort. O dat ladies would leave off comforting !

Mrs. Brown. But there is one lady who is good and quiet, I'm sure, and does not torment you.

Hugho. Ay, der is one, and she be very good.

Mrs. Brown. She sends you what is fit for you to take, and writes no notes at all.

Hugho. I will dance, and play cup and ball to her, when I be well, and tell fader, when he returns, to take no money for it.

Mrs. Brown. And will fader do so, think you ? It would be no misfortune to thee, poor thing, if he should never return.

Enter MISS FRANKLAND, and steals on tiptoe to the back of the sofa.

Miss Frank. (*speaking softly to MRS. BROWN.*) He is resting, I see. I have brought the jelly, and will go away. (*Retiring.*)

Hugho. Who dere ?

Mrs. Brown. Miss Frankling : but she is going away.

Hugho. Not go, not go ; good Miss Frankling !

[*MRS. BROWN sets a chair for MISS FRANKLAND by the sofa, and HUGHO takes her hand and kisses it.*]

Miss Frank. Don't speak, Hugho : I go away if you do. (*He raises his head, and nods to her without speaking.*)

Mrs. Brown. You start, madam !

Miss Frank. That handkerchief round his head gives him a likeness I never observed before.

Mrs. Brown. Them wandering foreigners, madam,

have no nightcaps : they are no better than savages in that and many other respects. (*Pointing to the handkerchief on his head.*) It is, to be sure, an unchristian-looking rag : I could scarcely bear to let him say his prayers in it. (*A loud rap is heard at the street-door.*)

Hugho (*starting up in a fright*). It is Lady Worrymore.

Miss Frank. Be quiet, poor child ! I'll soon carry her away with me : she shall not tease you long.

Enter LADY WORRYMORE.

Lady Wor. (*running up to the sofa, clasping her hands affectedly, and hanging over him*). Lovely darling ! O how I grieve to find you still so ill ! What can I do to make you well ?

Hugho. Stay away : dat shall best make me well.

Lady Wor. Stay away ! how can I do so, my angel, when I am so interested — so grieved ! Nobody knows how much I grieve for him.

Miss Frank. Nay, a good many do, I should think ; for you have been grieving all over the town.

Lady Wor. You little know : how could words express what I have felt for him ? Look at the lovely creature ! There is soul and beauty in every line of his countenance. Nay, don't frown at me, *Hugho* : if you are suffering I'll kiss away the pain. (*Stoops and kisses him vehemently, while he struggles and pushes her off.*)

Miss Frank. Do, Lady Worrymore, be quiet. You'll put the poor child into a fever.

Lady Wor. (*persevering*). No, no ! I will make him well : he must be well ; for I have told Lady Tweedler, and Lady Cockup, and Miss Larden how beautiful he looks in his handkerchief turban ; and they are all coming to see him.

Hugho. O dear, dear ! to be so tormented ! I wish dat I was dead. (*Bursting into tears.*)

Mrs. Brown. Indeed, indeed, my lady, your kindness is obstrepulous : the poor child will die of it.

Miss Frank. Let me entreat you, Lady Worrymore, to leave him in peace ; and forbid those ladies to come here. He will have a night-cap on his head presently, and then it will neither be worth your while nor theirs to come near him.

Lady Wor. What a heartless girl you are, Miss Frankland ! how unfeeling ! A night-cap on that pretty classical head ! What would Mr. Palette say ? what would our great sculptors say of such a proposal ? They would call you a barbarian.

Miss Frank. Let them call me what they please ; we have no right to torment the poor boy with our admiration. Do leave him in peace. See how he is weeping with vexation, and cannot get to sleep.

Mrs. Brown. Which is quite necessary, my lady, as your ladyship knows very well. Neither beast nor body can do without sleep, as my good old mistress used to say, and she was a very sensible woman.

Lady Wor. Well, then, be it so ; since even such a creature as this is subject to the necessities of nature. But let me wipe his tears before I leave him, and cover him up close for repose. (*Wiping his eyes with her pocket handkerchief, and going to arrange the shawl.*) Bless me ! what a covering is this for my darling ! (*Pulling it off, and taking a fine Indian shawl from her shoulders, which she spreads over him.*) This is more worthy to unfold such a being ; this will keep him better from the cold. — Sweet rest to you, my pretty Hugh ! I must tear myself away. (*Curtseys slightly to Miss FRANKLAND, and hurries off.*)

Mrs. Brown. She has left him a good shawl, howsomever ; it will put a mint of money into his purse, when he has wit enough to dispose of it.

Miss Frank. You must not reckon upon that too securely.

Re-enter LADY WORRYMORE, and beckons Mrs. BROWN, who goes to her apart.

Lady Wor. (*aside to Mrs. BROWN*). You need take no trouble about the shawl, you know ; for my servant will call for it to-morrow. [*Exit hastily.*]

Miss Frank. Call for it to-morrow ! The shawl, I suppose ?

Mrs. Brown. Yes ; deuce take her generosity ! kisses and sweet words are cheaper than shawls.

Miss Frank. I guessed as much ; the mint of money won't come from that quarter. — Let us move a little to this corner, if you please. (*Leads Mrs. BROWN away from the sofa, more to the front.*) What do you know of the man who brought him to England — this Manhauslet ? Do you think he is really his father ?

Mrs. Brown. He says he is.

Miss Frank. Docs he behave to him as if he were ?

Mrs. Brown. He behaves to him as well as some fathers do to their children ; and that is indiff'ent enough.

Miss Frank. Poor boy ! indiff'ent enough, I fear.

Mrs. Brown. He had a monkey, when he first came, that danced on its hind legs, and played quarter-staff and them tricks ; and I never knew which of them he liked best, *Hugho* or the ape : he gave them the same food, the same kind of fondling, and the same education.

Miss Frank. Did you not tell me, a few minutes since, that the boy said his prayers ?

Mrs. Brown. True, madam ; but he did so, because I told him he ought to do it, for all good boys did so.

Miss Frank. Did he pray in the German tongue ?

Mrs. Brown. No ; heaven forbid, madam, that he should speak to his Creator in such a jargon as that !

Miss Frank. You taught him, then, what to say ?

Mrs. Brown. To be sure I did, madam ; for, as I said before, the ape and he had both the same learning from that heathenish vagrant, Manhauslet.

Miss Frank. And what has become of the ape ?

Mrs. Brown. As soon as little Hugo was so admired by the gentry, as to be sent for to great folk's houses, to show off his balls and his dancing, and all them there pretty motions of his, he understood, somehow or other, that the monkey was not reckoned genteel, and so he sent him on his travels with another outlandish vagrant, to go to country fairs and the like.

Miss Frank. But what has become of Man-haunslet ?

Mrs. Brown. I don't know, madam.

Miss Frank. Did he ever mention his wife to you, or who was Hugo's mother ?

Mrs. Brown. No, madam.

Miss Frank. Did Hugo ever mention his mother ?

Mrs. Brown. No, madam.

Miss Frank. I thank you, Mrs. Brown. Take good care of the child. I'll see you soon again. (*Going to the sofa.*) He is in a sound sleep now. How strong that likeness is ! even sleep seems to add to it. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The house of COLONEL FRANKLAND. He enters, with a letter in his hand, leaning on PATERSON. Sits down in an easy chair, and sets about arranging books and papers on a table at the bottom of the stage.

Colonel Frank. (*after looking at the letter.*) Let me again consider the request of this gay baronet. (*Muttering as he reads.*) Disinterested attachment — only requests to be allowed to endeavour to gain her good opinion. — Yes, yes ! the plea and pretensions of them all. The days of our life wear on, and every pleasant solace, after it has lulled and cheered us for a season, drops away. — I would rather have parted with her to William Clermont ; but what course of events is ever fulfilled according to the foresight of our imagination ? (*Speaking in a louder voice, vehemently.*) None ! no, none !

Pat. (*advancing from the bottom.*) What is your pleasure, sir ?

Colonel Frank. A thing which I never get, Pater son.

Pat. I'm sure I do all I can to content your honour.

Colonel Frank. So thou dost, my old friend ; but thou canst not make Fortune do the same thing. Thou art an old soldier, Pater son, as well as myself : tell me, now, if thou wert ever at siege, battle, or even skirmish, in thy life, wherein every circumstance fell out as the general or commander had reckoned upon ?

Pat. No, surely, your honour. But what is the head of a general good for, if it can do nothing but plan, and cannot turn every unforeseen accident that casts up, to the furtherance of his purpose some way or other ?

Colonel Frank. Very true, my friend ; and thou art teaching me a lesson without being aware of it.

Pat. I were a bold man, indeed, to pretend to do that to your honour knowingly.

Colonel Frank. (*sighing deeply.*) I wish I had had some such teaching ten years ago. But no ; I suppose it would have done me no good then.

Pat. Ay ; that was about the time when our young lady —

Colonel Frank. Don't speak of that ; I can't bear it.

Pat. I crave your honour's pardon ; I might have known as much. But when you talk cheerily to me, I always, somehow or other, forget myself.

Enter SIR JOHN CROFTON, and PATERSON retires.

Colonel Frank. Your servant, Sir John. You are, in the true etiquette of a lover, I see, somewhat before your time.

Sir John. Call it not so, colonel. What has made it etiquette to all, but the natural haste and ardour of real lovers ? and of my pretensions to be considered as one of the last class, I hope in good time to convince you.

Colonel Frank. Convince the lady, Sir John ; and if the conviction should please her, I must be content. I will not thwart her inclinations.

Sir John. I thank you, my dear sir, for this ready and hearty acquiescence in the first wish of my heart.

Colonel Frank. Nay ; you rate my acquiescence somewhat beyond its real worth : it is neither ready nor hearty.

Sir John. I am very sorry if my proposals to your niece do in any respect displease you, Colonel Frankland.

Colonel Frank. They do me honour, Sir John, and displease me as little as any offer of the kind could have done, with one exception ; for I will deal honestly with you,

Sir John. I respect your sincerity, though it gives me the pain of knowing there is one whom you would have preferred to me.

Colonel Frank. But it is a preference arising more from the partiality of my own feelings, than from any superior pretensions in the man.

Sir John. I thank you for this candour, and will not conceal from you that I considered Clermont as an acceptable visitor in the family, which has made me hitherto conceal the nature of my feelings for your charming niece ; but, seeing his mind become so suddenly engrossed with the blandishments of Lady Worrymore, I have thought myself at liberty to declare my secret sentiments.

Colonel Frank. Yes ; I have had some intimation

of it. (*Starting from his chair, and walking lamely but rapidly across the floor.*) Silly noodle!—foolish simpleton!—bewildered ninnyhammer! He had brains in his head once.

Sir John. They are gone a wool-gathering for the present, at least.

Colonel Frank. And will return with a knotty handful of it for their pains. O, the senseless gudgeon!

Sir John. Senseless enough, it must be owned. I should have thought —

Colonel Frank. Say no more upon this foolish subject. There is a fair field before you, Sir John: win the lass, if you can, and then I will do my part, and strive to give up my comfort as resignedly as may be.

Enter MISS FRANKLAND.

Sir John (going eagerly up to her). How fortunate I am to see you thus, on the very first conversation I have presumed to hold with your uncle on the subject nearest to my heart!

[*Taking her hand, which she endeavours to pull away.*]

Miss Frank. Your fortune, however, will be of short continuance, if my presence is concerned with it; for I only wished to see my uncle for one moment, as there is a person waiting for me, below stairs, on particular business.

Sir John. Some milliner or shop-woman, I suppose, who can as well return to-morrow.

Miss Frank. And if it were so, I have no right to waste her time, whatever I may do with my own. — Good morning.

Sir John (still endeavouring to detain her). Call it not waste. Nobody rates time so high as those who will go.

Miss Frank. And nobody rates it so low as those who will not.

Sir John. Let us compromise the difference, then. Stay here but one quarter of an hour, and I'll give you my word of honour to go at the end of it.

Miss Frank. Even that promise cannot detain me.

[*Exit hastily.*]

Colonel Frank. What did the saucy girl say to you just now, when she frowned so?

Sir John (conceitedly). Oh! young ladies' frowns are like dreams, and must be interpreted by contraries.

Colonel Frank. Not those of Fanny Frankland, however; she frowns not on man, woman, or child, without being really displeased. This looks unpromising, Sir John.

Sir John. Not a whit—not a whit, my dear colonel, I have known a man refused by a fair mistress three times in the course of one little month, and married to her at the end of it.

Colonel Frank. Then let me freely tell you, sir,

that the wooer and the wooed were, in that case, worthy of one another.

Sir John. Your irony, my good sir, is rather too severe. I don't pretend to be romantic; but in the sincerity and disinterestedness of my attachment to Miss Frankland, I hope you will do me the honour and the justice to place confidence. I now take my leave, and I hope, with your permission, to repeat my visits.

[*Exit, COLONEL FRANKLAND bowing coldly to him.*]

Colonel Frank. (alone). This won't do; no, it won't do. O that the silly fellow should have allowed himself to be bewildered with the rhapsodies of such a fool as Lady Worrymore! Surely, writing verses must have some power of intoxication in it, and can turn a sensible man into a fool by some process of mental alchemy. Thank heaven, I never had any personal experience of the matter! I once tried to turn a few common expressions of civility into two couplets of metre, to please a dainty lady withal, but it would not do: so I e'en gave it up, and kept the little portion of mother-wit that Nature had bestowed upon me uninjured.

Re-enter MISS FRANKLAND.

Art thou here again?

Miss Frank. I waited till I heard him go away.

Colonel Frank. And hast returned, with the curiosity of a very woman, to learn what he has been saying to me.

Miss Frank. Nay, the vanity of a very woman has whispered in my ear, and informed me of all that already.

Colonel Frank. And was it welcome information?

Miss Frank. Not very.

Colonel Frank. He has rank,—a fair character, as young men go in the world, and a moderately good fortune.

Miss Frank. He has those recommendations.

Colonel Frank. And is, moreover, free from the follies of poetry. What sayest thou, then, to such a suitor?

Miss Frank. As long as you are not tired of me, dear uncle, I will not give up your society for that of any other man. And I feel, my dear sir,—(*taking his hand tenderly.*)—I feel it sensibly and gratefully, that you are not tired of me yet.

Colonel Frank. Foolish child! tired of the only comfort I have on earth!

Miss Frank. Let us say no more, then, on this subject.—I came to speak to you of something else.

Colonel Frank. And I will listen to thee most willingly.

Miss Frank. (with emotion). I thank you—I am going—I would not give you pain—I should not have ventured —

Colonel Frank. What is the meaning of all these

I's, and would not's, and should not's, and pauses, and pantings?

Miss Frank. Bear with me a moment. I shall be able to speak coherently by-and-bye.

[*A pause, during which he looks earnestly in her face.*]

Colonel Frank. Well, dear Fanny, what is it?

Miss Frank. (in a hurried manner). Are you sure that your daughter left no child behind her?

Colonel Frank. Quite sure.—I am confident of it.—I have good reason to believe she did not.—Do not put racking thoughts into my head. What has tempted thee to tear open an ill-closed wound?

Miss Frank. Pardon the pain I give. A strong sense of duty compels me.—You are confident, you say, and on good reasons, that she left no child behind her.

Colonel Frank. Would not that Italian adventurer have informed a wealthy father-in-law that a child was born, and had survived its mother? Would such a plea for worldly purposes have been neglected? No, there could be no child; and, thank heaven, there was none!—What can have put such fancies into thy head?

Miss Frank. I have seen a child to-day who strongly resembles my cousin.

Colonel Frank. Thou art too young to have any distinct recollection of her face.

Miss Frank. Nay, but I have; it was so pleasant a face, and she was so good to me.

Colonel Frank. It was a pleasant face. If I could remember her as she once was, and forget what she afterwards became, it would be a recollection worth all my wealth to purchase.

Miss Frank. Should you like to see this child?

Colonel Frank. No, no, no! I could not bear it.

Miss Frank. He shall not, then, be brought to you; but I will often go and look at him myself. You will not be offended with that?

Colonel Frank. Thou wilt go often to look at him! Is the likeness then so strong?

Miss Frank. So strong, that in looking on him you would feel that Louisa, or such a woman as Louisa, must have been his mother.

Colonel Frank. Such a woman, an thou wilt.—What kind of forehead has this child?

Miss Frank. Somewhat broad and low.

Colonel Frank. And the nose?

Miss Frank. Rather short than long; and the nostrils on either side are curved so prettily, that they look like two little delicate shells.

Colonel Frank. Is it possible! This was the peculiarity in her face.

Miss Frank. You droop your head, dear uncle;—you tremble. Let me bring this child to you.

Colonel Frank. Not now,—not now.

Miss Frank. But you will, some other time.

Colonel Frank. Let me have a little respite.—To look on ought like her—like what she was—like

the creature that played round my chair—that followed me—that—Out upon thee, Fanny Frankland! thou hast stirred up vain yearnings within me, and when I see him he will not be like her after all.

Miss Frank. And if he should not be so like as you expected, will you not befriend a poor helpless child, for even a slight resemblance?

Colonel Frank. I'll do what thou desirest, be it ever so slight.

Miss Frank. Thanks, dear uncle! Retire and compose yourself awhile. Let me lead you to your own room.

[*Exeunt, he leaning on her arm.*]

SCENE II.

LADY SHREWDLY'S garden: the house seen in the side-scene.

Enter from a walk, at the bottom of the stage, LADY WORRYMORE and CLERMONT, speaking as they enter.

Lady Wor. And then, again, can any thing be more beautiful than when, looking up to Juliet's window, he exclaims,—

“Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.”

O how fine!—You are silent: don't you think so?

Cler. There are many passages in the play that I admire more.

Lady Wor. Nay, surely you admire it: positively you must. I doat upon it; and Mr. Clutterbuck says, no lover could have said any thing of his mistress so exquisitely impassioned—so finely imagined.

Cler. I believe, indeed, no lover would have said any thing like it.

Lady Wor. And again, which is, perhaps, more exquisite still,—

“Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,

As daylight doth a lamp: her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright,
That birds would sing, and think it were not night.”

Is not that impassioned? Is not that sublime?

Cler. I dare not pretend to judge of what is so honoured by your ladyship's approbation. But you have stopped short at the only lines in the whole speech that appear to me, although with some degree of conceit, to express the natural feelings of a lover.

Lady Wor. Indeed! Repeat them, I pray.

Cler. "O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!"

Lady Wor. (*in a drawing voice*). Yes, to be sure, a common lover might have said something like that.—Mr. Clutterbuck took no notice of those lines.—But, positively, you must attend his lectures: you must, indeed. You cannot adore our immortal bard as you ought, without hearing Clutterbuck.—(*Looking at her watch.*) Bless me! how time flies!—I should, ere this, have been contemplating the divine lineaments of that Madonna.—You'll go with me, I hope?

Cler. I am sorry it is not in my power; but allow me the honour of attending you to your carriage.

[*Ezcut, disappearing among the bushes, as LADY SHREWDLY and MISS FRANKLAND enter from the house*

Miss Frank. I see a lady and gentleman yonder; who are they?

Lady Shrewdly. Only Lady Worrymore and Clermont.—They left me some time ago; and her carriage waits for her at the wicket: but, I suppose they have found it agreeable to take a sentimental saunter in the shrubbery.

Miss Frank. They have become mighty intimate. Who could have thought it?

Lady Shrewdly. Vanity, as well as a city shower, occasions many strange acquaintances.

Miss Frank. But of a kind less transient. They do not part at the mouth of a shed or gateway, and meet again no more.

Lady Shrewdly. Not always; but in the present instance the resemblance will hold good, even in this respect.

Miss Frank. I fear you deceive yourself.

Lady Shrewdly. I believe I do not; but I will not be positive. You know Clermont better than I do.

Miss Frank. I thought I knew him; but I was mistaken.

Re-enter CLERMONT from the shrubbery, and bows to MISS FRANKLAND without speaking.

Lady Shrewdly. You are grave, Mr. Clermont, and I trace pondering lines upon your brow; may one know what engages your serious contemplation?

Miss Frank. The composition, perhaps, of verses for the prettily-bound album of Lady Worrymore.

Cler. A book that will not have the honour of being opened by a lady who dislikes poetry.

Miss Frank. Nay, a lady of such a character might read that book, I believe, with very little offence. But when its pages are enriched with your sonnet, Mr. Clermont, the case will no doubt be altered.

Cler. And, taking that alteration for granted, this same lady will then very willingly abstain entirely from reading it.

Miss Frank. Most willingly; she will not even distrust your pretensions so much as to examine the fact.

Cler. I believe so. Cards of invitation, billets from a gay baronet, perhaps, or letters from country relations, afford reading enough for a prudent young lady who knows so well how to keep imagination in subjection to plain common sense—Ay, that, I think, is the phrase for the paramount virtue you now so decidedly profess—plain common sense.

Lady Shrewdly. A virtue, setting professions aside, of which there is mighty little in this garden at present, excepting some little scantlings that may, perhaps, belong to myself.—A truce with all this sparring! Cannot one person like poetry and another prose, as one likes moor-fowl, and another mutton, without offence?

Cler. No, not even so, Lady Shrewdly, if the moor-fowl be cooked by one's neighbour, and the mutton by one's self.

Miss Frank. And Mr. Clermont may add, that if the morsel of one's own cooking has been honoured by the approval of an epicurean palate, it were treason to dispute its superiority.

Lady Shrewdly (*putting her hand playfully to the lips of MISS FRANKLAND*). No more of this, foolish child!—Go into the house, I beseech you, and look for my pocket-book, which I have left upon some table or other.

Miss Frank. I do your bidding willingly. [*Exit.*

Lady Shrewdly. Mr. Clermont, when young people, like yourself and Miss Frankland, quarrel together, I take no account of it; but if one can do the other any service, propose the business just as freely as if they were the best friends in the world.

Cler. Explain your meaning, Lady Shrewdly. Can I in any way be useful to Miss Frankland?

Lady Shrewdly. You can, and I engage your services on her behalf.

Cler. I thank you—I thank you most heartily.—But will she do so? Would not Sir John Crofton prove a more acceptable agent?—a more zealous one I defy him to be.

Lady Shrewdly. No, no; it is a service he would never perform: not faithfully, I'm sure, standing, as it does, opposed to his own worldly designs.

Cler. O tell me what it is, my dear madam! I will do it most gladly.

Lady Shrewdly. Go to all the resorts of low foreigners about town, and find out, if possible, the German juggler called Manhaumslet.

Cler. The father of the boy Lady Worrymore admires so much?

Lady Shrewdly. The same.

Cler. What can she possibly have to do with such a man as that?

Lady Shrewdly. What very few indeed would think of doing.

Cler. How so?—I beg pardon for questioning so closely.

Lady Shrewdly. Indeed, you need not: it will bear to be questioned. She is seeking to strip herself of fortune and all its advantages, for the sake of justice and affection.

Cler. Of justice and affection?

Lady Shrewdly. In short, she has taken it into her head, from a strong resemblance, that that boy is the son of her unfortunate cousin, who died abroad some years ago, and, consequently, the grandchild of her uncle.

Cler. Generous creature! I am sure her actions are poetry, let her taste and fancy be what they may.

Lady Shrewdly. Yes, somewhat too romantic for Sir John's present views; so that we cannot trust the business to him.

Cler. No, hang him! I'll do it myself: I'll set about it forthwith. There is not a gambling-house, sponging-house, nor night-cellar within the bills of mortality, that shall be unsearched.

Lady Shrewdly. You take it up so eagerly that I cannot doubt your diligence. Good bye, for the present: I must return into the house, and release her from searching for what she will not find.

[*Exit.*]

Cler. To foster a quarrel with me so capriciously and pettishly at such a conjuncture!—I understand her now.—She is a noble creature; but surely she might have done it less offensively.

[*Exit by the garden.*]

SCENE III.

The private closet of LORD WORRYMORE.

Enter his lordship, with papers in his hand, followed by an amanuensis.

Lord Wor. Sit down at this table, and begin your task; and take good care to copy correctly the periods, the pauses, and the notes of admiration. Eloquence is wonderfully assisted in the reading by those little auxiliaries.

Aman. I will, my lord.

Lord Wor. And when you come to any very striking expressions, be sure to draw a line under them—so (*showing him how*) that the reader may do them justice, with a correspondent emphasis and elevation of voice.

Aman. Certainly, my lord: I shall mark all such passages as your lordship may be pleased to point out.

Lord Wor. I should like you to mark also some passages of your own selecting: for an unlearned person of common capacity will be struck with real eloquence surprisingly. When the former Corn

Bill was brought into the House, and I had prepared my speech,——

Enter BLOUNT.

Blount. Your speech, my lord?

Lord Wor. Yes, Blount: I am just telling this young person here how surprisingly my own attorney was struck with some passages which I read to him from my first speech on the Corn Laws; and a man, too, who has no more taste or cultivation than a coalheaver.

Blount. I well believe it, my lord. The want of both could never disqualify him from relishing the beauties of such a production.

Lord Wor. You have read it, then?

Blount. I have heard of it. It was that effort of your genius, I understand, which helped to win the heart of Lady Worrymore.

Lord Wor. (*sighing*). Ay, it was even so: in those happier days when her high-toned mind followed freely its own dictates; ere caprice and love of change had led it astray.

Blount. Never mind; we shall bring it back again to as high tones as it ever uttered, and all upon the right string, too.

Lord Wor. And you think she will be charmed with this speech?

Blount. My life upon it, she will be charmed beyond measure.

Lord Wor. (*with affected modesty*). I think she will be reasonably pleased.

Blount. No, faith! that won't serve our purpose at all: she must be charmed to a folly.

Lord Wor. Ha! ha! ha! thou art a cunning fellow, Blount; I'll get thee promoted in the navy for this. (*Going to the writing table, and overlooking the amanuensis, who is busy writing.*) Iet me see how far you have got.—Aha! within two words of the very passage. (*Mutters to himself as he looks at the papers, and making gestures of declamation, very pompously.*)

Blount (*aside*). What is the fool about?—(*Aloud.*) Some striking flowers of oratory, my lord: one can see it by the fire of your eyes and the vehemence of your action. I am fortunate in witnessing the grace of your delivery: it is well for me to have a lesson.

Lord Wor. You shall judge, my friend! (*Lifting the manuscript from the table, and putting himself in a dignified attitude as he reads.*) "That grain which, by the hands of our own ploughmen, whistling in concert with the early lark, hath been deposited in the maternal bosom of our soil; that grain which hath waved in the gentle breezes of summer and of autumn, and fructified under the salubrious temperature of our native climate——" (*looking to him for applause.*)

Blount. Very fine indeed! Such grain as that is too good for making quartern loaves of,—to be

munched up by every dirty urchin that bawls about the streets.

Lord Wor. (chuckling with delight). No, no! my argument does not lean that way.

Blount. You do it injustice: it will lean any way.

Lord Wor. I only meant to prove that the lords of the soil should be allowed to defend the produce of their soil from competition and depreciation.—And that passage pleases you?

Blount. Pleases me! if I say, *delights* me, will you doubt of my sincerity? No, my lord; I am sure you will not.

Lord Wor. (with affected modesty). Why, I must frankly confess that I think it a tolerable specimen of parliamentary eloquence.—But here is something farther on, which has, perhaps, superior claims on your attention, if you will honour me with some portion of it.

Blount. With it all, my dear lord; can it possibly be better employed?

Lord Wor. (spreading his right arm, and assuming dignity, as before). “I am free to confess, my lords, that the fruits of the earth have been given by the bounty of Providence for the sustenance of man.”

Blount. That, the noble lords will certainly assent to; and, so far, the speech must be effective.

Lord Wor. But hear it out.—“The sustenance of man,”—mark ye now;—“the pot of the labourer; the oven of the cottager; the board of the marriage-feast, with all the fair faces surrounding it; the christening, and the merry-making; and even the sorrowful repast of those, who in the graves of their forefathers have deposited their dead;—yes, I am free to confess, my lords, that there, on such occasions, should the healthful produce of our native fields be found in abundance. But would you have the repasts of England’s valiant sons and lovely daughters drawn from foreign climes?—from fields unlike to those in which they have joyfully beheld the green blade shoot, and the poppy wave its gay head in the sun?—from fields barren to them of all dear associations and sympathies which are the nurture of the mind?—I will not wrong noble lords so much as to suppose it.”

Blount. If they can allow, after that, one penny loaf of foreign flour to thicken the potage of a drover, they deserve to be choked with it themselves.

Lord Wor. Ha! ha! ha! it amuses me to see you take it up so heartily. Well, I love you the better for it; though you do express your thoughts in your own sailor-like fashion. I thought it would strike you.—And you must do it justice, my young friend; you must read it with emphasis and all appropriate action.

Blount. Neither emphasis nor action shall be spared, depend upon it; but as to doing it justice, you know that is impossible.

Lord Wor. O! you are too flattering—too partial.

Blount. But are you sure, my lord, that Lady Worrymore has never heard any part of this speech before?—no morsel of it, dropping from your lips unguardedly?

Lord Wor. No: I have been too much offended with her of late to repeat to her one word of it. She does not even know that I have prepared a speech on the subject.

Blount. A fortunate forbearance!

Lord Wor. And I reckoned, too, that her surprise would be the greater after its success in the House; as no doubt it would, had the measure been brought forward at the time that was appointed for it.

Blount. Then all is safe.—There is a gentle knock at the door. Permit me. (*Opens the door, and enters LADY SHREWDLY, with a box in her hand.*)

Lady Shrewdly (looking round her). In busy preparation, I see.—And I, too, have been busy, and have found my way up the back staircase without meeting any body.—How do you get on?

Lord Wor. I assure your ladyship we get on famously. I think our plot sure of success. None of the finer parts of the speech are lost upon this young man. He has a native taste, though uncultivated: he will do justice to them all.

Lady Shrewdly. With the help of this wig and a proper solemnity. (*Taking a wig from the box, which she puts upon BLOUNT’S head.*) There; who but must admire the sapient countenance of the great orator Mr. O’Honikin?—And has Clermont’s sonnet been exchanged for the more precious gem of his lordship?

Blount. I have taken care of that, and it is now in Lady Worrymore’s own keeping, under promise that the sealed envelope is not to be opened till the reading hour.

Lady Shrewdly. I’m glad of it. Adieu, then, till we meet at the place of trial, and, I trust, of triumph, my lord. (*Going.*)

Lord Wor. (preventing her). Nay, you must stay just to hear him read one of his favourite passages.

Lady Shrewdly. I thank you very much; but I am in a particular hurry.

Lord Wor. Nay, nay; but a short passage, and I’ll read it myself.

Lady Shrewdly. Indeed, I am in a hurry.

Lord Wor. You must hear it. I’ll detain you but a few moments. (*Running her up to the wall, as she tries to make her escape.*)

Lady Shrewdly. Let me go, I beseech you: I hear Lady Worrymore coming.

[*Exit hastily, while he looks round in alarm.*]

Lord Wor. (listening). I hear nobody coming.

Blount. It was but a trick to get away.

Lord Wor. What a desperate haste she must be in! (*Going to the table, and seeing the amanuensis at a loss.*) Write on, my friend: what’s the matter?

Aman. There’s something wrong here.

Lord Wor. That’s impossible.

Aman. There must be a page wanting.

Lord Wor. (examining the papers.) Truly, so there is. I must have dropt it in the library.

[*Exit into the library.*]

Blount (aside, looking at the amanuensis). Silly fellow, to mention such a discovery! It would have made as good sense without the page as with it.

Lord Wor. (calling behind the scenes, from the library). Bring light here: I can see nothing.

[*Exit amanuensis, carrying a light, and BLOUNT following.*]

SCENE IV.

A narrow ante-room or hall; servants seen crossing the stage from opposite sides.

1st serv. Have you been listening, Tim? You seem mightily diverted.

2d serv. I had no occasion to listen; for I contrived business for myself, as it were, and stole quietly into the room, and saw all the company, and the oration-man busy in his vocation: and hard work it is, I'll assure you.

1st serv. Hard work! it is only words out of his mouth, is it not? A country curate would think nothing on't.

2d serv. Only words out of his mouth, say ye? Both legs and arms are at work, like any weaver busy on the treadles: and for making of mouths, and grinning and staring under the curls of that blouzing wig of his, it's impossible for me to gi' you any notion on't. I would not undertake to supply either lords or ladies wi' such a turbullion of roaring, and thumping, and winnowing of arms for a month's wages twice told. I've seen the stage doctor at Barth'lomew fair, but he is but a joke to it. Listen, man! you can hear him through the wall.

[*BLOUNT's voice heard without.*]

1st serv. (listening). Faith, so I do! And how does my lady take it?

2d serv. Ay, she has nearly as hard work in admiring him, as he has with his eloquence, as they call it. Heaven help her to a soberer way of commending folks, for her body's sake! She'll be in a fever by the evening.

1st serv. Never mind that; she's an able-bodied person enough, for all that she casts up her eyes, and smells at her bottle of salts so often. But here comes Mr. Clermont's Ned.

Enter a 3d Servant.

3d serv. Is my master here?

2d serv. Yes, but he came last of all the company: my lady inquired for him twenty times over, before he appeared.

1st serv. What kept him so long, I wonder!

3d serv. It was more wonderful that he got here at all.

1st serv. How so

3d serv. He has been in all the ragamuffin places in London, after a ragamuffin foreigner.

2d serv. And did he find him?

3d serv. No; it was all labour lost. But I have just discovered where he is certainly to be found; and if you would let me into the room for a moment, that I may whisper it in his ear, I should be greatly obliged to thee, Tim.

2d serv. Let you into the room! Not till ye gi' me a good silver sixpence, I warrant you.

3d serv. A silver sixpence, for speaking to my own master!

2d serv. Ay: and for seeing as good a show as any body ever paid half-a-crown to gape at.— List! list! he's roaring again.

[*BLOUNT's voice heard as before.*]

3d serv. Well; I must speak to my master, be the cost what it may.

2d serv. Come along, then.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

The grand library: BLOUNT is discovered standing on a platform, with a table before him and his manuscript oration in his hand, surrounded by LORD and LADY WORRYMOR, LADY SHREWDLY, MISS FRANKLAND, CLERMONT, &c. &c., while a general murmur of applause is heard, as the scene opens.

Blount (in a low voice, as if much exhausted). Pardon me for a moment.

[*Takes a glass of water from the table and drinks it slowly.*]

Lady Wor. (running about from one person to another). Was there ever any thing so eloquent?— Is it not sublime?— And you love poetry, Lady Tweedle; is it not poetical, too? A scholar like you, Mr. Clermont, must know how to appreciate its excellence.

Sir John. His learning were of little value else. Those who have studied Demosthenes and Cicero will know what to think of this, pretty accurately.

Lady Wor. I am delighted to hear you say so, Sir John. Demosthenes! Cicero! Oh, it makes my heart stir within me to hear those names pronounced! and those only who love their immortal works can do justice to the eloquence of Mr. O'Honikin.

Lord Wor. (going up to them, rubbing his hands and chuckling). And you like it, Lady Worrymore?— and you like it, Sir John?— Both very right: he's a clever fellow; both very right. What do you say, Mr. Clermont?

Cler. Every one is right to be pleased when he can.

Lady Wor. What an observation, applied to the fervour of our admiration!

Lord Wor. (laying his hand soothingly on CLER-

MONT'S arm). Don't be so grave, my dear sir : have patience—have patience : your pretty sonnet will claim its own share of admiration presently. (*Going with great complacency from one person to another.*) I hope you like him ? I hope you like the speech ? Very good ; all very clever. At least, I am told so—it does not become me to speak.

Lady Shrewdly (*aside, pulling his sleeve*). Have a care : you'll discover all with that false modesty.

Lord Wor. (*aside to LADY SREWDLY*). No, no ! I'm cunning ; I manage very well. (*Aloud.*) My Lady Worrymore, what did you think of that part about the ploughman and the lark, and the waving of the poppies ?—very fine, was it not ? No, no ! I don't mean fine, neither ; rather too fanciful.

Lady Wor. You are a cold critic, my lord. It requires a kindred spirit with the writer's to admire such exquisite imagery.

Lord Wor. Very right ; so it does, and you are akin to him, dear wife.

Lady Wor. Hush ! he has recovered, and is going to resume.

Blount (*after having sipped the water and rubbed his forehead with an affected languor, takes up his paper and proceeds*). "I have now, my lords—I mean, my honourable friends—put you in possession of the views, ideas, and opinions of a humble individual, who has cogitated on this momentous subject with a sincere, a pure, a vivid, an ardent desire to enlighten the understandings, to rouse the proper feelings, of others ; and I am free to confess, that I feel it to be my duty, humble individual as I am : I feel it to be my duty, and am free to confess, that it will give me the most unfeigned delight and satisfaction, if I have but roused one spirit to its duty—warned one bosom with the feelings which ought to be felt on such a momentous subject—loosened from the trammels of prejudice one intelligent, enlightened, and intellectual compatriot."

[*Bows affectedly, and lays down the paper, whilst a murmur of applause fills the room.*]

Lady Wor. (*to CLERMONT*). What a beautiful conclusion, Mr. Clermont ! Can one say more of it than that it is worthy of the divine passages which preceded it ?

Cler. That is exactly what I should say of it, and I am glad it will satisfy your ladyship.

Lady Wor. O that word satisfy ! I'll speak no more to you. (*Running eagerly to BLOUNT as he descends from the platform.*) O my dear Mr. O'Honikin ! you have laid us under eternal obligations. I shall now know what the ancient orators of Greece would have been, had they lived in our own times.

Sir John. And spoken upon the corn laws.

Lord Wor. (*with great pleasure and vivacity*). And you are pleased, Sir John ? And you are enchanted, Lady Worrymore ?

Lady Wor. Yes ; rather more so, I believe, than your lordship.

Lord Wor. Very right ; I find no fault with you for that, my lady ; it is right to be enchanted with a clever thing, let others feel as they may. Is it not, Miss Frankland ? Is it not, Lady Tweedle ? (*Clapping BLOUNT'S shoulder.*) O, my dear Orator ! you have done your part to admiration : you have given such expression to my thoughts.

Lady Wor. (*to BLOUNT*). What does he say ?

Blount. That I—I—his lordship does me the honour to say that I have given expression to his thoughts ; graciously insinuating, that the poor ideas I have just delivered are akin to those which he himself entertains.

Lady Wor. (*contemptuously, and in a low voice to BLOUNT*). Which are always akin to whatever he happens to hear last.

Blount. And must, in this bright metropolis, find a goodly clan of relations.

Lady Wor. And, my dear Mr. O'Honikin ! what alternations of humility and generous confidence ! The humble individual, who feels it to be his duty to rouse to action, to warm with—How did it go ?

Blount. O, dear lady, you make me blush !—To rouse to duty—warm to feeling—loosen from the trammels of prejudice my enlightened, intelligent, and intellectual compatriots. All that a humble individual like myself could possibly hope to achieve.

Lord Wor. And has he not achieved it ? has he not, my love ?

Lady Wor. (*aside*). What, is he here again !

Lady Shrewdly (*aside to LORD WORRYMORE*). Be quiet, my lord, or you'll betray the whole.

Lord Wor. (*aside to LADY SREWDLY*). Well, well ! I'm as quiet as a mouse.

Lady Shrewdly. But you forget the sonnet, Lady Worrymore, in your admiration of the speech.

Lady Wor. I beg your pardon, Mr. Clermont ; I beg a thousand pardons.

Cler. One, madam, is more than enough.

Lady Wor. (*taking a packet from her reticule*). This most prized and precious packet. (*Opening it and holding out a paper to CLERMONT.*) Pray, dear sir, do you now occupy the seat of Mr. O'Honikin, and emparadise our souls with the effusions of your divine muse.

Cler. Pardon me, madam ; myself and my verses are utterly unworthy to occupy the place of such superlative predecessors.

Lady Wor. Nay, nay ; you will read them yourself ; no one else would give them their proper expression.

Cler. Excuse me : excuse me.

Blount. And excuse me, also, for presuming to offer my husky voice for that service which Mr. Clermont too modestly declines.

Lady Wor. How delightfully obliging! but I fear it will exhaust you too much.

Lord Wor. (eagerly). Not a bit, not a bit! To it, dear Orator, and give us the sonnet, too.

Blount (receiving the paper from LADY WORRYMORE: returns to the platform, and reads affectedly as before).

SONNET TO A YOUNG LADY.

The pretty gadfly, sporting in the rays
Of Sol's bright beams, is heedless of the pain
The noble steed doth from its sting sustain.
On his arch'd neck and sleeky sides it plays,
Darting now here, now there, its pointed sting;
While he, impatient of the frequent smart,
Doth bound, and paw, and rear, and wince, and start,
And scours across the plain.—But nought doth bring
Relief to his sharp torment:—So do I,
Poor luckless wight! by Love's keen arrows gall'd,
From thee, my little pretty teaser-fly.
But, ah! in vain! there is in me no power
To shake thee off; nor art thou ever pall'd
With this thy cruel sport, in ball-room, bank, or bower.

Lady Wor. Delightful, delightful! I expected to be charmed with your sonnet, Mr. Clermont, but this outdoes all expectation.

Cler. And all patience at the same time, madam.

Lady Wor. Nay, don't let the modesty of genius suppose that we could possibly think it tedious. How delightful the lady must have been to whom that sonnet was addressed! A young lady, as the title gives notice.

Cler. The younger the better, I'm sure, for receiving such verses.

Lord Wor. What does he say? Does his modesty shrink from praise?

Cler. My lord, I can suffer this no longer: so much honour thrust upon me, to which I have no pretensions, is—

Lord Wor. (aside to CLERMONT). Come this way, and receive a private word in your ear.

Lady Shrewdly (aside to LORD WORRYMORE). Let me speak to him, my lord, and do you enjoy your secret triumph. (*Draws CLERMONT away to a corner, where she continues speaking to him in dumb show.*)

Lady Wor. Was such beautiful poetry, with such a modest poet, ever yet combined?

Sir John. He blushed deeply, indeed: and, methinks (*fixing his eyes on MISS FRANKLAND*), he has a fair friend here who sympathises with his modesty, if one may judge from the colour of her cheeks. Ah! when shall I receive such proofs of sympathy?

Miss Frank. When you blush at all, Sir John. You can scarcely expect from your friends this token of sympathy till you give them an opportunity.

Blount. Yes, our poet blushed a little, I believe, as I read his verses; he was scarcely aware of their excellence.

Lord Wor. How should he? how should he? One makes but slight account of one's own. It is a pretty thing enough in its way; but you honour it too much, perhaps. He, he, he! (*Chuckling and rubbing his hands.*) Don't you think so, Lady Tweedle? Don't you think so, Miss Fussit? Don't you think so, my love?

Lady Wor. (impatiently). You tread on my flounces, my lord. Honour such a poem too much? it is impossible! I'll have a gadfly painted on my fan and worship it.

All the ladies (MISS FRANKLAND excepted). So will I—so will we all.

Blount. And what more will you do, dear ladies, to honour your divine poet?

Lady Wor. And our divine orator too, Mr. O'Honiknik.

Lord Wor. Crown their busts with laurels, my Lady Worrymore, with your own fair hands.

Lady Wor. Charming! that is the classical tribute which my heart pants to bestow. I would not live an hour without doing it, if I had but their busts and a garland.

Lord Wor. I'll find the busts this very evening, my love, if you'll find the laurels.

Lady Wor. Thank you, my lord! How amiable it is in you to be so ready in honouring the merit of others! Let it then be so arranged, and this evening in the garden, before sunset, the tribute shall be paid; to which solemnity (*curtseying around her*) I bid you all.

Lord Wor. Bravo, my dear wife! Done like a most courteous and graceful lady. He, he, he! I thought it would please you. Did you mark the last line of it, ending thus—"Ball-room, bank, and bower?" It cost the poet some trouble, no doubt, to find such alliteration as that.

Blount. Unless it came by the Muse's inspiration, which is a convenient help for any poet, and saves the frail bark of his fancy a plaguy course of tacking. But you say nothing of the beginning of the piece, which shows such richness of expression:

"The pretty gadfly, sporting in the rays
Of Sol's bright beams"—

steeping, as it were, the brightness of the sun in his own brightness. This is what may be called supererogation or opulence of language.

Lady Wor. So it is: a most ingenious and judicious remark.

Lord Wor. You are a clever fellow, O'Honiknik.

Sir John. As good a critic as an orator.

Enter a Servant, announcing something in dumb show.

Lord Wor. Ay, there is some little refreshment, I suppose, in the next room. Pray do us the honour. (*Offering his arm to a lady.*) [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

COLONEL FRANKLAND'S house.

Enter Miss FRANKLAND, with a scarf or shawl on her shoulders, as if going out, meeting BARBARA, who enters by the opposite side.

Bar. Sir John Crofton is below, madam.

Miss Frank. And have you not told him that I am going out.

Bar. I did so, my dear lady; but what use is there in denying you to a gentleman who says he will return an hour hence, or an hour after that, or an hour after that again, should it be more convenient to you?

Miss Frank. Does he request to be admitted so earnestly?

Bar. Yes, indeed; and his requests are like the sails of a windmill, always returning.

Miss Frank. Very likely, Barbara, when there is breeze enough to swell them.

Bar. How so, madam?

Miss Frank. You smile on him when he comes, perhaps, as if you would say, "My mistress is going out, but I know she will be pleased to see you, Sir John."

Bar. Indeed, indeed, I did not, madam; and for any little presents he has given—I mean offered me, I scorn them as much as any body. But, I must needs own, madam, that I likes to see a genteel titled gentleman enter the house, who speaks to a poor servant cheerily, better than a grave stately Mr. Thingumy, who passes one as if one were the door-post.

Miss Frank. Don't be so discomposed, Barbara; I beg pardon if my suspicions wrong you. Be this as it may, I believe you wish me well.

Bar. Ay, that I do; I wish you well, and rich, and every thing that is good. And lady sounds better than mistress at any rate. I little thought, after serving you almost twenty years as dry-nurse, school-nurse, and own maid, to be but the attendant of a plain gentlewoman at last.

Miss Frank. (*laughing.*) For thy sake, then, I had better look out for a peer. However, since it must be, desire Sir John Crofton to come up stairs. (*Exit BARBARA.*) It is an unpleasant moment, and I shrink from it, but the sooner it is over the better.

Ay, and to settle the matter with a good grace for him, and without mortification to myself, it must be done quickly.

Enter SIR JOHN CROFTON.

Sir John. I thank you, Miss Frankland, for this condescension: five minutes of your company is precious when one cannot obtain more. But are you, indeed, obliged to go out?

Miss Frank. I really have business which obliges me to go.

Sir John. And I have business (pardon me for calling it by that name) which requires you to stay. Will you honour me so far? (*Setting chairs and sitting down by her.*) Miss Frankland, there are situations which must plead a man's excuse for abruptness—for precipitancy—for—for—in short, you understand me. I see by the glance of her eye, that Miss Frankland understands me to be in the most awkward situation that a man of feeling can be placed in.

Miss Frank. And is it on that account the more likely to embarrass Sir John Crofton?

Sir John. That sarcastic question does me the greatest injustice. (*Laying his hand on his heart.*) Could you read the real sentiments which are here embosomed, you would know how ardent, how disinterested, how unalterable is that attachment to your cruel self which you seem so inclined to sport with.

Miss Frank. In that case I should certainly know it, and regulate my gratitude accordingly.

Sir John. What frigid formal words may come from the fairest lips on the most interesting subjects! Gratitude! Oh, Miss Frankland! you know that it is something far more precious than gratitude which I would gladly earn from you by the whole affections of my heart, the whole devotion of my life and of my fortune.

Miss Frank. And if I can give you no more, your suit of course is at an end, and free to be preferred in some more worthy and favourable quarter.

Sir John. O, do not say so! a more favourable, I painfully feel, may be easily found; a more worthy, never.

Miss Frank. You set upon me an imaginary value.

Sir John. Call it not so: I repeat my words; and permit me to add, adorable girl, that where worth is, favour deserves to be waited for. Say, that in a fortnight hence, I may have some chance of subduing your reluctance.

Miss Frank. (*shaking her head.*) I cannot.

Sir John. In a month, then?

Miss Frank. (*as before.*) That would make no difference.

Sir John. Say two months, then—six months; ay, a whole year, if you can be so cruel as to with-

hold your consent to make me happy for so long a period.

Miss Frank. That is a cruelty I shall never be guilty of.

Sir John. You delight, you transport me! on my knees I thank you, most bewitching of creatures!

Miss Frank. Rise up, Sir John, and waste no thanks on so small an obligation; but hear me out. Withholding my consent is a cruelty, as you are pleased to call it, of which I shall never be guilty, since what will never be given, cannot be said to be withheld for any period.

Sir John (rising from his knees angrily). Upon my honour, Miss Frankland, you are a practised angler, a very practised angler, no doubt; but do not think to hook a trout with bait that suits a gudgeon.

Miss Frank. You are angry, Sir John, and that admonishes me that I should be plain—that I should be honest.

Sir John. Ay, very honest, no doubt. (*Going hastily away, and returning.*) Nay, nay, nay! I am not angry; and you shall be as honest as you will, but kind at the same time.

Miss Frank. As you understand the word *kind*, the two are incompatible.

Sir John. And how does Miss Frankland understand it, pray?

Miss Frank. That to put a speedy end to all suspense, even by a flat refusal, is kind in every thing that regards the affections; if I am not too presumptuous in supposing the present proposal to be a case of that nature.

Sir John. Faith, it is at least one of an extraordinary nature, and may excuse all concerned with it from the common rules of ceremony and etiquette. (*Crossing the floor, then returning with a conceited smile.*) Pardon me, Miss Frankland; I feel myself still at liberty to watch for some more propitious moment.

Miss Frank. Your patience will be tired out ere you find it; and so will the patience of my friend (*looking at her watch*), whom I promised to meet nearly half an hour ago.

[*Curtseying to SIR JOHN, who retires tardily, and lays his hand on his heart as he disappears.*]

Miss Frank. (alone). O self-conceit, self-conceit! how is the most downright person in the world, restrained by the common rules of society, to deal with thee? And if thou art the cause of perseverance, what shall we say of the high-lauded virtue of constancy?

Enter LADY SHREWDLY.

Lady Shrewdly. Is it possible, Fanny Frankland? I could not have believed it.

Miss Frank. What is it that so thwarts your belief?

Lady Shrewdly. That you should encourage the addresses of Sir John Crofton, because Clermont

for a season was cajoled by the affected ardour of Lady Worrymore. You might have seen very well that he was ashamed of his sonnet, and enjoyed not the praises she lavished on it.

Miss Frank. And what puts it into your head that I have encouraged his addresses?

Lady Shrewdly. I met him just now on the stairs, smiling to himself very knowingly, and when I asked him, with a significant look, how affairs prospered with him here, his answer was a nod of complacency, which wanted no words of explanation.

Miss Frank. I have given him as decided a refusal as my knowledge of civil language could provide me with.

Lady Shrewdly. My poor simple creature! what dictionary in the world will furnish language sufficiently explicit to make a vain puppy understand that a woman will not have him? I should have understood his foolish smile better; pardon me, dear child.

Miss Frank. But it does not signify; he will understand it distinctly enough to-morrow without a dictionary's help, for I am convinced that our little boy is the son of poor Louisa.

Lady Shrewdly. We shall know that soon, for the German will be here to answer the questions of your uncle in a quarter of an hour. Clermont was indefatigable in finding him out.

Miss Frank. Was he?

Lady Shrewdly. Yes, he was; and why do you say this so languidly?

Miss Frank. To speak sincerely, then, I but half like his eagerness in helping to make me a poor woman.

Lady Shrewdly. Fy, fy, Fanny Frankland! your heart is an unfit place for unworthy thoughts to harbour in.

Miss Frank. They sometimes harbour in better hearts than mine.

Lady Shrewdly. Ay, they are subtle imps, that for a moment will find shelter anywhere; but they are quickly turned adrift, and have rest and entertainment only with the unworthy.

Miss Frank. I thank you! I thank you most gratefully, my dear Lady Shrewdly, for this friendly correction; I cast the base thought from my breast. I have given him cause by my petulance to suppose that I am not a fit companion for him, and therefore every thing particular between us is justly at an end. Why should I suppose that he has served me on this occasion from any but amiable motives?

Lady Shrewdly. Indeed you ought not to suppose it.

Miss Frank. Alas, my dear friend!

Lady Shrewdly. Why that sigh?

Miss Frank. Do you know that I am afraid of myself?

Lady Shrewdly. And why, dear child; of what are you afraid?

Miss Frank. I fear that, when I am comparatively poor, I shall not bear the neglect of the world and my own insignificance as I ought.

Lady Shrewdly. Nay, that very fear is a voice from heaven for thy preservation.

Miss Frank. May it prove so! I feel I shall be supported in doing what is right; and feeling what is right may at length follow (*raising her eyes to heaven*), if my humble sacrifice be accepted.

Lady Shrewdly. And it will be accepted, my own honest girl! But you were going out, I know, and I will not detain you: pray permit me to get into the carriage with you, that I may enjoy your company the longer.

Miss Frank. You are very kind.

[*Ezeunt arm-in-arm.*]

SCENE II.

COLONEL FRANKLAND'S apartment.

Enter PATERSON with books, which he lays upon a table, and then wheels his master's easy chair to its proper place.

Pat. (alone). Ay, this here book of maps has a long rest in the old bookcase; I wonder what campaigns and battles he has got into his head now. Howsomever, it signifies little, so as they can keep his notions of his *own constitution*, as he calls it, and ill-formed gout and affection of the kidneys, and heaven knows what! out of it.

Enter COLONEL FRANKLAND, leaning on his stick.

Colonel Frank. (after seating himself, and looking at his hand). I think this stiffness in my joints must be somehow connected with this uneasy feeling in my back: dost thou not think so, Paterson? yet the doctor says it is not.

Pat. And should not he know best, sir? Heaven bless your honour! my joints are stiff, as most old men's are; and my back aches often enough, but I never think of asking the doctor about it. Take a musket in your hand and pace about the gallery a bit, and I'll warrant your back will get better.

Colonel Frank. Thou'rt a rough physician, Paterson.

Pat. But a kind one, your honour, and that is more than can be said of some that are smoother.

Colonel Frank. Well, well; there's no changing thy nature, and I must e'en receive such sympathy as thou hast to give.

Enter Servant.

Serv. The German foreigner is come, sir, that you wished to see. Miss Frankland desired me to tell you.

Colonel Frank. Let him come to me here.

Serv. And the little master too, sir?

Colonel Frank. (agitated). No, no! let him come by himself; Miss Frankland will look to the child. (*Exit servant.*) Hast thou any notion, Paterson, what this outlandish fellow has been sent for?

Pat. I have a kind of notion, I know not how, about it. Does your honour wish me to leave the room?

Colonel Frank. Stay where thou art; I would rather have thee by me.

Enter MANHAUNSLET.

(*To MANHAUNSLET.*) You are a foreigner, I understand, and have brought a little boy with you to this country.

Man. Yes, hon'rab'le sur.

Colonel Frank. Is he your own son!

Man. He be good as son to me.

Colonel Frank. That is no direct answer. Tell me the honest truth, and, whatever it may be, I will reward thee for it. And if you say what is false, I am not such a dunderhead but I shall find it out.

Pat. Ay; his honour will find you out, so you had better speak the plain truth at once.

Colonel Frank. The boy, then, is not your own son; is he your relation?

Man. Do not know.

Colonel Frank. Whose son is he?

Man. Do not know.

Colonel Frank. Where was he born?

Man. Do not know.

Colonel Frank. How did he fall into your hands? Answer me plainly; don't hesitate.

Pat. Nay, your honour; he'll say "do not know" to that too. Just let him tell his story after his own fashion, and pick the truth out of it the best way you can. If it does not hang together, you can question him afterwards.

Colonel Frank. I believe thou art right, Paterson. Tell me your story your own way, my friend. I have a curiosity to know how you came by the child, and I will pay you handsomely for satisfying it. And you need not be afraid of my taking the boy from you, till I have made you willing to part with him.

Man. Der be eight years ago, dat I passed trou de small town in Bohemia, in de night. When in one moment de large inn house burst into flame, and somebody wiv two long arms trowed de child out from window, which I did catch in my gaberdine.

Colonel Frank. And did you not learn what strangers were in the inn, and to whom he belonged?

Man. One poor gentleman, who was taken ill in de house, and died of illness and of de burnings on dat night.

Colonel Frank. What countryman was he?

Man. Do not know.

Colonel Frank. What papers, clothes, or goods did he leave behind him?

Man. All turned to cinder.

Colonel Frank. What clothes had the child upon him, when you caught him in your gabardine?

Man. One littel shirt.

Pat. Had it any letters marked upon it?

Man. No.

Pat. Where is that shirt now?

Man. It lie wid many oder rags to manure de cornfields of Bohemia.

Colonel Frank. And this is all you have to tell us of the boy?

Man. Not all.

Colonel Frank. Tell me the rest, then, quickly.

Man. Dere be no better boy for de tight rope, and de tumbling, and de jugglery, in all de worl: and he never telled no lie—no, not at all.

Colonel Frank. Hang the tight rope and the jugglery! Thou hast given him a notable education, no doubt; and a fine varlet he will be to receive into any family. So you have nothing more to tell me about the child?

Man. Notting more.

Colonel Frank. What a romantic visionary track that dear girl has pursued! Call her in, Paterson; I'll see the poor child now with more composure. (*Exit PATERSON.*) He is profitable to you, I suppose?

Man. He earn money for me; he is my living.

Colonel Frank. I understand you, friend, and have no wish to do you any wrong.

Enter MISS FRANKLAND, leading HUGHO, and followed by MRS. BROWN and PATERSON.

Miss Frank. (*advancing to her uncle with HUGHO.*) See, my dear uncle.

Colonel Frank. (*starting from his seat.*) Very like; ay, very like, indeed. Look up, my pretty child; look in my face steadily.—Would I could certainly know who was thy mother!—(*Turns away from him, and then returns and looks at him again.*)—Be whose child thou may, thou art a creature worth cherishing. Give me thy hand. (*Takes his hand and examines it.*) The very form of her fingers and nails; they were particular. (*Staggers back and sinks again into his chair, quite overcome.*)

Miss Frank. My dear uncle, bear up cheerily. You see I have brought you what was well worth the bringing.

Colonel Frank. Thou hast indeed, dear Fanny; and for thy sake, were the resemblance less, he shall live as a child in my family, and be taken from his present way of life.

Miss Frank. I thank you, dear uncle.

Colonel Frank. We have no reasonable proof of his parentage.

Miss Frank. I know not what you have learnt from Mr. Manhaunslet; but if this statement from the Genoese ambassador, in answer to the queries of Clermont, agree with it, you will have something of evidence to rest on. [*Offering him a paper.*]

Colonel Frank. Read it thyself; I cannot—no, don't read it; tell me the substance of it; that will suffice.

Miss Frank. It says that Madame Martoni became the mother of a boy a few weeks before her death, and that Martoni, with the child, left Italy the year after to go into Bohemia, but from that time was never heard of more.

Colonel Frank. (*catching HUGHO in his arms and kissing him.*) If thou art her boy—if thou art, indeed.—O, that I were assured of it!

Miss Frank. Mrs. Brown, you said something about a gold heart that you took from his neck.

Mrs. Brown. Yes, madam, I put it up when he was sick, for I thought Lady Worrymore would lay her hands upon it.—Here it is. (*Giving a locket to MISS FRANKLAND, who shows it to the colonel.*)

Miss Frank. Do you know it, sir?

Colonel Frank. (*shaking his head.*) I do not. (*To MANHAUNSLLET.*) Was it on the child when you first found him?

Man. It was rount his neck. It is ornament dat our women and oder countries' women do wear; de are sold in Italian and German fairs not greatly dear.

Colonel Frank. It must be hollow; does it open?

Man. Not open.

Pat. Let me look; perhaps it does; (*turning it round.*) This little ornament may be a spring. (*Presses and opens it.*)

Colonel Frank. (*eagerly.*) Hast thou found any thing?

Pat. A small bit of paper enclosing this lock of hair. There, your honour.

Colonel Frank. (*taking the paper from PATERSON, and reading.*) "A lock of my father's hair." It is written in her own small hand, and this is the very lock which she cut from my head when—Oh, oh! and she loved me to the last, though she wounded me so grievously! (*Embraces HUGHO again and again, then crosses the room hastily.*) Come to my room presently, Fanny, and bring the boy with thee. [*Exit.*]

Man. Ha, Master Hugh! you be one gentleman now.

Mrs. Brown. And right glad to leave you, I think.

Hugh. No, Dame Brown; he fed, he clothed me, and did beat me very seldom.

Mrs. Brown. Except when the monkey and you quarrelled, and then he always took part with that odious brute.

Miss Frank. Say no more of this, good Mrs. Brown: let every thing unpleasant be forgotten.

Colonel Frankland will settle every thing to your satisfaction. (*To PATERSON.*) Lead them to the housekeeper's room, and take good care of them both.

[*As PATERSON is leading them away, HUGHO runs to them, kisses MRS. BROWN'S hand, and gives his hand kindly to MANHAUNSLER.*]

Hugho. See you bote again : see you often, and glad of it.

Miss Frank. That is right, *Hugho.* And now you must come with me, and be a good child to your old grandfather.

Hugho. And good boy to you always : to love you, and bide wid you, and do all your bidding. O ! I will tumble, and juggle, and sing to you all day long, if you will. (*Wrapping himself fondly in the skirt of her gown, and clinging to her as they go off.*) [*Ezcut.*]

SCENE III.

LORD WORRYMORE'S garden. Two busts, covered with linen, in the background, and company assembled, amongst whom are discovered LORD WORRYMORE, LADY SHREWDLY, &c. &c.

Lord Wor. (*to servants.*) Move the busts this way ; this is the best possible spot for them. (*Servants move the busts on their pedestals to the front of the stage.*) She will be here in a moment. But where is Blount ?

[*Retires amongst the crowd at the bottom of the stage, whilst LADY SHREWDLY and SIR JOHN CROFTON come forward.*]

Sir John. So the fair lady has unseated herself with her own busy hands, and torn from her own brow all the grace and honours of an heiress.

Lady Shrewdly. It has indeed been her own doing.

Sir John. And a very foolish one, too : the age of romance has been long passed.

Lady Shrewdly. And will not be revived, I perceive, by *Sir John Crofton.*

Sir John. No, faith ! the world, as it stands, is good enough for me.

Lady Shrewdly. I have the honour to agree with you entirely upon that point.

Sir John. Find out a puny urchin to disinherit herself !—I have made a very narrow—I mean, any one who has thought of offering to her, has had a narrow escape.

Lady Shrewdly. And if it be honourable, as well as narrow, you have reason to be pleased.

Sir John. Did she know of this brat and his birthrights this morning when I saw her ?

Lady Shrewdly. She suspected it then ; and the expression you wore on your face, as I passed you on the stair, of a favoured lover, showed me plainly enough that you did not.

Sir John. Nay, *Lady Shrewdly* ; you mistook that expression.

Lady Shrewdly. I should have understood it to mean, then, that you were not favoured.

Sir John. When it is necessary that *Lady Shrewdly* should be informed of my private affairs, I shall have the honour to answer her queries.

Lady Shrewdly. And when such information can reflect any credit upon *Sir John Crofton*, I presume he will deem it necessary.

Enter BLOUNT.

Ha ! *Blount* come at last : and not far behind comes *Colonel Frankland* and his niece.

Enter COLONEL FRANKLAND, leaning on CLERMONT and MISS FRANKLAND ; and SIR JOHN CROFTON, making them a distant bow, retires to the bottom of the stage.

Colonel Frank. I thank thee, *Clermont* : thy arm makes a good support for an old man.

Cler. And is one always at your service, my dear sir.

Colonel Frank. I thank thee, my good fellow. Thou art as kind as ever, and as simple, too, methinks ; but how comes it that thy bust, as they tell me, is to be crowned with laurel for that sonnet of thine, which *Fanny*, to say the honest truth, has not praised much.

Lord Wor. (*now advancing to the front, and over-hearing them.*) How so ? Not praised much ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! maiden prudery : just as it should be.

Colonel Frank. It may be so ; but she generally speaks as she thinks.

Lord Wor. Not praised it much ! What faults does she find with it ?

Colonel Frank. There was something at the beginning, I forget what, that she said was very bad ; and all that ball-room, bank, and bower business in the last line, she thinks is but wordy and cumbersome.

Lord Wor. Pooh ! pooh ! pooh ! all maiden prudery, colonel. She will not—she will not be pleased with the poetry of a young fellow.

Colonel Frank. It may be so : and how comes he to have his bust made out so cleverly ? To write rhymes one day, and be crowned for it the next, is marching quick-step time on the route of reputation.

Enter LADY WORRYMORE, followed by her maid, carrying a basket with two laurel wreaths.

But here comes the *Lady Paramount*, and *Bestower of Reputation*, who should be painted with a trumpet in her mouth, like my *Lady Fame*.

Lord Wor. And so she ought. When her mind is unwarped by prejudice, nobody knows so well where praise is due.

Lady Wor. (looking round on the company, and bowing graciously). Most punctually assembled, and most welcome! I thank you all, and beg your pardon for being so long in joining such friends; but, in truth, I could not be satisfied with the wreaths, which have been platted and unplatted, I don't know how often. And see there (*pointing to the basket*); they are not yet what I could wish. Laurels for this sublime circlet should have been fresher and brighter than our poor English climate did ever produce;—the myrtles for the other culled in the valley of Vaucluse itself. Indeed they are not worthy of their high destination.

Lord Wor. But from your fair hands, my lady, is there either orator or poet who would not prize a garland of the simplest herbs?

Blount. Yes, saintfoin, buttercups, or any thing.

Lady Wor. Oh, Mr. O'Honikin! could any one but yourself, undervaluing your own excellence, have talked of this touching solemnity! O dear! what shall I say? My heart pants within me! Tears are forcing their way into my eyes! (*Laying one hand on her breast affectedly, and the other on her eyes.*)

Blount (*aside to LADY SHREWDLY*). Forced work, indeed, I believe.

Lord Wor. (*to LADY SHREWDLY*). She is really touched. This is very amiable, my dear cousin.

Lady Shrewdly. Assuredly, my lord, she has a true feeling of the honours belonging to genius.

Lady Wor. You are right, my dear Lady Shrewdly! you understand me. Oh! did ever creature feel it so sensibly as I do! The very word *genius* sometimes makes me weep. (*Putting her handkerchief to her eyes affectedly.*)

Lord Wor. Well, my dear wife, it is very affecting; it almost brings tears into my own eyes. (*Running from one person to another.*) Is it not so? Is it not very affecting?—Could almost cry myself.—Don't you feel it?—But come, my dear love! you delay the ceremony.

Lady Wor. It shall be delayed no longer.—Happy moment! sublime point of time! (*Taking a wreath from the basket.*) Thus, by an unworthy hand, is crowned the bust of personified Eloquence.

Blount (*to MISS FRANKLAND*). Unveil that bust, fair lady: nothing but the hand of beauty, I suppose, must take part in such ministry.

[*MISS FRANKLAND removes the veil from one of the busts, as LADY WORRYMORE raises the garland to crown it, but starts back, uttering a faint cry, on perceiving it to be the bust of her lord.*

Lady Wor. There is some mistake here. What a stupid blunder to bring this bust here, instead of the right one!

Lord Wor. Ha! ha! ha! it is the right one, dear lady! it is the right one.

Lady Wor. Do you think to persuade me, my lord, that is not the very bust which was taken of yourself six months ago, by Mr. Thumbit?

Blount. And is not the bust taken of his lordship six months ago very fit to receive the honour earned by a speech written by him, probably about the same period?

Lady Wor. Fie! fie! Mr. O'Honikin! to attempt to deceive me, and wrong yourself; to pluck the eagle's feathers from your own outstretched wings, to stick them in the pinions of a—

Blount. Indeed, madam, that very eloquent speech which I had the honour of reading to your ladyship and this good company, is no more my own than this wig (*taking off the wig*), which I owe to the bounty of Lady Shrewdly.

Lady Wor. (*staring at him*). Frank Blount of Herefordshire?

Blount. The same, and your very humble servant.

Lady Wor. You were always full of nonsense and tricks; but this is past endurance.

Blount. My dear madam! cannot you endure that the eloquence you have so ardently admired should belong to your own accomplished lord;—should be the produce, as one may say, of your own flesh and blood?

Lord Wor. Yes, my dear life! you must pardon both him and me: for, had you known the speech to be of my composition, you would not have done it justice I fear. Don't pout so, my dear! (*in a soothing voice*) nay, don't pout. I like you for admiring what is good, let the author of it be who he may. He! he! he! he! he!

Blount. And because the orator has received his due, must the poet go unhonoured? Mr. Clermont there is waiting to see his bust crowned with its garland also; and as there is no wig on his head, your ladyship cannot be deceived in that quarter.

Lord Wor. And ladies, you know, my love, are reckoned better judges of poetry than speeches; though the present company, I believe, will reckon you rather a capricious, than a bad judge of either.

Lady Wor. (*holding her head to one side, and assuming an air of diffidence*). I feel,—what I ought to have acknowledged before,—that the tremor of my nerves has rendered me quite unfit, for the last twelve hours—O, much longer!—to judge of any thing. It is better for me to take care of my own fragile frame, than to concern myself with what is, perhaps, beyond the power of my poor capacity.

Blount. Why, your ladyship's capacity never showed itself more undoubtedly than on the present interesting occasion. Had you praised the speech which I had the honour of reading, as the composition of Lord Worrymore, the partiality of a wife might have been suspected.

Lord Wor. Very true, he! he! he! Well urged, Blount. And now, Mr. Clermont, come nearer to

us, and witness the honour conferred on the writer of the sonnet. My dear love! where is the other wreath?

Blount (following LADY WORRYMORE, as she turns away moodily). Nay, my lady, don't let the writer of that beautiful sonnet be curtailed of his honours, because of my delinquency. It were an insult to the whole nine Muses to send poetry away uncrowned, when prose has been so nobly rewarded.

Cler. Pray, don't urge it. Her ladyship, perhaps, thinks such poetry unworthy to be ranked with such prose; and we ought not to—

Lady Wor. By no means, Mr. Clermont; by no means. The merit of that beautiful sonnet cannot be affected in my estimation by any adventitious circumstances.

Lord Wor. That's right, Lady Worrymore; let every thing rest on its own merit, he! he! he! That is the golden rule to go by.

Blount (as before). Now do you unveil that bust, Miss Frankland. Ha! you retire behind backs, and won't do it.—I'll do it myself, then, though I be but an unseemly minister in such elegancies. (*Gives LADY WORRYMORE the wreath, and then, as she is raising it, uncovers the other bust of her lord.*) Put it on; put it on, my lady. This is also the bust of the real poet who penned that delectable sonnet, and must not be defrauded of its due.

Lady Wor. (dashing the wreath in his face). I can bear such provoking insults no longer.

Blount. Devil take it! You have scratched my face with your twigs.

Lady Wor. I wish they had all been thorn and Bramble for your sake. (*Turns away indignantly.*)

Lady Shrewdly (following her soothingly). My dear Lady Worrymore! how can you take it so much to heart?

Lady Wor. And you too, madam, have been in the plot against me. A very becoming occupation for a neighbour and a friend!

Lady Shrewdly. My dear madam! was it possible for us to suppose that we prepared for you any other than an agreeable surprise? You won the heart and hand of your dear lord by sensibility to his merit; and has that merit become less dear to you, when the glory derived from it is reflected upon yourself?

Lord Wor. (following LADY SHREWDLY and LADY WORRYMORE). Ay, very sensible; very well put, my good cousin. The glory is reflected on herself, and she casts it from her, like a spoiled child who likes every urchin's playthings better than his own. Come, come, dear life; you did think that sonnet a clever thing, and you do think it, I know you do.

Lady Wor. Keep that knowledge to yourself, then, my lord; it will but make us both very absurd.

Lord Wor. Nay, nay, nay!

[*Following her to the bottom of the stage, speaking to her in dumb show till they disappear amongst the company there.*]

Cler. (advancing to MISS FRANKLAND, who is now returned to the front). You did not appear very sorry for my disappointment.

Miss Frank. It cost me few tears, I confess. And you take it composedly, too, considering how much enthusiastic admiration you have been deprived of at one stroke. But was there not really a sonnet of your writing sent to Lady Worrymore?

Cler. I blush to say there was. But Blount's waggery has proved my friend. He gave her that written by her own husband in its stead.

Miss Frank. And what has become of it?

Cler. It is burnt, gentle friend, and shall disturb you no more.

Miss Frank. And of what importance can it now be, whether I am disturbed by it or not?

Cler. Of more importance than ever; since your good opinion is more necessary to my happiness than it has ever been before. I know the generosity of your feelings, which has stirred up a quarrel between us, that I might on your change of circumstances feel myself a free man, without reproach or censure. But you will not find it so easy to get rid of me, dear Fanny, as of your fortune.

Colonel Frank. (who has been listening behind backs). And who says she has got rid of her fortune?

Cler. I beg pardon, Colonel Frankland, for alluding to such matters; but you have now found an heir in your own descendant, and it is natural that it should be so.

Colonel Frank. And I'll wager a crown, now, you both wish to have it so, that you may make a romantic match of it, and live on that bare estate on the mountains of Cumberland. But I hate romance; and unless you make up your mind have her with the half of my moveable property as her dowry, you shall not have her at all.

Cler. My dear sir, the boy is your grandchild.

Colonel Frank. And if he were so ten times over, shall I ever suffer a little imp like him to be dearer to me than this generous girl? (*Putting their hands together.*) Now, keep ye good friends, and quarrel no more. And—but a truce to good advice at present; for here are our two bubbles of vanity returned again, inflated still with air enough to keep them buoyant on the whirlpool of vanity for months or years to come.

[*LORD WORRYMORE and his lady, hand-in-hand, advancing from the bottom of the stage.*]

Lord Wor. Give me joy, give me joy, my friends! Lady Worrymore has pardoned our frolic; and I believe there is nobody here, who

will think less favourably of her taste and her judgment for the mistakes of this day.

Lady Shrewdly. Assuredly not. A wife who has taste and capacity enough to admire the talents and genius of her own husband, is most happily endowed.

Lord Wor. Well said; he—he—he! very happily endowed. (*To LADY WORRYMORE.*) Don't you think so, my love?

Lady Wor. (*gravely and demurely.*) I suppose she will be reckoned so. [*Scene closes.*]

WITCHCRAFT:

A TRAGEDY IN PROSE, IN FIVE ACTS.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

ROBERT KENNEDY OF DUNGARREN (*commonly called DUNGARREN*).

MURREY.

RUTHERFORD, *minister of the parish.*

FATHERINGHAM, *friend of MURREY.*

The Sheriff of Renfrewshire.

The Baillie or Magistrate of Paisley.

BLACK BAWLDY, *the herdboy of DUNGARREN.*

ANDERSON, *the principal domestic of DUNGARREN.*

WILKIN, *an idiot.*

Crowd, gaoler, landlord, &c.

WOMEN.

LADY DUNGARREN (*commonly so called*), *mother of*

ROBERT KENNEDY.

VIOLET, *daughter of MURREY.*

ANNABELLA, *the rich relation of LADY DUNGARREN.*

GRIZELD BANE,

MARY MACMURREN, } *reputed witches.*

ELSPY LOW,

PHEMY, *maid to ANNABELLA.*

Nurse, maidservants, crowd, &c.

Scene in Renfrewshire, in Scotland.

* The subject of this drama was first suggested to me by reading that very curious and original scene in the "Bride of Lammermuir," when the old women, after the division of largess given at a funeral, are so dissatisfied with their share of it, and wonder that the devil, who helps other wicked people willing to serve him, has never bestowed any power or benefits upon them. It appeared to me that the gifted author had come within one step of accounting for a very extraordinary circumstance, frequently recorded in trials for the crime of witchcraft,—the accused themselves acknowledging the crime, and their having had actual intercourse with Satan and other wicked spirits. This was a confession that was sure to be followed by a cruel death, and the conjectures produced to account for it have never been satisfactory. It has been supposed that, previously to their trial, from cruel treatment and misery of every kind, they desired to have an end put to their wretched existence, even at the stake. But this is surely not very probable; for, if a fair trial by unprejudiced judges acquitted them of the crime,—a circumstance not likely to happen,—it was still in their power to get rid of life in the first river or pond deep enough to drown them, or by some other means less dreadful than fire and faggot. Neither can it be supposed that such confessions, at least all of them, were made in a state of delirium. It is more reasonable to suppose that some of those unhappy creatures, from the state of their minds, and from real circumstances

leading to it, actually did believe themselves to have had intercourse with the Evil One, consequently to be witches; and the design of the play is to illustrate this curious condition of nature. Soon after the publication of that powerful and pathetic novel, I mentioned my thoughts upon the subject to Sir W. Scott, and urged him to pursue the new path he had just entered into. That I was unsuccessful in my suit, and failed to persuade him to undertake the subject, all his warm admirers—and who are not?—must regret,—a regret that will not be diminished by the perusal of the Tragedy on Witchcraft. The language made use of, both as regards the lower and higher characters, is pretty nearly that which prevailed in the West of Scotland about the period assigned to the event, or at least soon after it; and that the principal witch spoke differently from the other two, is rendered probable from her being a stranger, and her rank in life unknown. Even in those days the well-educated classes were distinguished from their neighbours on the south side of the Tweed, by their accent and pronunciation, rather than any actual difference of words.

The story is entirely imaginary, one circumstance excepted, viz. the piece rent from the gown of the supposed witch, produced in court as a proof that she had actually been present, though invisible, in the chamber of the tormented patient,—a real circumstance, mentioned, I believe, in one of the trials for witchcraft, though I forget where.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A parlour in the house or tower of DUNGARREN.

Enter LADY DUNGARREN and ANNABELLA, by different sides.

Anna. You must be surprised, my dear cousin, at my unexpected return.

Lady Dun. I will frankly confess that I am. How did you find your friends in Glenrowan?

Anna. With their house full of disagreeable visitors and discomfort: another day of it would have cast me into a fever; so I will trespass on your hospitality a week longer, knowing how kindly disposed you have always been to the child of your early friend.

Lady Dun. It would be strange, indeed, if the daughter of Duncan Gordon were not welcome here.

Anna. How has poor Jessie been since I left you?

Lady Dun. (*shaking her head.*) I have but a sorrowful account to give of her.

Anna. Had she any rest last night? Does she look as wildly as she did? Were any strange noises heard in the chamber during the night?

Lady Dun. Ay; noises that made me start and tremble, and feel a horrid consciousness that some being or other was in the room near me, though to the natural eye invisible.

Anna. What kind of sounds were they? Why did you think they were so near you?

Lady Dun. I was sitting by the table, with my head resting on my hand, when the door leading from the back staircase, which I am certain I had bolted in the evening, burst open.

Anna. And what followed?

Lady Dun. I verily thought to see some elrich form or other make its appearance, and I sat for some moments riveted to my chair, without power to move hand or foot, or almost to breathe.

Anna. Yet you saw nothing?

Lady Dun. Nothing.

Anna. And heard only the bursting of the door?

Lady Dun. Only that for a time: but afterwards, when I listened intently, I heard strange whisperings near me, and soft steps, as of unshod feet passing between me and the bed.

Anna. Footsteps?

Lady Dun. Ay; and the curtains of the bed began to shake as if touched by a hand, or the motion of some passing body. Then I knew that they were dealing with my poor child, and I had no power to break the spell of their witchcraft, for I had no voice to speak.

Anna. You had no power to speak?

Lady Dun. No; though the Lord's prayer was on my lips, I was unable to utter it.

Anna. Heaven preserve us! what a dreadful

situation you were in! Did the poor child seem to notice any thing?

Lady Dun. I cannot say how she looked when the door burst open; but as soon as I could observe her, her eyes were wide open, gazing fixedly, as if some ugly visage were hanging over her, from which she could not turn away, and presently she fell into a convulsion, and I at that instant recovered my voice and my strength, and called nurse from her closet to assist her.

Anna. What did nurse think?

Lady Dun. Nurse said she was sure that both Grizeld Bane and Mary Macmurren had been in the room. And this I will take my oath to, that afterwards, when she fell quiet, she muttered in her sleep, in a thick untuneable voice, and among the words which she uttered, I distinctly heard the name of Mary Macmurren.

Anna. What an awful thing it is if people can have power from the evil spirit to inflict such calamity!

Lady Dun. Awful indeed!

Anna. How can they purchase such power?

Lady Dun. The ruin of a Christian soul is price enough for any thing. Satan, in return for this, will bestow power enough to do whatever his bondswoman or bondsmen listeth.

Anna. Yet they are always miserable and poor.

Lady Dun. Not always; but malignant gratifications are what they delight in, and nothing else is of much value to them.

Anna. It may be so:—it is strange and fearful!

Lady Dun. I must go to my closet now, and mix the medicine for poor Jessie, to be ready at the proper time; for I expect the minister to pray by her to-night, and would have every thing prepared before he comes.

[*Exit.*

Anna. (*alone, after a thoughtful pause.*) Ay, if there be in reality such supernatural agency, by which a breast fraught with passion and misery may find relief. (*Starting back.*) Dreadful resource! I may not be so assisted. (*After walking to and fro in great perturbation.*) Oh, Dugarren, Dugarren! that a paltry girl, who is not worthy to be my tirewoman, the orphan of a murderer—a man disgraced, who died in a pit and was buried in a moor; one whose very forehead is covered with blushing shame when the eye of an irreproachable gentlewoman looks upon her; whose very voice doth alter and hesitate when a simple question of her state or her family is put to her,—that a creature thus naturally formed to excite aversion and contempt should so engross thy affections! It makes me mad!—"May not be so assisted!" Evil is but evil, and torment is but torment!—I have felt both—I have felt them to extremity—what have I then to fear? (*Starts on hearing the door open behind her, as PHEMY enters.*) Who is there?

Phemy. Only me, madam.

Anna. What brings thee here ?

Phemy. I came to know if you will trust the Glasgow carrier, who is just come for the orders of the family, with your commission to the silk shop.

Anna. What art thou telling me ?

Phemy. Of your commission to the silk shop.

Anna. I don't understand thee.

Phemy. The additional yards of silk that are wanted.

Anna. I want none, fool ! Thy wits are bewil-dered.

Phemy. Not *my* wits, madam. What will you please to have, then, for the trimming of your new mantua ?

Anna. Newt skins and adder skins, an thou wilt.

Phemy. That might do for a witch's gown, indeed : Grizeld Bane might have a garniture of that sort.

Anna. What dost thou know of Grizeld Bane ?

Phemy. Stories enow, if they be true. It is she, or Mary Macmurren, who has, as they say, be-witched the poor young lady here ; and it was a spell cast by her, that made the farmer's pretty daughter fall over the crag and break her leg, the week before her wedding.

Anna. Before her wedding ?

Phemy. Yes, truly, madam ; and no wedding at all will ever follow such an untoward mischance.

Anna. Who told thee this ?

Phemy. Everybody tells it, and knows it to be true. — (*After a pause.*) But the carrier is waiting.

— She does not heed me. (*Aside.*) What is the matter, madam ? Are you not well ?

Anna. (*rousing herself suddenly.*) Dost thou know Grizeld Bane ?

Phemy. Heaven forefend !

Anna. Dost thou know where she lives ?

Phemy. Somewhere not far distant, I believe : Black Bawldy the herd knows her den well enough.

Anna. Is he in the house at present ?

Phemy. Very likely ; for this is the time when his cows are brought in for the milking.

Anna. Go find him, if thou canst, and send him to me immediately. (*Exit PHEMY.*) If there be a spell to break wedlock, and to break affection also, it were well worth its purchase at any price ; yea, though the soul's jeopardy were added to the gold.

Re-enter PHEMY, followed by BAWLDY.

Phemy. I had not far to seek for him : he stood waiting in the passage, for the cooling of his brose.

Anna. Come nearer, Bawldy. Dost thou know where Grizeld Bane lives ?

Bawldy. Ay, that I do, to my cost. She and her black cat, too, live ow'r near my milk kye. Brindle and Hawky gi' but half the milk they should gi', and we wat weel whare the ither half gangs to.

Anna. Never mind that, my good lad ! Hie to her immediately, and tell her to come to me.

Bawldy. To you, ledly ?

Anna. Yes : to come to me without loss of time. — There is money for thee. (*Giving money.*) Do thy errand speedily and secretly : let nobody know that I have sent thee.

Bawldy. An' she's to come to you here, hidlings, as it war ?

Anna. Yes, Bawldy ; and when she comes, let her wait for me in the cattle shed, by the wood, and I'll meet her there. Dost thou understand me, man ? Go quickly.

Bawldy. The night, ledly ?

Anna. Yes, to-night. Why dost thou look so scared ?

Bawldy. I darna gang to her at night. — Gude be wi' us ! an I war to find her at her cantrips, I had better be belaired in a bog, or play coupcarling ow'r the craig o' Dalwhierry.

Anna. She must be very terrible to make thee so afraid.

Bawldy. When she begins to mutter wi' her white wuthered lips, and her twa gleg eyen are glowering like glints o' wildfire frae the hollow o' her dark bent brows, she's enough to mak a trooper quake ; ay, wi' baith sword and pistol by his side. — No, no, Ledly ! the sun maun be up in the lift when I venture to her den.

Anna. Thou wilt get there before it be dark, if thou make good speed.

Bawldy. No, though I had the speed o' a mawkin. It is gloaming already ; black clouds are spreading fast ow'r the sky, and far-off thunner is growling. There is a storm coming on, and the fiends o' the air are at wark ; I darna gang till the morning.

Anna. Timid loon ! retire then, and go in the morning. But see that thou keep the secret. I'll give thee more money, if thou prove trusty and diligent. [*Exit BAWLDY.*]

Phemy. The carrier will set off in a trice, madam.

Anna. Let him go.

Phemy. And no orders given ?

Anna. Give him what orders thou wilt, and plague me no more. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

Before the gate of DUNGARREN tower : ANDERSON and other servants are seen loitering within the gate.

Enter DUNGARREN, with a fowling-piece in his hand, and a pouch or bag swung from his shoulder, as returned from sport.

And. (*advancing to meet him.*) I'm right glad to see your honour returned ; for the night draws on, and it wad hae been nae joke, I trow, to hae been belated on a haunted warlock moor, and thunner growling i' the welkin.

Dun. The sky indeed looks threatening.

And. And what sport has your honour had the day? The birds grow wilder every year, now.

Dun. Think you so, Anderson?

And. Troth do I! There's something uncanny about them too. It's a fearful time we live in.

Dun. I have done pretty well, however. Give this to the housekeeper to increase the stores of her larder. (*Unfastening the bag, and giving it to ANDERSON.*)

And. By my faith! she'll be glad enough o' sic a supply; for Madam Annabell is come back again, wi' that episcopal lassie frae the Isle o' Barra, that reads out o' a prayer book, and ca's hersell her leddy's gentlewoman. Lord be mercifu' to us! the leddy's bad enough, but Job himself could hardly thole the gentlewoman.

Dun. What has brought her back so soon? She was to have staid a week in Dumbartonshire.

And. That's more than I can say: but here comes Black Bawldy, wha was sent for to speak to her; ay, and gaed into the very parlour till her. He, maybe, kens what has brought her back.

Dun. That's strange enough.

And. Nae mair strange than true. Into the very parlour: I saw him set his dirty feet on the clean floor wi' my ain eyen.

Enter BAWLDY.

Dun. So, Bawldy, thou'rt become company for ladies in a parlour.

Bawldy. Toot, your honour! ony body's gude enough to haver wi' them, when they're wearying.

Dun. What makes Mrs. Annabell return to us so soon, if she be wearying?

Bawldy. She'll no weary now, when your honour's come hame.

Dun. Has any thing happened? She was to have staid a week in Dumbartonshire.

Bawldy. May be she has been a week there, o' her ain reckoning, though we ca' it only twa days. Folks said when she gaed awa', that she wou'd na be lang awa'. It wou'd be as easy to keep a moth frae the can'le, or a cat frae the milk-house, as keep her awa' frae the tower o' Dunganren (*lowering his voice*) when the laird is at hame.

Dun. What sayst thou, varlet?

Bawldy. Only what I hear folks say, your honour.

Dun. Go thy ways to thy loft and thy byre. Folks are saucy, and teach lads to forget themselves. [*Exit BAWLDY.*] (*Pointing to the bag.*) Take it in, Anderson. [*Exit ANDERSON.*]

Dun. (*alone, turning impatiently from the gate.*) I thought to have crossed the threshold of my own house in peace.—To be pestered with the passion of an indelicate vixen!—She fastens her affection upon me like a doctor's blister-sheet, strewed with all the stinging powders of the torrid zone, for daring and desperate medication. (*After pacing to*

and fro in a disturbed manner.) And my gentle Violet, too: must she be still subjected to her scornful looks and insulting insinuations? A noble spirit like hers, under such painful circumstances to be exposed to such insolence! It shall not be: I will not suffer it. (*A thoughtful pause.*) To affront a lady in my own house? Not to be thought of! To leave the country at once, and let the sea and its waves roll between us? Ay, this were well, were not all that is dear to me left behind;—my mother, my poor afflicted sister, my dear, dear Violet, the noble, distressed Violet Murrey.—No; I will stay and contend with the termagant, as I would with an evil spirit. Had she the soul of a woman within her, though the plainest and meanest of her sex, I would pity and respect her;—but as she is—O! shame upon it! she makes me as bad as herself. I know not what to do: I dare not enter yet.

[*Exit the way by which he came.*]

SCENE III.

A wild moor, skirted on one side by a thick tangled wood, through which several open paths are seen. The stage darkened to represent faint moonlight through heavy gathering clouds. Thunder and lightning.

Enter by the front ELSPY LOW, MARY MACMURREN, and her son, WILKIN, who stop and listen to the thunder.

Mary Mac. (*spreading her arms exultingly.*) Ay, ay! this sounds like the true sound o' pryncedom and powerfulness.

Elspy Low (*clapping her hands as another louder peal rolls on.*) Ay; it sounds royally! we shall nae mair be deceived; it wull prove a' true at last.

Mary Mac. This very night we shall ken what we shall ken. We shall be wi' the beings of power—be wi' them and be of them.

[*Thunder again.*]

Elspy Low. It is an awful din, and tells wi' a lordly voice wha is coming and at hand: we shall nae mair be deceived.

Mary Mac. (*to WILKIN, as he presses closer to her side.*) Dinna tug at me sa wickedly, Wilkin; thou shalt ha' a bellyfu' soon o' the fat o' the lawn, my poor plouton.

Wilkin. Fou! fou! meat! great meat!—hurr, hurr! (*making a noise in his throat to express pleasure*) it's a coming!

Mary Mac. We shall ha' what we list at last,—milk and meat! meat and malt!

Elspy Low. Mingling and merry-making; and revenge for the best sport of a'!

Mary Mac. Ay; the hated anes will pay the cost, I trow. We'll sit at our good cogs of cream, and think o' the growling carle's kye wi' their

udders lank and sapless, and the good wife greeting ow'r her kirn.

Elspy Low. Ha, ha, ha! there's good spice in that, woman, to relish far poorer fare.

Mary Mac. They refused us a han'fu' in our greatest need, but now it will be our turn to ha' fou sacks and baith cakes and kebbucks at command, while their aumery is bare.

Elspy Low. Ha, ha, ha! there's good spice in that kimmer. [A very loud peal, &c.]

Mary Mac. Hear ye that! the thunner grows louder and louder; and here she comes wi' her arms in the air and her spirit as hie as the clouds. Her murky chief and his murky mates wull soon fra a' quarters o' the world, I warrant you, come trooping to their tryste.

Enter GRIZELD BANE from the wood by the bottom of the stage, advancing with wild frantic gestures.

Grizeld Bane (stopping on the middle of the stage, and spreading wide her raised arms with lofty courtesy). Come, come, my mighty master!

Come on the clouds; come on the wind!
Come for to loosen, and come for to bind!
Rise from the raging sea; rise from the mine!
There's power in the night storm for thee and for thine!

Mary Mac. (very eagerly to GRIZELD). Dost thou really see him?

Elspy Low (in the same manner). Dost thou see him? or hear him?

Mary Mac. Is he near us?

Elspy Low. Is he on the moor?

Grizeld Bane. Hold your peace, wretches! he may start up by your side in an instant, and scare the very life from your body, if ye forget what I told you.

Elspy Low. I have na' fogotten it.

Mary Mac. Nor I neither. We're to tak' han's first of a'. (Takes ELSPY by the hand, and then turns to WILKIN.) And thine, too, Wilkin.

Wilkin. Meat, meat!

Mary Mac. No, glutton; thou mun gi' me thy haun and go round, as I told thee.

Wilkin. Round! round! pots be round, dishes be round; a' fou for Wilkin! hurt, hurr!

[GRIZELD BANE joins them, and they all take hands, moving in a circular direction, and speaking all together in a dull chanting measure.]

To the right, to the right, to the right we wheel;
Thou heaving earth, free passage give, and our dark prince reveal.

To the right, &c. (three times, then turning the contrary way.)

To the left, to the left, to the left we go;
Ye folding clouds, your curtain rend, and our great master show! [Loud thunder.]

Elspy Low (after a pause). Is he coming yet?
Mary Mac. Is he coming, Grizeld Bane? I see nothing.

Grizeld Bane (seizing her by the throat). Hold thy peace, or I'll strangle thee! Is it for a wretch like thee to utter earthly words on the very verge of such an awful presence?

Mary Mac. For God's sake!—for Satan's sake!—for ony sake, let gang thy terrible grip.

[A tremendous loud peal.]
Grizeld Bane (exultingly). There's an astounding din to make your ears tingle! as if the welkin were breaking down upon us with its lading of terror and destruction! The lightning has done as I bade it. I see him, I see him now.

Mary Mac. Where, where? I see nothing.

Elspy Low. Nor I either, Grizeld.

Grizeld Bane. Look yonder to the skirt of that cloud: his head is bending over it like a knight from the keep of a castle. Hold ye quiet for a space; quiet as the corse in its coffin: he will be on the moor in a trice.

Elspy Low. Troth, I think he will; for I'm trem'ling sae.

Mary Mac. I'm trem'ling too, woman; and sae is poor Wilkin.

Grizeld Bane (exultingly, after another very loud peal, &c.). Ay, roar away! glare away! roar to the very outrage of roaring! Brave heralding, I trow, for the prince of the power of the air!—He will be here, anon.

Mary Mac. I'm sure he will, for my legs bend under me sae, I canna' stand upright.

Grizeld Bane. Hold thy tongue! he is on the moor. Look yonder, where he is moving with strides like the steps of a man, and light by his side. Dost thou see it? [To MARY MACMURREN.]

Mary Mac. Preserve us from scath! I see like a man wi' a lantern. Dost thou see it, Elspy?

Elspy Lowe. Distinctly: and wi' what fearfu' strides he comes on!

Grizeld Bane. It is he; he approaches. Bow your heads instantly to the earth, and repeat the Lord's Prayer backwards, if you can.

[They all bow their bodies and begin an inarticulate muttering; and presently enters MURREY, bearing a lantern, which he hastily darkens upon discovering them, and tries to avoid them.]

Grizeld Bane. Do not pass from us! stay with us; speak to us, Satan! Our spells are shrewd and sure, and thou knowest we have served and will serve thee. Turn not away! Give us power and we'll worship thee. Art thou not come to our tryste?

Mur. Miserable women! what brings you here at this hour in this place? With whom have you made a tryste?

Grizeld Bane. With thyself, mighty Satan! for

we know thee well enough for all the screen of darkness that encircles thee.

Mur. (in a deep, strong, feigned voice). What is your will with me?

Grizeld Bane. Give us power, and we'll worship thee.

Mur. What power do you covet? Power over goods and chattels, or power over bodies and spirits? Say which, by your compact, you would purchase!

Grizeld Bane (eagerly). Both, both!

Mur. Ye ask too much; take your choice of the one or the other.

Mary Mac. What sayst thou, Elspy?

Elspy Low. I'll consider first.

Mary Mac. Goods and chattels for my compact.

Grizeld Bane (to her disdainfully). Sordid caitiff! Bodies and spirits for mine!

Mur. I will see to that at convenient season.

Grizeld Bane, Mary Mac., and Elspy Low (speaking at once). Now, now!

Grizeld Bane. Let us have it now, mighty master, and we'll swear to the compact on this spot.

Mur. Have ye considered it? Ye shall have your will on earth for a term, and then ye must serve my will in the pit of fire and brimstone for ever.

Grizeld Bane. Be it so! and make this very night the beginning of our power.

Mur. Ye are rare mates, indeed, to be so eagerly set upon evil.

Grizeld Bane. Are we not, master? Swear us forthwith, and remove that dull darkness from thy presence. Call round thy liege imps and begin. Ay, ay; they are all coming.

Mary Mac. Where, where, Grizeld?

Grizeld Bane. A score of grinning faces to the right and the left. Dost thou not see them, blind mole that thou art? But where is he who was wont to attend thee, great chieftain? Thou hast never a liege man like him.

Mur. Whom dost thou mean, haggard dame?

Grizeld Bane. He with the wreath round his throat; the fellest and bravest of them all.

Mur. He shall be with me when I meet you again.

Grizeld Bane. Do not leave us now, princely master! do not deceive us again: bind us and give us power ere we part.

Mur. Go to the further side of the wood, and I'll follow you: I may not bind you here, for I hear the sound of horses approaching. Begone; mortal man must not disturb our rites.

[As the women are about to go off, RUTHERFORD, as if just dismounted, holding his horse by the bridle, appears from behind a rocky hillock which forms one of the side scenes, near the front, whilst the lightning, coming in a broad flash across the stage, shows every

thing upon it distinctly for a moment. A loud peal follows: RUTHERFORD and his horse draw back and disappear; and exeunt by the opposite side GRIZELD BANE, &c., leaving MURREY alone.

And so there be verily such wretched creatures in the world, who are, or desire to be, in league with the wicked one! It is a fearful and mortifying glimpse of human nature. I hope they have not scared my poor child upon her way; or rather, that this awful storm has prevented her from coming abroad. O, would I had not requested her to meet me! for I know her brave spirit and the strength of her affection; neither storm nor danger will deter her. Why did I tempt her? Alas, my gentle child! is this the love of a parent? Here she is!

Enter VIOLET from the same side by which RUTHERFORD disappeared, and he runs to her and locks her in his arms, both remaining silent for a time.

Vio. My father! my dear, dear father!

Mur. My own sweet Violet! all that I can call my own, and worth all that I have lost. But for thee, my dear child, I should in truth be, what I am now, by all but thyself, believed to be,—no longer a being of this world.

Vio. Say not so, my dear father! are there not kindness and humanity every where, whether you receive it under one name or another? And if this be not the case, take me with you, and you shall be no longer friendless and bereft.

Mur. No, Violet; that I will never do. To see thee by stealth, were it but a few times in the course of years, with sad dreary intervals between, is still worth living for; and more than a man, stained with the blood of a fellow creature, deserves.

Vio. Ah, why will you tax yourself so harshly? The quarrel was fastened on you.

Mur. Fool that I was, to let the angry reproaches of a fool get such mastery over me! were reason and prowess bestowed upon me for such a despicable use? Oh! had Fotheringham, who stood by, and was the only witness of the combat, endeavoured, as he might have done, to reconcile us, that blood had never been shed.

Vio. But what is past is past; let us think of the lot which is our portion now—of that which lies before us. I will love you always, and think of you always, and be with you always, if you will permit me. The rank and the fare and the home that are good enough for you are good enough for me. And if Fotheringham be still in life, he may again appear to clear you from this crime. In the mean time, your supposed death and your supposed body being found and buried by your friends, give you in any distant retreat a complete security. Let me then, my dear father, go with you now, or follow you soon.

Mur. Is there not one to be left behind who is dear to you?

Vio. No one who is or ought to be so dear as you. And I shrink from the thought of being received into a family who will despise me.

Mur. Violet, thou art too proud: thou hast my infirmity by inheritance. Yes, I was proud once: but, dead in men's belief, and separated from the social world, I am now, as it were, a dead man in my own feelings. I look on the things of this earth as though I belonged not to it. I am meek and chastened now, and will not encourage thee in the cherishing of imprudent unreasonable pride. But we will talk of this elsewhere: I hear voices from the wood.

[*Wild cries from the women heard at a distance, and then nearer.*]

I fear they will return when they find I do not join them.

Vio. Whom do you mean?

Mur. Didst thou meet nobody on the way?

Vio. Nobody but our good minister and his man, going, as I suppose, to the Tower of Dungarren, to pray by the sick child.

Mur. I hope he did not see you.

Vio. I hope he did not: for I tried to conceal myself behind a bush; and he and the servant passed me in silence.

[*Wild cries without, nearer than before.*]

Mur. Let us leave this spot: those creatures are returning to it. I will tell thee about them when we are in safety.

[*Exeunt in haste.*]

SCENE IV.

A narrow passage hall or lobby.

Enter PHEMY, meeting ANDERSON, who carries a light in his hand.

And. We may a' gang to our beds now, that are nae appointed to sit up.

Phemy. What a terrible storm we have had! The brazen sconces in the hall, with the guns, pistols, pikes, and claymores, made such a clattering, as if they were coming down upon our heads altogether, with the slates and rafters of the old roof on the top of all. I'm certain a thunderbolt struck somewhere or other on this unlucky house: I wish I were out of it.

And. It's a pity ye dinna get your wish, then. I'm sure there's naebody rightfully belonging to this family that has any mind to baulk it.

Phemy. Don't be so hasty, Mr. Anderson: I had no intention to disparage the house of Dungarren, though there be neither silk nor tapestry on its walls, like the houses that I have lived in.

And. Weel, weel! be it sae! Silk and tapestry may be plentier than manners in the rich island of Barra.

Phemy. I have lived in other places than Barra, I assure you.

And. I dinna doubt ye hae; but let us mak nae mair quarrelling about it now, when we shou'd a' be thankfu' that we war sheltered frae sic a storm in ony house.—Grizeld Bane and her mates war on the moor the night, I'll tak my aith on't. God help ony poor wanderer wha may hae been belated near their haunts! I wadna hae been in his skin for the best har'st fee that ever was paid into a Lowlander's purse or a Highlander's spleuchan.

Phemy. Was not the minister expected?

And. O! he belike, might cross the moor unscathed. It wad be a bauld witch or warlock either, that wad meddle wi' the minister. And that is the reason, I reckon, why he winna believe there is ony sic thing in a' the country about.

Enter BAWLDY.

Phemy. Here comes Bawldy. What keeps thee up, man?

Bawldy. I'm waiting for the minister.

And. Wha bade thee wait? What is Duncan about?

Bawldy. He's about a Highlandman's business, just doing naething at a'; and wad be snoring on the settle in the turning o' a bannock, if fear wad let him sleep.

Phemy. Is he more afraid than the rest of you?

Bawldy. He has mair cause, mistress: he has seen bogles enow in his time, and kens a' the gaits and fashions o' them.

Phemy. Has he indeed?

Bawldy. Ay, certes; by his ain tale, at least. We hae heard o' mawkins starting up in the shapes of auld women, when chased to a cross running burn, but Duncan has seen it. Nae wonner if he be feared!

And. Weel, than, an thou will sit up, he'll tell thee stories to keep thee frae wearing; and I dinna care if I join you myself for an hour or sae, for I'm naewise disposed for my ain bed in that dark turret-chaumer.

Bawldy. But gin ye keep company wi' stable loons and herds, Mr. Anderson, ye'll gi' them, nae doubt, a wee smack o' your ain higher calling. Is the key o' the cellar in your pouch? My tongue's unco dry after a' this fright.

And. Awa' ye pawky thief! Dost thou think that I'll herrie the laird's cellar for thee or ony body?—But there's the whiskey bottle in my ain cupboard, wi' some driblets in it yet, that ye may tak; and deil a drap mair shall ye get, an thy tongue were as guizened as a spelding. I wonder wha learnt sic a youngster as thee to be sae pawky.

Phemy. Bawldy has by nature cunning enough to lose nothing for want of asking; and Mr. Anderson, too, has his own natural faculty for keeping what he has got.—Good night to you both.

And. Good night to you. (*Half aside.*) I'm sure I wad rather bid you good night than good morrow, at any time. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE V.

A large chamber, with a bed at the bottom of the stage, on which is discovered a sick child, and LADY DUNGARREN seated by it.

Enter DUNGARREN by the front, stepping very softly.

Dun. Is she asleep?

Lady Dun. Yes; she has been asleep for some minutes.

Dun. Let me watch by her then, and go you to rest.

Lady Dun. I dare not: her fits may return.

Dun. The medicine you have given her will, I trust, prevent it: so do go to rest, my dear mother!

Lady Dun. No, dear Robert; her disease is one over which no natural medicine has any power. As sure as there are witches and warlocks on earth—and we know there are—they have been dealing with her this night.

Dun. Be not too sure of this. The noise of the storm, and the flashes of lightning, might alarm her, and bring on convulsions.

Lady Dun. Ah, foolish youth! thou art proud of the heathenish learning thou hast gleaned up at college, and wilt not believe what is written in Scripture.

Dun. Nay, mother, say only that I do not believe—

Enter ANNABELLA behind them, and stops to listen.

—such explanations of Scripture as have given countenance to superstitious alarm. Our good pastor himself attaches a different meaning to those passages you allude to, and has but little faith in either witches or apparitions.

Lady Dun. Yes, he has been at college, good man as he is. Who else would doubt of it?

Dun. But Violet Murrey has not been at college, and she has as little faith in them as Mr. Rutherford.

Anna. (*advancing passionately.*) If Violet Murrey's faith, or pretended faith, be the rule we are to go by, the devil and his bondfolk will have a fine time of it in this unhappy county of Renfrew. She will take especial care to speak no words for the detection of mischief which she profits by.

Dun. Profits by! What means that foul insinuation.

Lady Dun. Be not so violent, either of you. Soften that angry eye, Robert; and remember you are speaking to a lady.

Dun. And let her remember that she is speaking of a lady.

Anna. What rank the daughter of a condemned malefactor holds in the country, better heralds than I must determine.

Dun. Malignant and heartless reproach! Provoke me not beyond measure, Annabella. For this good woman's sake, for thy own sake, for the sake of female dignity and decorum, provoke me no more with words so harsh, so unjust, so unseemly.

Anna. Not so unseemly, Dunganren, as degrading the heir of an honourable house, with an attachment so—but I will say no more.

Dun. You have said too much already.

Lady Dun. Hush, hush! for heaven's sake be peaceable! You have wakened the child from her sleep. Look how she gazes about. Nurse! nurse! ho! [*Calling loudly off the stage.*]

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Are they tormenting her again? They hae time now, when their storm and their revelry is past, to cast their cantrips here, I trow. (*Shaking her fist angrily.*) O you ugly witch! show your erlich face from behind the hangings there, an' I'll score you aboon the breath wi' a joctele.

Lady Dun. (*to nurse.*) Dost thou see any thing?

Nurse. I thought I just saw a waft o' her haggart visage in the dark shadow o' the bed hangings yonder. But see or no see, she is in this room, as sure as I am a Christian saul. What else should mak' the bairn stare sae, and wriggle wi' her body sae miserably?

Dun. But are not you a bold woman, nurse, to threaten a witch so bloodily?

Nurse. I'm bauld enough to tak' vengeance at my ain haun upon ony body that torments my bairn, though it war Satan himsel. Howsomever, I carry about a leaf o' the Bible sewed to my pouch, now; for things hae come to sic a fearfu' pitch, that crooked pins and rowan-tree do next to nae good at a'. Bless us a'! I wush the minister war come.

Dun. And you have your wish, nurse; for here he is.

Enter RUTHERFORD, in a hurried, bewildered manner.

Lady Dun. My good sir, you are welcome: but my heart reproaches me for having brought you from home in such a dreadful night. What is the matter with you?

Dun. He cannot speak.

Lady Dun. Sit down in this chair, my good sir. He is going to faint.

[*DUNGARREN supports him, and places him in an easy chair; then fetches him a glass of water, which he swallows hastily.*]

Dun. Has the lightning touched you, dear sir?

Ruth. Not the lightning.

Lady Dun. Has aught happened to you on the moor?

Anna. Have you seen any thing? He has seen something.

Dun. Have you seen any thing, my good sir?

Ruth. Nought, by God's grace, that had any power to hurt me.

Dun. But you have seen something which has overcome your mind to an extraordinary degree. Were another man in your case, I should say that superstitious fears had o'ermastered him, and played tricks with his imagination.

Ruth. What is natural or unnatural, real or imaginary, who shall determine? But I have seen that, which, if I saw it not, the unassisted eyesight can give testimony to nothing.

Lady Dun. and Anna. (both speaking together). What was it? What was it?

[*RUTHERFORD gives no answer.*]

Dun. You saw, then, what has moved you so much, distinctly and vividly?

Ruth. Yea, his figure and the features of his face, as distinctly, in the bright glare of the lightning, as your own now appear at this moment.

Dun. A man whom you knew, and expected not to find at such an hour and in such a place. But what of this? Might not such a thing naturally happen?

Ruth. (lowering his voice, and drawing DUNGARREN aside, while ANNABELLA draws closer to him to listen). No, Robert Kennedy: he whose form and face I distinctly saw, has been an in-dweller of the grave these two years.

Dun. (in a low voice also). Indeed! Are you sure of it?

Ruth. I put his body into the coffin with mine own hands, and helped to carry it to the grave; yet there it stood before me, in the bright blazing of the storm, and seemed to look upon me too, with a look of recognition most strange and horrible.

Anna. (eagerly). Whose ghost was it? Who was the dead man you saw?

Ruth. (rising from his chair, and stepping back from her with displeasure). I reckoned, madam, but upon one listener.

Lady Dun. Nay, be not angry with her. Who can well refrain from listening to such a tale? And be not angry with me either, when I ask you one question, which it so much concerns me to know. Saw you aught besides this apparition? any witches or creatures of evil?

Ruth. I will answer that question, lady, at another time, and in greater privacy.

Anna. (to LADY DUNGARREN). He has seen them; it is evident he has. But some of his friends might be amongst them: there may be good cause for secrecy and caution.

Dun. (to ANNABELLA). Why do you press so unsparingly upon a man whose spirits have, from some cause or other, received such a shock?

Ruth. I forgive her, Dungarren: say no more

about it. It is God's goodness to me that I am here unhurt, again to do the duty of a Christian pastor to my dear and friendly flock now convened. Let me pray by the bed of that poor suffering child, for her, for myself, and for all here present.

Lady Dun. (to ANNABELLA). Let us put her in a different position before he begin: she must be tired of that; for see, she moves again uneasily.

[*LADY DUNGARREN takes ANNABELLA to the bottom of the stage, and they both seem employed about the child, while DUNGARREN and RUTHERFORD remain on the front.*]

Dun. It is a most extraordinary and appalling apparition you have seen. What do you think of it?

Ruth. What can I think of it, but that the dead are sometimes permitted to revisit the earth, and that I verily have seen it.

Dun. I would more readily believe this than give credit to the senseless power and malevolence of witchcraft, which you have always held in derision.

Ruth. It is presumption to hold any thing in derision.

Dun. Ha! say you so, in this altered tone of voice? Have you met with any thing to-night to change your opinions on this subject? Have you seen any of the old women, so strangely spoken of, on the moor?

Ruth. Would that I had only seen such!

Dun. The voice in which you speak, the expression with which you look upon me, makes me tremble. Am I concerned with aught that you have seen?

Ruth. You are, my dear Robert, and must think no more of Violet Murrey. (*A deep silence.*) Yes; it has stricken you to the heart. Think upon it as you ought. I expect no answer.

Dun. (endeavouring to recover speech). But I must—I will try—I must answer you, for I (*tearing open his waistcoat, and panting for breath,*)—I can believe nothing that accuses her.

Ruth. Were a daughter of my own concerned, I could not be more distressed.

Dun. It makes me distracted to hear thee say so!

Ruth. Go to thine own room, and endeavour to compose thy mind, and I will pray for thee here. Pray for thyself, too, in private: pray earnestly, for there is, I fear, a dreadful warfare of passion abiding thee.

[*Exit DUNGARREN by the front, while RUTHERFORD joins the ladies by the sick-bed, where they prepare to kneel as the scene closes.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The inside of a miserable cottage, with a board or coarse table by the wall, on which stand some empty wooden bickers, or bowls.

Enter WILKIN, who runs eagerly to the board, then turns away disappointed.

Wilkin. Na, na! tuim yet! a' tuim yet! Milk nane! parritch nane! (*Pointing to the bowls, and then pressing his stomach.*) Tuim there! tuim here! Woe worth it! to say they wad be fou, an' they're no fou! Woe worth it! woe worth them a'!

Enter BAWLDY, and WILKIN runs to take hold of him.

Bawldy (frightened). Han's aff, I tell thee!

Wilkin. Hast brought ony thing? Gie me't, gie me't.

Bawldy (pulling out a horse-shoe from his pocket). Stan' aff, I say! Nane o' your witch nips for me! I hae, maybe, brought what thou winna like, an thou hae wit enough to ken what it is.

Wilkin. Will't kill me?

Bawldy. Ay; fule as he is, he's frightened for't; —the true mark of warlockry. They hae linket him in wi' the rest: naething's ow'r waff for Satan, an it hae a soul o' ony kind to be tint.

Wilkin. Will't kill me?

Bawldy. No; but I'll score thy imp's brow wi't, —that's what I'll do,—an tu lay a finger on me. But dinna glow'r sae: stan' aff a bit, and answer my questions, and there's siller for thee. (*Throwing him some pence.*) Was tu on the moor i' the night-time, wi' thy mither?

Wilkin. Mither?

Bawldy. Ay; was tu on the moor wi' her, when the thunner roared?

Wilkin. Thunner roared, fire roared, thunner roared! hurl! hurl! hurl! (*Imitating the noise of thunder.*)

Bawldy. Ay; an' ye ware there?

Wilkin. Ay, there. (*Nodding his head.*)

Bawldy. An' wha was there beside?

Wilkin. Beside?

Bawldy. Beside thee an' thy mither. What saw ye there?

Wilkin. Black man an' fire: hurl! hurl! (*Making a noise as before.*)

Bawldy. Gude saf' us! has tu seen the deil then, bodily?

Wilkin. Deil, deil!

Bawldy (shrinking back from him). Keep me frae scath! That I should stand sae near ane that has been with Satan himsel! What did you see forbye?

Wilkin. Saw? Saw folk.

Bawldy. What folk? Auld women?

Wilkin. Auld women; young women. Saw them a' on fire. Hurl! hurl! hurl!

Bawldy. Saw a young woman? Was it Maggy Kirk's crooket daughter?

Wilkin. Na, joe! young woman.

Bawldy. What's her name? What did they ca' her?

Wilkin. Leddy— young leddy, on fire.

Bawldy. Gude saf' us a'! can this be true!

[*Voices without.*]

1st voice. I'll tak amends o' her for cheating us again.

2d voice. An' sae will I, spitefu' carline! Maun naebody hae power but hersel?

Enter MARY MACMURREN and ELSPY LOW, and BAWLDY hides himself behind the door.

Mary Mac. There's power to be had, that's certain: power that can raise the storm and the fiend; ay, that can do ony thing. But we're aye to be puir yet: neither meat nor money, after a's dune!

Elspy Low. Neither vengeance nor glawmery, for a' the wicket thoughts we hae thought, for a' the fearfu' words we hae spoken, for a' the backward prayers we hae prayed!—I'll rive her eye out o' her head, though they shou'd glare upon us frae their hollow sconces, like corpse-can'les frae a grave-stane.

Mary Mac. (pointing to the board). Even they puir cogs are as toom as before, and my puir idiot as hungry. Hast tu had ony thing, Wilkin? (*Turns round to him and discovers BAWLDY.*) Ha! wha has tu wi' thee? (*To BAWLDY.*) What brought thee here, in a mischief to thee! Thou's Dunganren's herd, I reckon.

Bawldy. I came frae the tower of Dunganren wi' an errand, I wou'd hae ye to wit.

Mary Mac. Tell thy errand, then, and no lurk that gate, in a nook, like a thoumart in a dowcot: for if tu be come here without an errand, thou shalt rue it dearly to the last hour o' thy life.

Bawldy. Isna this Grizeld Bane's house?

Mary Mac. No, silly loon! it's my house. She's but a rinagate rawny, frae far awa' parts, that came to be my lodger. Ay; and she may gang as she came, for me: I'll no harbour her ony mair. Nae mair Grizeld Banes in my house, to reeve an' to herrie me sae! She maun pack aff wi' hersel this very day.

Enter GRIZELD BANE.

Grizeld Bane (looking on her with stern contempt). Who speaks of Grizeld Bane with such unwary words? Repeat them, I pray thee. (*MARY stands abashed.*) Thou wilt not.—(*To ELSPY, in like manner.*) And what hast thou to say of Grizeld Bane?

(*A pause.*) And thou, too, art silent before my face.

Elspy Low. There's a callant frae Dunganren, i' the nook, that comes on an errand to thee.

Grizeld Bane (*to BAWLDY*). Do not tremble so, silly child! What is thine errand?

Bawldy. She bade me—she bade me say—ye maun come to her.

Grizeld Bane. To whom, and where? Thou speakest as if my hand were already on thy throat, where it shall very soon be, if thou tell not thy errand more distinctly.

Bawldy. The stranger leddy at the tower, the Ledy Annabell, desires that ye wad meet her in the lone shed, near the outer gate, in the afternoon. Gi' me an answer, an please ye.

Grizeld Bane (*in a kind of chant.*)

Where there be ladies and where there be lords,
Mischief is making with glances and words,
Work is preparing for pistols and swords.

Bawldy. Is that an answer?

Grizeld Bane. She may take it for one; but if it please thee better, thou mayst say to her, I will do as she desires. And take this token with thee, youngster. (*Going close to him.*)

Bawldy. Na, na, I thank ye; I have answer enough. [*Exit in a fright.*]

Grizeld Bane (*turning to MARY MACMURREN and ELSPY LOW*). And ye are dissatisfied, forsooth! you must have power as you will and when you will.

Elspy Low. Thou hast deceived us.

Grizeld Bane. Was there not storm enough to please ye?

Elspy Low. Enough to crack the welkin; but what got we by it?

Grizeld Bane. Did he come in the storm? Did you not see him and hear him?

Mary Mac. Certes did he; but what gat we by it? He keepit na' his tryste wi' us the second time; an' we gaed wearily hame on our feet, as wat and as puir as we came.

Grizeld Bane. O that false tongue! ye rode upon clouds: I saw you pass over my head, and I called to you.

Mary Mac. The woman is a fiend or bereft a' together! I waket hame on my feet, en' gaed to my miserable bed, just as at any ony ither time, an' sa did she.

Grizeld Bane. But rode ye not afterwards, my chucks? I saw you both pass over my head, and I called to you.

Elspy Low. If we ware upon clouds, we ware sleeping a' the while, for I ken naething anent it. Do ye, neighbour? (*To MARY MACMURREN.*)

Mary Mac. I dare na' just say as ye say, kimmer, for I dreamt I was flying in the air and somebody behint me.

Grizeld Bane. Ay, ay, ay; ye will discern mist

and mysteries at last. But ye must have power, forsooth! as ye list and when ye list. If he did not keep tryste in the night, let us cast a spell for him in the day. When doors and windows are darkened, mid-day is as potent as midnight. Shut out the light and begin. But if he roar and rage at you when he does come, that is no fault of mine.

[*Draws a circle on the floor.*]

Mary Mac. and *Elspy Low* (*at once*). Na, na! dinna bring him up now.

[*Exeunt hastily, leaving GRIZELD alone.*]

Grizeld Bane (*chanting to herself after having completed the circle.*)

Black of mien and stern of brow,
Dark one, dread one, hear me now!
Come with potency and speed;
Come to help me in my need;
Kith and kindred have I none,
Ever wand'ring, ever lone.
Black of mien and stern of brow,
Dark one, dread one, hear me now!

He is now at hand; the floor yawns under my feet, and the walls are running round; he is here! (*Bending her head very low and then raising it.*) Ha! is it thou? art thou risen in thy master's stead? It becomes thee to answer my call; it is no weak tie that has bound us together. I loved thee in sin and in blood: when the noose of death wrung thee, I loved thee. And now thou art a dear one and a terrible with the prince of the power of the air. Grant what I ask! grant it quickly. Give me of thy power; I have earned it. But this is a mean, narrow den; the cave of the lin is near, where water is souging and fern is waving; the bat-bird clutching o'er head, and the lithe snake stirring below; to the cave, to the cave! we'll hold our council there.

[*Exit with frantic gestures, as if courteously showing the way to some great personage.*]

SCENE II.

A flower garden by the cottage of VIOLET MURREY, with the building partly occupying the bottom of the stage, and partly concealed.

Enter DUNGARREN, who stops and looks round him, then mutters to himself in a low voice, then speaks audibly.

Dun. The lily, and the rose, and the gilliflower; things the most beautiful in nature, planted and cherished by a hand as fair and as delicate as themselves! Innocence and purity should live here; ay, and do live here: shall the ambiguous whisper of a frightened night-scared man, be his understanding and learning what they may, shake my confidence in this? It was foolish to come on such an errand. (*Turns back, and is about to retire by the way he*

entered, then seems irresolute, and then stops short.) Yet being here, I had better have some parley with her: I may learn incidentally from her own lips, what will explain the whole seeming mystery. (*Looking again on the flowers as he proceeds towards the house.*) Pretty pansy! thou hast been well tended since I brought thee from the south country with thy pretty friend, the carnation, by thy side. Ay, and ye are companions still; thou, too, hast been well cared for, and all thy swelling buds will open to the sun ere long.

Enter VIOLET from the house, while he is stooping over the flowers.

Vio. You are come to look after your old friends, Dunganren?

Dun. I have friends here worth looking after, if beauty and sweetness give value. Thou art an excellent gardener, Violet; things thrive with thee wonderfully, even as if they were conscious whose flowers they are, and were proud of it.

Vio. Ah! that were no cause for pride. Methinks, if they were conscious whose flowers they are, they would droop their heads and wither away.

Dun. Say not so: thou art melancholy; the storm has affected thy spirits. Those who were abroad in it say that the lightning was tremendous.

Vio. It was tremendous.

Dun. And the rolling of the thunder was awful.

Vio. It was awful.

Dun. And the moon was at times one blaze of fiery light, like returning bursts of mid-day, giving every thing to view for an instant in the depth of midnight darkness. (*A pause.*) One who was there told me so. (*Another pause, and she seems uneasy.*) And more than that, a strange unlikely story. (*A still longer pause, and she more uneasy.*) But thou hast no desire to hear it: even natural curiosity has forsaken thee. What is the matter?

Vio. Nothing is the matter: tell me whatever you please, and I will listen to it. Were witches on the moor?

Dun. Yes, witches were there, but that is not my story. There was a form seen on the moor most unlike any thing that could be evil. Thou art pale and disturbed; hast thou a guess of my meaning?

Vio. The moor is wide, and benighted wanderers might be upon it of different forms and degrees.

Dun. But none who could look like one, whom, nevertheless, 'tis said, it did resemble.

Vio. (*endeavouring to recover herself.*) Nay, nay, Dunganren! do not amuse yourself with me: if the devil has power to assume what form he pleases, that will account for your story at once. If he has not, you have only to suppose that some silly girl, with her plaid over her head, was bewildered by the storm at her trysting place, and that will explain it sufficiently.

Dun. These are light words, methinks, to follow upon melancholy gravity so suddenly.

Vio. If my words displease you, Dunganren, there is more cause for sorrow than surprise, and the sooner I cease to offend the better.

Dun. Violet Murrey of Torwood!!!

Vio. Robert Kennedy of Dunganren!!!

Dun. What am I to think?

Vio. Thoughts are free: take your range. Thinking is better than speaking for both of us; and so, if you please, we shall wish each other good morning. (*Turning from him with a hurried step towards the house.*)

Dun. (*following her.*) We must not so part, my Violet. Had any woman but thyself used me thus,—but what of that! I love thee and must bear with thee.

Vio. No, Robert Kennedy; thou lovest me not: for there is suspicion harboured in thy mind which love would have spurned away.

Dun. Say not *harboured*. O no! Spurned and rejected, yet, like a trodden adder, turning and rearing again. I ask to know nothing that thou seekest to conceal. Say only that thou wast in thy own home during the night, as I am sure thou wast, and I will be satisfied, though all the diabolical witnesses of Renfrewshire were set in array against thee.

Vio. Must I be forced to bear witness in my own behalf? There is one who should bear witness for me, and lacking that evidence, I scorn every other.

Dun. And where is that witness to be found?

Vio. In the heart of Dunganren.

Dun. Thou wringst it to the quick! I am proud and impetuous, but have I deserved this haughty reserve? Dost thou part with me in anger?

Vio. I am angry, and must leave thee; but perhaps I am wrong in being so.

Dun. Indeed thou art wrong.

Vio. Be thou charitable, then, and forgive me; but for the present let us part. [*Exit into the house.*]

Dun. (*alone.*) Her behaviour is strange and perplexing. Was her anger assumed or sincere? Was she, or was she not, on that accursed moor? "Some silly girl bewildered by the storm at her trysting place,"—were not these her words? Ay, by my faith! and glancing at the truth too obviously; at the hateful, the distracting, the hitherto unsuspected truth. It is neither witch, warlock, nor devil, with whom she held her tryste. Yea, but it is a devil, whom I will resist to perdition! It is a devil who will make me one also. O, this proud rising of my heart! it gives the cruelty of distraction; and, but for the fear of God within me, would nerve my hand for blood.

Re-enter VIOLET, in alarm, from the house.

Vio. Oh Robert, Robert! what mean those toss-

ings of the arms—those gestures of distraction? You doubt my faith, you think me unworthy, and it moves you to this fearful degree. If I deserve your attachment I deserve to be trusted. Think of this, dear Robert, for it kills me to see you so miserable.

Dun. Dear! you call me dear, only because you pity me.

Vio. I call thee dear, because — because — Out on thee, Robert Kennedy! hast thou no more generosity than this? [*Bursting into tears.*]

Dun. (*catching her in his arms, then unclasping her suddenly, and dropping on his knee.*) O forgive me, forgive me! I have treated thee ungenerously and unjustly: forgive me, my own sweet girl!

Vio. I will not only forgive thee, but tell thee every thing when I am at liberty to do so. Let us now separate; I have need of rest.

[*He leads her towards the house, caressing her hand tenderly as they go; then exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.

A passage or entrance-room in the tower.

Enter ANDERSON.

And. (*looking off the stage.*) What's the cunning loon standing, wi' his lug sae near that door for? (*Calling loud.*) What's tu doing there, rascal?

Enter BAWLDY.

Wha gies thee leave to come near the chambers o' gentle folks, and lay thy blackened lug sae close to the key-hole?

Bawldy. As for gentle folks, they come to me oftener nor I gang to them; and as for my lug, there was nae need to lay it to the key-hole whan the door was half open.

And. Catch thee who can unprovided wi' a ready answer! Thou hast the curiosity o' the deevil in thee and his cunning to boot: what business hast thou to pry into people's secrets?

Bawldy. A secret, forsooth, tauld wi' an open door and voices as loud as twa wives cracking in the lone! And gude be wi' us a'! they war only talking o' what we are a' talking or thinking o' fra' morning till night and fra' Sabbath day till Saturday.

And. And what is that, ne'er-do-weel?

Bawldy. What should it be but witchcraft and the young leddy? But this last bout, I trow, is the strangest bout o' a'.

And. What has happened now?

Bawldy. As I was passing by the door, I heard nurse tell the Leddy Annabell how the young leddy was frightened frae her rest, as she lay in her bed, wi' the room darkened.

And. And how was that?

Bawldy. Witches cam' into the room, I canna

tell how mony o' them, and ane o' them cam' upon the bed, and a'maist smooed her.

And. The Lord preserve us!

Bawldy. Ay; and she would hae been smooed a'thegither, gin she had na claught haud of the witch's arm, and squeezeed it sae hard that the witch ran awa', and left a piece o' her gown sleeve in the young leddy's han'.

And. It was Grizeld Bane or Mary Macmurren, I'll be bound for 't.

Bawldy. Wha it was she could nae say, for she could nae see i' the dark.

And. But the piece of the gown sleeve will reveal it. Show me that, and I'll ken wha it was, to a certainty. I ken ilka gown and garment belonging to them.

Bawldy. So does nurse, too: but the young leddy took a fit, as the roodies left the chaumer, and she has lost the clout.

And. That was a pity. The chamber maun be searched for it carefully, else they'll come again, and wi' some cantrup or ither, join it into the sleeve it was riven frae, as if it ne'er had been riven at a'. But gang to thy crowdy, man, and dinna tane a meal for a marvel. Thou hast nae business here: the kitchen and the byre set thee better than lobbics and chambers. (*Exit BAWLDY.*) That callant lurks about the house like a brownie. He's a clever varlet, too: he can read the kittle names in the Testament, and ding the dominie himsel at the questions and caratches. He's as cunning and as covetous as ony gray-haired sinner i' the parish; — a convenient tool, I suspect, in the hands of a very artful woman. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

The apartment of ANNABELLA, who enters, and throws herself into a chair, remaining silent, for a short time, and then speaks impatiently.

Anna. What can detain her so long? Could she miss finding him? He is seldom far off at this hour of the day, when broth and beef are on the board; and he can send a boy to the hill as his substitute. I wish the sly creature were come; for time passes away, and with it, perhaps, opportunity.

Enter PHEMY.

Phemy. He's here, madam.

Anna. That's well. Let him enter immediately, and do thou keep watch in the outer room.

[*Exit PHEMY, and presently BAWLDY enters.*]
I want thee to do an errand for me again, Bawldy. Do not look so grave and so cowed, man: thou shalt be well paid for it.

Bawldy. A'tweel, I'm ready enough to do ony errand, gin there be nae witchery concerned wi't.

Anna. And what the worse wilt thou be if there should? Didst thou not go to Grizeld Bane this morning, and return safe and sound as before, both soul and body, with a good crown in thy pocket to boot?

Bawldy. Certes my body cam' baek safe enough; but for my puir saul, Lord hae mercy on it! for when I gaed to my kye on the hill again, I tried to croon o'er to mysel the hunder and saxteen psalm, and second commandment, and could hardly remember a word o' them. Oh! she's an awfu' witch, and seares the very wit frae ane's noddle.

Anna. Never fear, Bawldy: she has left thee enough of that behind to take care of thine own interest. Thou hadst wit enough, at least, to do thy business with her; for she came to me in good time, to the spot which I appointed.

Bawldy. If she kens the place, she may meet you there again, without my ganging after her. The Lord preserve us! I wadna enter that house again for twa crowns.

Anna. Be not afraid, man: it is not to that house I would send thee; and thou shalt have two crowns for thy errand, though it be both an easy and a short one.

Bawldy. As for that, madam, an it were baith lang an' hard, I wadna mind it, so as it be an errand a Christian body may do.

Anna. A Christian body may go and speak a few words privately to Mrs. Violet Murrey's pretty maid, I should think.

Bawldy (sheepishly). There's nae great harm in that, to be sure.

Anna. And a Christian body may slip a crown quietly into her hand, and——

Bawldy (interrupting her in a low murmuring voice). Ay, ane o' the twa ye spak o'.

Anna. No, indeed, Bawldy: a third crown, which I will give thee to take from thine own pocket, and put into her pretty hand. Perhaps it may prove the forerunner of some other token between you. She is a good tight girl, but a few years older than thyself: she may take a fancy to thee.

Bawldy. Ah! Madam Annabell, somebody has been telling you that I hae a fancy for her; for they never devall wi' their havers. But what is she to do for the crown? for I reckon she maun won it some way or another.

Anna. In a very easy way. Tell her to send me her mistress's striped lutestring gown, for I want to look at the pattern of it, and will restore it to her immediately.

Bawldy. Is that a'?

Anna. Only thou must make her promise to conceal, from her mistress and from every body, that I borrowed the gown. Be sure to do that, Bawldy.

Bawldy. That's very curious, now. Whaur wad be the harm o' telling that ye just looket at it?

Anna. Thou'rt so curious, boy, there's no concealing any thing from thee. Art thou silly enough to believe that I only want to look at it?

Bawldy. Na, I guessed there was somewhat ahint it.

Anna. And thou shalt know the whole, if thou wilt promise to me solemnly not to tell any body.

Bawldy. I'll tell naebody. Gif my ain mither war to speer, she wad ne'er get a word anent it frae me.

Anna. I have been consulting with Grizeld Bane, about what can be done to relieve our poor sick child from her misery,—for those who put her into it can best tell how to draw her out of it,—and she says, a garment that has been upon the body of a murderer, or the child of a murderer,—it does not matter which,—put under the pillow of a witched bairn, will recover it from fits, were it ever so badly tormented. But, mark me well! should the person who owns the garment ever come to the knowledge of it, the fits will return again, as bad as before. Dost thou understand me?

Bawldy. I understand you weel enough: but will witches speak the truth, whan the deil is their teacher?

Anna. Never trouble thy head about that: we can but try. Fetch me the gown from thy sweetheart, and thou shalt have more money than this, by-and-bye. [Gives him money.]

Bawldy. Since you will ea' her my sweetheart, I canna help it; though I ken weel enough it's but mocking.

Anna. Go thy ways, and do as I bid thee without loss of time, and thou wilt soon find it good, profitable earnest. She will make a very good thrifty wife, and thou a good muirland drover, when thou'rt old enough. [Exit BAWLDY.]

Anna (alone). Now shall I have what I panted for, and far better, too, than I hoped. To be tormented by witchcraft is bad; but to be accused and punished for it is misery so exquisite, that to purchase it for an enemy were worth a monarch's ransom. Ay, for an enemy like this, who has robbed me of my peace, stolen the affections of him whom I have loved so ardently and so long; yea, who has made me, in his sight, hateful and despicable. I will bear my agony no longer. The heart of Dunganren may be lost for ever; but revenge is mine, and I will enjoy it.—It is a fearful and dangerous pleasure, but all that is left for me.—Oh, oh! that I should live to see him the doating lover of a poor, homely—for homely she is, let the silly world call her what they please—artful girl, disgraced and degraded; the daughter of a murderer, saved only from the gibbet by suicide or accident! That I should live to witness this!—But having lived to witness it, can revenge be too dearly purchased? No; though extremity of suffering in this world, and beyond this world, were

the price——Cease, cease! ye fearful thoughts! I shall but accuse her of that of which she is, perhaps, really guilty. Will this be so wicked, so unpardonable? How could a creature like this despoil such a woman as myself of the affections of Dunganren, or any man, but by unholy arts?

Enter PHEMY in alarm.

Phemy. Madam, madam! there are people in the passage.

Anna. And what care I for that?

Phemy. You were speaking so loud, I thought there was somebody with you. (*Looking fearfully round.*)

Anna. Whom dost thou look for? Could any one be here without passing through the outer room?

Phemy. I crave your pardon, madam, they can enter by holes, as I have heard say, that would keep out a moth or a beetle.

Anna. Go, foolish creature! Thy brain is wild with the tales thou hast heard in this house. Did I speak so loud?

Phemy. Ay, truly madam, and with such violent changes of voice, that I could not believe you alone.

Anna. I was not aware of it. It is a natural infirmity, like talking in one's sleep: my mother had the same.—I'll go to the garden, where the flowers and fresh air will relieve me.

Phemy. Are you unwell?

Anna. Yes, girl; but say so to no one, I pray thee. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A half-formed cave, partly roofed with rock and partly open to the sky, which is seen through the overhanging bushes; a burn or brook crossing the mouth of it, at the bottom of the stage, banked by precipitous rocks mixed with wood and fern.

Voice (heard without). Indeed, thou canst not pass this way.

2d voice (without). I don't mind it at all; the water will do me no harm.

1st voice (without). Thou shalt not wet thy feet, my dear child, when a father's arms are here, so able and so happy to carry thee.

Enter MURREY by the mouth of the cave, bearing VIOLET in his arms, whom he sets down by some loose rocks near the front of the stage.

Vio. Set me down, my dear father; I am heavy.

Mur. I could carry thee to the end, my own dear girl. O that thou wert again a baby, and mine arms locked round thee as of yore!

Vio. I remember it, father.

Mur. Dost thou, sweet one? Ah, ah! thou in my arms, and she whom I loved by my side, and thy pretty wordless lips cooing to us by turns—an utterance that made all words contemptible! Alas, alas! such days, and many bright succeeding days, have been and are gone. The fatal passion of a few short moments has made me a homeless outlaw, while reproach, instead of protection, is a father's endowment for thee. (*Sits down on a low detached rock, and buries his face in the folds of his plaid.*)

Vio. Dear, dear father! do not reproach yourself so harshly. If the world call what you have done by a very dreadful name, it is not a true one: equal fighting, though for a foolish quarrel, deserves not that appellation.

Mur. Whatever it may deserve, it will have it, when there is no witness to prove the contrary. Fatheringham alone was present, and he disappeared on the instant. When my trial came, I could not prove that the man I had slain fell in equal combat; nay, was the real aggressor in first attacking me.

Vio. It was cowardly and strange,—it was not the act of a friend to disappear and leave you so exposed.

Mur. Some evil fate befell him: he was not alive, I am certain, when I was apprehended, else he would have come forward like an honest, manly friend in my justification. The sentence of death is upon me; the mark of Cain is on my forehead; I am driven from the fellowship of men.

Vio. Say not so; for you have by the accidental death of your servant been, as it were, providentially saved from a fearful end; and being so saved, I must needs believe that some better fortune is in reserve for you.

Mur. Ay, poor Donald! I believe he would willingly have died for my sake, and Providence did so dispose of him. I little thought, after my escape from prison, when I had changed apparel with him, how completely our identity was to be confounded. He lies in the grave as James Murrey of Torwood,—in an unhallowed grave, as a murderer.

Vio. Were you near him when he fell into the pit?

Mur. Dear Violet, thou art bewildered to ask me such a question! When we had changed clothes completely, and I had even forced upon him as a gift, which he well deserved, the gold watch and seals of my family, we parted; and when his body was discovered, many weeks afterwards, the face, as I understand, from the mutilations of bruises and corruption, was no longer recognizable. But this is a mournful subject, and it is useless to dwell upon it now.

Vio. Very true; let us speak of those things for which there is still cause of thankfulness. The

Irish home you have found on the mountains of Wicklow, is it not a pleasant one?

Mur. Pleasant to those who look on sky and cliff, on wood and torrent, to rouse and refresh the mind, in the intervals of such retirement as hath a purpose and a limit. To the lonely outcast what scene is pleasant? The meanest man who plies his honest trade in the narrow lane of a city, where passers-by may wish him a good day, or bid God speed him, has a domicile and a home which I think of with envy.

Vio. O do not, then, live any longer in this deserted situation!

Mur. I know what thou wilt offer, but it must not be.

Vio. Why so? Since I have lost my dear mother, and have no farther duties to detain me here, may I not cross the sea with you now, and spend some time with you in Wicklow. It will be thought that I am gone to visit our Irish relation.

Mur. No, my affectionate child, that may not be.

Vio. I should go to our relation first, and nobody should know that I went anywhere else but Dunganren; nor should I even tell it to him without your permission.

Mur. (*rising quickly from his seat*.) Which thou shalt never have.

Vio. Why do you utter those words so vehemently? He is honourable and true.

Mur. He is thy lover, and thou believest him to be so.

Vio. Are you displeas'd that he is my lover?

Mur. Yes, I am displeas'd, for he will never be thy husband.

Vio. O think not so hardly of him! in his heart there is honour even stronger than affection. And if I might but tell him of your being alive——

Mur. Art thou mad? art thou altogether bereft of understanding? Swear to me, on the faith of a Christian woman, that thou wilt never reveal it.

Vio. He is incapable of betraying any one, and far less——

Mur. Hold thy tongue! hold thy tongue, simple creature! Every man seems true to the woman whose affections he hath conquered. I know the truth of man and the weakness of woman. Reason not with me on the subject, but solemnly promise to obey me. I should feel myself as one for whom the rope and the gibbet are preparing, should any creature but thyself know of my being alive.

Vio. Woe is me! this is misery indeed.

Mur. Do not look on me thus with such mingled pity and surprise. Call what I feel an excess of distrust—a disease—a perversion of mind, if thou wilt, but solemnly promise to obey me.

Vio. Let my thoughts be what they may, I dare not resist the will of a parent; I solemnly

promise. (*Looking up to heaven, and then bending her head very low.*)

Mur. I am satisfied, and shall return to my boat, which waits for me on the Clyde, near the mouth of this burn, with a mind assured on so important a point, and assured of thy good conduct and affection. (*Looking about, alarmed.*) I hear a noise.

Vio. 'Tis the moving of some owl or hawk in the rifts of the rock overhead. To this retired spot of evil report no human creature ever ventures to come, even at mid-day.

Mur. Yes, I remember it used to be called the Warlock's den, and had some old legendary pretensions to the name. But there is a noise. (*Looks up to the open part of the cave, and discovers DUNGARREN above, looking down upon them.*)

Vio. It is Dunganren; what shall we do? Begone, father.

Mur. I must stand to it now; he will be down upon us in an instant: it is too late to avoid him.

Vio. No, it is not; he shall not come down. (*Calling up to him.*) Robert Kennedy, is it thou?

Dun. (*above*.) Does the voice of Violet Murrey dare to ask me the question?

Vio. Stay where thou art, and come no farther; I dare ask thee to be secret and to be generous.

Dun. (*above*.) Distracting and mysterious creature, I obey thee. (*Retires.*)

Vio. He retires, and we are safe. Let us now separate. (*In a low voice.*) Farewell, my dear father! you will come and see me again?

Mur. I hope next summer to pay thee another and a less hurried visit. Farewell. (*Holding her back.*) No, no! do not embrace me.

Vio. He has retired, and will not look again.

Mur. Be not too confident. Farewell, and remember thy solemn promise. My ship will sail for Ireland to-morrow morning early, and thou shalt hear from me soon. [*Exit by the way he entered.*]

Vio. (*alone*.) If they should meet without, and they may do so!—But that must not be. (*Calling in a loud voice.*) Dunganren, Dunganren! art thou still within hearing?

[*DUNGARREN re-appears above.*]
I cannot speak to thee in so loud a voice; come down to me here.

[*He descends by the jutting rocks into the bottom of the cave in the dress and accoutrements of an angler, with a fishing-rod in his hand, and stands before her with a stern and serious look, remaining perfectly silent.*]

O Robert Kennedy! look not on me thus! I meant to thank you for your friendly forbearance, but now I have no utterance: I cannot speak to you when you so look upon me.

Dun. Silence is best where words were vain and worthless.

Vio. You deserve thanks, whether you accept them or not.

Dun. To obey the commands of a lady deserves none.

Vio. Nay, but it does, and I thank you most gratefully. He who was with me is gone, but— but—

Dun. But will return again, no doubt, when the face of a casual intruder will not interrupt your conference.

Vio. O no! he will not return—may never return. Who he is, and where he goes, and how I am bound to him, O how I long to tell thee all, and may not!

Dun. What I have seen with mine eyes leaves you nothing to tell which I am concerned to hear.

Vio. Be it so, then; since the pride of your heart so far outmates its generosity.

Dun. You have put it out of my power to be generous; but you desire me to be secret, and shall be obeyed. Is it your pleasure, madam, that I should conduct you to your home, since he who was with you is gone?

Vio. That I accept of a service so offered, shows too well how miserably I am circumstanced. But I do accept it: let me leave this place. (*Goes toward the mouth of the cave.*)

Dun. Not by the burn, the water is too deep.

Vio. I came by it, and there is no other way.

Dun. Came by it, and dry-shod too! (*Looking at her feet.*) He who was with thee must have carried thee in his arms.

Vio. Yes, he did so; but now I will walk through the stream: wet feet will do me no injury.

Dun. There is another passage through a cleft rock on this side, concealed by the foxglove and fern.

Vio. Lead on, then, and I'll follow. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A large hall or entrance-room, with deer's horns and arms hanging on the walls.

Enter Nurse with a tankard in her hand, followed presently by ANDERSON, who calls after her as she is about to disappear by the opposite side.

And. Nurse, nurse, I say! Is the woman deaf?

Nurse. What are ye roaring after me for? Can a body get nae peace nor comfort ony time o' the day or night? Neither o' them, by my troth, bring muckle rest to me.

And. That may be, but ye'r tankard comforts, that belong, as it wad seem, to baith day and night, maun be stinted at present; for the sheriff and a' his rascally officers frae Paisley are at the yett, and writers beside, Lord preserve us! wi' ink-horns at their buttons and paper in their hands. Gae tell the leddy quickly, and set ye'r tankard down.

Nurse. For the sheriff officers to lay their lugs

in. Na, na! sma'er browst may serve them; I'll mak' sure o' some o't. [*Takes a drink and exit.*]

And. I wonder whaur the laird is: it's an unchancy time for him to be out of the gaet. Donald, Donald!

Enter DONALD.

Whaur's the laird? He should be here to receive the sheriff.

Donald. He's no in the house.

And. Gang and find him in the fields, then.

Donald. He's no in the fields, neither.

And. Whaur is he, then?

Donald. He'll be a clever fellow, I reckon, that finds him on the hither side o' Dumbarton.

And. How dost tu ken that sa weel? What suld tak him to Dumbarton?

Donald. His ain ill humour, I believe, for he returned fra' the fishing wi' his knit brows as grumly as a thunner cloud on the peak o' Benlomond, and desired me to saddle his mear: and he took the road to the ferry without speaking anither word; and the last sight I gat o' the mear and him was frae the black craig head, when they war baith in the boat together, half way over the Clyde.

And. That's unlucky: I maun gang to the yett and receive the sheriff mysel, as creditably as I can.

Donald. Ye may save yoursel that trouble, I trow, for he has made his way into the house already.

Enter the Sheriff with his Officers and Attendants, and Servants of the family following them.

Sheriff (to ANDERSON). We would see the Laird of Dunganren.

And. He's frae hame, an please your honour.

Sheriff. From home! are you sure of this? we come on no unfriendly errand.

And. I mak' nae doubt o' that, your honour: but he is frae hame, and far a-field, too.

Sheriff. That is unfortunate; for I am here officially to examine the members of his household. His mother, I presume, is at home?

And. Yes, your honour; the leddy is at hame, and will come to you immediately.

Sheriff. It is said you have been disturbed with strange noises and visitations in this family, and that the young lady is more tormented than ever. What kind o' noises have been heard?

And. O Lord, your honour, sic elrich din! I can compare it to nothing. Sometimes it's like the sougning o' wind; sometimes like the howling o' dogs.

Donald (taking the word from him). Sometimes like the mewling o' cats; sometimes like the clattering o' broomsticks.

1st serv. (pressing forward and taking the word from DONALD). Sometimes like the hooting o' howlets; and sometimes like a black sow grunting.

Sheriff. A black sow grunting!

Donald. Ay, please your honour. The grunt of a black sow is as de'il-like as its colour: I wad ken't, in the dark, frae ony white sow that ever wore a snout.

Sheriff. Well, sometimes hooting of owlets, and the grunting of a black sow.

Aud., Donald, and 1st serv. (all speaking at once). And sometimes like a——

Sheriff. Spare me, spare me, good folks! I can listen but to one at a time.

Enter LADY DUNGARREN, ANNABELLA, PHEMY, Nurse, and Maid-servants.

Good day, and my good service to you, Lady Dungarren. I'm sorry the laird is from home: my visit may perhaps disturb you.

Lady Dun. Do not say so, sheriff; I am at all times glad to see you; but were it otherwise, we are too well accustomed to be disturbed in this miserable house, to think much of any thing.

Sheriff. I am very sorry for it,—very sorry that your daughter continues so afflicted.—(Showing her a paper.) Have you any knowledge of this paper? The information contained in it is the cause of my present intrusion.

Lady Dun. (after having looked over it attentively). I know nothing of the paper itself; but the information it conveys is true.

Sheriff. Have you ever seen the handwriting before?

Lady Dun. No—yes—I think I have. Look at it, Annabella: it is somewhat like your own.

Anna. (in a hurried manner). Dear madam, how can you say so? The l's, and the m's, and the n's are all joined stiffly together, and you know very well that I never join my letters at all.

Lady Dun. Very true, cousin; I see there is a great difference now, and I don't know whose hand it is, though doubtless the hand of a friend; for we cannot remain in this misery much longer. It should be examined into, that the guilty may be punished, and prevented from destroying my poor child entirely.

Sheriff. Has any person of evil repute been admitted to see her? Who has been in her chamber?

Lady Dun. Who has been visibly in her chamber, we can easily tell; but who has been invisibly there, the Lord in heaven knows.

Sheriff. Have they never been visible to the child herself whom they torment?

Lady Dun. She has stared, as though she saw them.

Anna. She has shrieked, as though they laid hold of her.

Nurse. She has clenched her hands as if she had been catching at them, in this way. [Showing how.]

Phemy. Ay, and moved her lips so (showing how), as if speaking to them. I saw her do it.

Nurse. And so did I; and I saw her grin, and shake her head so, most piteously.

Phemy, nurse, and maid-servant (all speaking at once). And I saw her——

Sheriff. Softly, softly, good woman! Three tellers are too many for one tale, and three talers are too many for one pair of ears to take in at a time.—(Turning to the lady.) Has she ever told you that she saw witches by her bed-side?

Lady Dun. Yes; several times she has told me so, in wild and broken words.

Sheriff. Only in that manner.

Anna. You forget, madam, to mention to the sheriff, that she told us distinctly, a few hours ago, how a witch had been sitting on her breast, as she lay in bed; and that, when she struggled to get rid of her, she rent a piece from the sleeve of her gown.

Sheriff. The witch rent the sleeve from her gown?

Nurse. No, no, your honour; our poor child rent a piece frae the sleeve o' the witch's gown.

Sheriff. Has the piece been found?

A great many, speaking at once. Ay, ay! it has! it has!

Sheriff. Silence, I say!—(To ANNABELLA.) Have the goodness to answer, madam: has the rag been preserved?

Anna. It has, sir; but it is no rag, I assure you.

Nurse. As good silk, your honour, as ever came frae the Luckenbooths of Edinburgh.

Sheriff. Are not witches always old and poor?

The devil must have helped this one to a new gown, at least; and that is more than we have ever heard of his doing to any of them before.

Anna. We have read of witehes who have been neither old nor poor.

Sheriff. Ha! is there warrantry, from sober sensible books, for such a notion? I am no great scholar on such points: it may be so.—But here comes the minister: his better learning will assist us.

Enter MR. RUTHERFORD.

I thank you, my reverend sir, for obeying my notice so quickly. Your cool head will correct our roused imaginations: you believe little, I have heard, of either apparitions or witches.

Ruth. My faith on such subjects was once, indeed, but weak.

Sheriff. And have you changed it lately?—(A pause for RUTHERFORD to answer, but he is silent.) Since when has your faith become stronger?

After a short pause as before, several voices call out eagerly.—Since the storm on Friday night; when Mary Maemurren and a' the crew were on the moor.

Sheriff. Silence, I say again! Can the minister not answer for himself, without your assistance?—You heard my question, Mr. Rutherford: were you upon the moor on that night?

Ruth. I was.

Sheriff. And saw you aught upon the moor contrary to godliness and nature?

Ruth. What I saw, I will declare in fitter time and place, if I must needs do so.

Sheriff. Well, well, you are cautious, good sir; and, perhaps, it is wise to be so. — Lady Dunganren, with your permission, I will go into the sick chamber and examine your daughter myself.

Lady Dun. You have my permission most willingly. Follow me immediately, if you please, and ask the poor child what questions you think fit. Mr. Rutherford, do you choose to accompany us?

[*Exit* LADY DUNGARREN, ANNABELLA, *Sheriff,* and RUTHERFORD; ANDERSON,

Nurse, DONALD, &c. &c. *remaining.*

And. And he'll gie nae answer at a', even to the sheriff.

Nurse. Certes, were he ten times a minister, he should hae tauld what he saw to the sheriff of the county.

Donald. A gentleman born and bred, and the king's appointed officer into the bargain.

Nurse. And he winna tell what he saw afore us, forsooth—for that's what he means by fitter time and place—foul befa' his discretion! He wadna believe in witches, I trow; but they hae cowed him weel for 't at last.

And. To be sure, he looket baith ghastly and wan, when the sheriff speered what he saw upon the moor.

Nurse. Ay, ay, it was some fearfu' sight nae doubt. God's grace preserve us a'! the very thought o' what it might be gars my head grow cauld like a turnip.

Donald. It was surely something waur than witches dancing that frightened the minister.

Nurse. As ye say, Donald: either Highlander or Lowlander has wit enough to guess that. I like nane o' your ministers that'll speak naewhere but in the pu'pit. Fitter time and place, quotha!

And. Hoot, toot, woman! he has gotten his lear at the college, and he thinks shame to be frightened.

Nurse. Foul befa' him and his lear too! It maun be o' some new-fangled kind, I think. Our auld minister had lear enough, baith Hebrew and Latin, and he believed in witches and warlocks, honest man, like ony ither sober, godly person.

And. So he did, nurse; ye're a sensible woman, but somewhat o' the loudest, when ye're angry. Thae gude folks want some refection, I trow; and there's gude yill and ham in the buttery.—Come, sirs, follow me.

[*Exit, with a courteous motion of the hand, followed by the sheriff's officers, &c. PHEMY and nurse remaining.*

Nurse. Whaur can Black Bauldy be a' this while? His smooty face is seldom missing whan ony mischief is ganging on!

Phemy. What do you want with him?

Nurse. To send him owre the craft for the new-laid eggs, that the ploughman's wife promised us.

Phemy. He has been sent further off on another errand already.

Nurse. And wha sent him, I should like to ken, whan we are a' sae thrang?

Phemy. My lady sent him.

Nurse. Your leddy, say ye! She has grown unco intimate wi' that pawky loon o' late: I wish gude may come o't. I maun gang for the eggs mysel, I warrant.—But I maun e'en gang first to the chaumer door, and listen a wee; though we'll only hear the hum o' their voices, an our lugs war as glear as the coley's.

Phemy. And I'll go with you too: the hum o' their voices is worth listening for, if nothing more can be heard.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

An open space before the Abbey Church of Paisley.

Enter the Sheriff and RUTHERFORD, in earnest discourse.

Sheriff. Yes, you may, indeed, be well assured that I have never, during all the years in which I have served the office of sheriff of this county, performed a duty so painful; and I am very sensible that what I am compelled to summon you to perform, is still more distressing.

Ruth. Were it not sinful, I could wish myself incapable, from disease or disaster, or any other let, of giving legal testimony. Oh! to think of it clouds my brain with confusion, and makes me sick at heart! Violet Murrey, the young, the unfortunate, the gentle, and, I firmly believe, the innocent,—to give evidence to her prejudice,—it is a fearful duty!

Sheriff. It is so, good sir; yet it must be done. I have taken into custody, on accusation of witchcraft, the fairest woman in the west of Scotland; and you must answer on oath to the questions that may be put to you, whether it be for or against her. If she be innocent, Providence will protect her.

Enter the Chief Bailie of Paisley behind them, and listens to the conclusion of the above speech.

Bailie. If she be innocent! Can any one reasonably suppose that such a creature would be accused, or even suspected, but on the strongest proofs of guilt? Some old haggard beldame, with an ill name at any rate, might be wrongfully suspected; but Violet Murrey, good sooth! must have been where she should not have been, ere a tongue or a finger in the county would have wagged to her prejudice.

Sheriff. That's what your wife says, I suppose.

Baillie. By my faith, sheriff, it's what every body says; for it stands to reason.

Ruth. That it stands to folly, would be an apter cause for every body's saying it, my worthy baillie.

Baillie. Grace be with us all! does a minister of the Gospel set his face against that for which there be plain texts of Scripture? And when cattle are drained dry, children possessed, storms raised, houses unroofed, noises in the air, and every one's heart beating with distrust and fear of his neighbour,—is this a time for us to stand still, and leave free scope for Satan and his imps to lord it over a sober and godly land? By my certes! I would carry faggots with my own hands to burn my nearest of kin, though her cheeks were like roses, and her hair like threads of gold, if she were found, but for one night, joining in the elrich revelry of a devil's conventicle. (*A distant trumpet heard.*) Ha! the judges so near the town already!

Sheriff. Would they were further off! they come sooner than I reckoned for.

Baillie. Soon or late, we must go to meet them, as in duty bound.—You take precedence, sheriff: I will follow you. [*Exeunt Sheriff and Baillie.*]

Ruth. (*alone.*) What is or is not in this mysterious matter, lies beyond human reason to decide. That I must swear to the truth of what I have seen, when questioned thereupon by authority, is my only elcar point of discernment. Hard necessity! My heart, in despite of every proof, whispers to me she is innocent. (*A loud brawling and tumult heard without.*) What noise is this?—The senseless exasperated crowd besetting one of those miserable women who held orgies on the heath on that dreadful night.

Enter MARY MACMURREN and WILKIN, in the custody of constables, and surrounded by a crowd, who are casting dust at her, &c. The constables endeavouring to keep them off.

1st woman. Deil's hag! she'll pay for her pastime now, I trow.

2d woman. For a' the milk kye she has witched.

1st woman. For a' the bonnie bairns she has blasted.

1st man. She girns like a brock at a terry-dog.

2d man. Seore her aboon the breath, or she'll east a eantrup, and be out o' your han's in a twinkling.

Mary Mac. What gars ye rage at me sae? I ne'er did nae harm to none o' ye.

1st woman. Hear till her! hear till her! how she lees!

1st man. And what for no? Leeing is the best o' their lear, that hae the de'il for their dominie.

2d man. Ay, wicket witch; leeing's nought to her: but we'll gie her something forbye words for an answer. Wha has gotten a joeteleg to seore the wrinkled brow o' her?

3d man (*offering a knife.*) Here! here!

[*The crowd rush furiously upon her, and are with difficulty kept off by the constables.*]

1st con. Stand back, I say, every mithcr's son o' ye, an' every faither's daughter to boot. If the woman be a witch, winna she be burnt for't, as ithers o' that calling hae been afore her? Isna that enough to content ye?

1st man. Ay, we'll soon see that ugly faee, glowing through the smoke o' her benfire, like a howlet in the stour of an auld cowping barn.

2d man. An that piece o' young warlockry by her side, see how he glow's at us! can tu squeek, imp? (*Trying to pinch WILKIN, who calls out.*)

Wilkin. O dule! O dear! it's the meddling wi' me.

1st con. Shame upon ye, shame upon ye a'! Ha' ye nae better way o' warring wi' the de'il than tormenting a poor idiot?

Mary Mac. Shame upon ye; he's a poor fatherless idiot.

1st woman. Fatherless, forsooth! He's a fiend-begotten imp I warrant ye, and should be sent to the dad he belongs to. (*Trumpet heard nearer.*)

1st con. Red the way, I say, and gang out o' our gait, lika saul and bouk o' ye! The judges are at han', and my prisoner maun be carried or they come, else they'll order ye a' to the tolbooth at a swoop.

[*Exeunt constables with MARY MACMURREN and WILKIN, followed by some of the crowd, while others remain; the trumpet heard still nearer.*]

1st man. What a braw thing it is to hear the trumpet sound sae nobly! There they come now; the judges, and the sheriff, and the baillies, and the deacons—a' the grand authorities o' the country.

1st woman. Heigh sa' us, what a gurly carle that judge is on the left! nae witch that stan's before him wull escape, I trow, war' she as young and as bonny as the rose-buds in June.

Young woman. Hau'd your tongue, mithcr, that a body may see them in peace. It's an awfu' thing but to look upon them here: the Lord help them that maun fae them in condemnation!

1st woman. Daft bairn! wull the Lord help witches, thinkst tu?

Enter judges in procession, followed by the sheriff, baillies, gentlemen of the county, and attendants, &c. &c., and passing diagonally across the stage, exeunt.

SCENE II.

A poor, mean room in a private house in Paisley.

Enter ANNABELLA, throwing back her hood and mantle as she enters.

Anna. Now let me breathe awhile, and enjoy my hard-earned triumph unconstrainedly.—Revenge,

so complete, so swift-paced, so terrible! It repays me for all the misery I have endured. — May I triumph? dare I triumph? — Why am I astounded and terrified on the very pinnacle of exultation? Were she innocent, Providence had protected her. What have I done but contrived the means for proving her guilt? Means which come but in aid of others that would almost have been sufficient.

Enter BLACK BAWLDY.

Bawldy. O dule! O dule! she's condemned! she'll be executed, she'll be burnt, she'll be burnt the morn's morning at the cross, and a' through my putting that sorrowfu' gown into your hands, and by foul play, too, foul befa' it! O hone, O hone!

Anna. What's all this weeping and wringing of hands for? Art thou distracted?

Bawldy. I kenna how I am, I care na how I am; but I winna gang to hell wi' the death of an innocent leddy on my head, for a' the gowd in Christentie.

Anna. Poor fool! what makes thee think that the gown thou gottest for me had any thing to do with her condemnation?

Bawldy. O you wicked woman! I ken weel enough; and I ken what for you confined me in that back chammer sae lang, and keepit my brains in sic a whirlegig wi' whiskey and potatoes.

Anna. Thou knowest! how dost thou know?

Bawldy. I set my lug to a hole in the casement, and heard folks below in the close telling a' about the trial. It was that gown spread out in the court, wi' a hole in the sleeve o't, matching precisely to a piece o' the same silk, which na doubt you tore out yourself when it was in your hands, that made baith judge and jury condemn her.

Anna. Poor simpleton! didst thou not also hear them say, that the minister, sore against his will, swore he saw her on the moor, where the witches were dancing, in company with a man who has been in his grave these three years? was not that proof enough to condemn her, if there had been nothing more?

Bawldy. It may be sae.

Anna. And is so. Is not Mary Macmurren a witch? and has not she been condemned upon much slighter evidence? Thou'rt an absolute fool, man, for making such disturbance about nothing.

Bawldy. Fool, or nae fool, I'll gang to the sheriff and tell him the truth, and then my conscience will be clear frae her death, whate'er she may be.

Anna. Her death, frightened goose! Dost thou think she will really be executed?

Bawldy. I heard them say, that she and Mary Macmurren are baith to be burnt the morn's morning.

Anna. They said what they knew nothing about. Mary Macmurren will be burnt, for an example to all other witches and warlocks, but a respite and

pardon will be given to Violet Murrey: it is only her disgrace, not her death, that is intended; so thy conscience may be easy.

Bawldy. If I could but believe you!

Anna. Believe me, and be quiet; it is the best thing thou canst do for thyself, and for those who are dearest to thee. Be a reasonable creature, then, and promise to me never to reveal what thou knowest.

Bawldy. I will keep the secret, then, since she is not to suffer. But winna you let me out the morn to see the burning o' Mary Macmurren? It wad be a vexatious thing to be sae near till't, and miss sic a sight as that.

Anna. Thou shalt have all reasonable indulgence. But what scares thee so?

[*Voice heard without.*

Bawldy (trembling). I hear the voice o' Grizeld Bane. She mann ha' been below the grund wi' her master sin' we last gat sight o' her at the tower, else the sheriff officers would ha' grippet her wi' the rest. Lord preserve us! is she coming in by the door or the winnoch, or up through the boards o' the flooring? I hear her elrich voice a' round about us, an my lugs ring like the bell o' an awmous house.

Enter GRIZELD BANE.

Grizeld Bane. Now, my brave lady, my bold lady, my victorious lady! Satan has many great queens in his court, many princesses in his court, many high-blooded beauties in his court; I saw them all last night, sweeping with their long velvet robes the burning pavement of it: thou wilt have no mean mates to keep thee company, and thou wilt match with the best of them too; there is both wit and wickedness in thee to perfection.

Anna. Hush, hush, Grizeld Bane! What brings thee here? Are there not good ale and spirits in thy cellar, and a good bed to rest upon? What brings thee here?

Grizeld Bane. Shame of my cellar! thinkst thou I have been there all this time? I have been deeper, and deeper, and deeper than a hundred cellars, every one sunken lower than another.

Bawldy (aside to ANNABELLA). I tauld you sae, madam.

Anna (aside to BAWLDY). Go to thy chamber, if thou'rt afraid.

Grizeld Bane. Ay, deeper and deeper —

Anna. Thou needst not speak so loud, Grizeld Bane; I understand thee well enough. I hope thou hast been well received where thou wast.

Grizeld Bane. Ay; they received me triumphantly. They scented the blood that will pour and the brands that will blaze; the groans and the shrieks that will be uttered were sounding in their ears, like the stormy din of a war-pipe. What will be done to-morrow morning! Think upon that,

my dainty chuck! and say if I did not deserve a noble reception.

Anna. No doubt, with such society as thy imagination holds converse with.

Grizeld Bane. Yes, dearest! and thou, too, hast a noble reception abiding thee.

Anna. (*shrinking back*). Heaven forefend!

Grizeld Bane. Ha, ha, ha! Art thou frightened, dearest? Do not be frightened! it is a grand place! my own mate is there, and the cord about his neck changed into a chain of rubies. There is much high promotion abiding thee.

Anna. And will have long abiding, I trust, ere I am invested with it.

Grizeld Bane. Not so long; not so long, lady: whenever thou wilt it may be. Dost thou love a clasped gorget for thy pretty white neck? (*Going up to her with a sly grin of affected courtesy, and attempting to grasp her throat.*)

Bawldy (*springing forward and preventing her*). Blasted witch! wad ye throttle her?

Grizeld Bane. Ha! imp! hast thou followed me so fast behind? Down with thee! Down with thee! There is molten lead and brimstone a-cooking for thy supper; there's no lack of hot porridge for thee, varlet.

Bawldy. Oh madam, oh madam! what hae ye brought on yoursel and on me, that was but a poor ignorant callant! O send for the minister at once, and we'll down on our knees, and he'll pray for us. The damnation of the wicked is terrible.

Anna. She is but raving: the fumes of her posset have been working in her brain; be not foolish enough to be frightened at what she says.

Bawldy. I wish, O I wish I had never done it! I wish I had never set eyes or set thoughts on the mammon of unrighteousness. Oh, oh!

Grizeld Bane (*to BAWLDY*). Ha, ha, ha! Thou'rt frightened, art thou?

Anna. Thou seest she is in jest, and has pleasure in scaring thee. Go to thy chamber, and compose thyself. (*Calling him back as he is about to go, and speaking in his ear.*) Don't go till she has left me. Hie to thy cellar, Grizeld Bane.

Grizeld Bane. And leave thy sweet company, lady?

Anna. For a good savoury meal, which is ready for thee; I hear them carrying it thither. Go, go! I have promised to visit Lady Dunganren at a certain hour, and I must leave thee. (*Calling very loud.*) Landlord! Landlord!

Enter Landlord (*a strong determined looking-man*).

Is Grizeld Bane's meal ready? (*Significantly.*)

Land. Yes, madam, and with as good brandy to relish it as either lord or lady could desire. (*To GRIZELD BANE.*) Come, my lofty dame, let me lead you hence. (*Fixing his eyes steadfastly on her face, while she sullenly submits to be led off.*)

Manent ANNABELLA and BAWLDY.

Bawldy. The Lord be praised she is gone! for she has been in the black pit o' hell since yestreen, and wad pu' every body after her an she could. Dear leddy, send for the minister.

Anna. Hold thy fooli-h tongue, and retire to thy chamber. Violet Murrey's life is safe enough, so thy conscience may be easy. Follow me, for I must lock thee in.

Bawldy. Maun I still be a prisoner?

Anna. Thou sha'n't be so long; have patience a little while, foolish boy. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A prison. VIOLET MURREY is discovered sitting on the ground by the light of a lamp fixed in the wall; her face hid upon her lap, while a gentle rocking motion of the body shows that she is awake.

Enter DUNGARREN by a low arched door, which is opened cautiously by a turnkey, who immediately shuts it again and disappears.

Dun. (*going close to her, and after a sorrowful pause*). Violet, O Violet, my once dear Violet! dost thou know my voice? Wilt thou not raise thy head and look upon me?

Vio. I know your voice: you are very kind to come to me in my misery.

Dun. Misery, indeed! Oh that I should see thee thus,—the extremity of human wretchedness closing around thee!

Vio. (*rising from the ground and standing erect*). Say not the extremity, Robert Kennedy, for I am innocent!

Dun. I will believe it. Ay, in despite of evidence as clear as the recognition of noon-day,—in despite of all evidence, I would believe it. The hateful sin of witchcraft, if such a sin there be, thou hast never committed; it is impossible.

Vio. I know thou wilt believe it: and O! that thou couldst also believe that I am innocent of all falsehood and fickleness of affection! But thou canst not do so; it were unreasonable to expect it. Thou wilt think of me as an ungrateful, deceitful creature; and this is the memory I must leave behind me with Robert of Dunganren.

Dun. I forgive thee! I forgive thee, dear Violet! for so in thy low estate I will call thee still, though thou lovest another as thou hast never loved me.

Vio. I love him, full surely, as I cannot love thee, but not to the injury of that affection which has always been thine.

Dun. I came not here to upbraid: we will speak of this no more.

Vio. Alas, alas! I should speak and think of things far different, yet this lies on my heart as the heaviest load of all. May God forgive me for it!

Dun. And he will forgive thee, my dear friend! for such I may and will call thee, since I may not call thee more.

Vio. Do, my noble Robert! that is best of all. And, resting in thy mind as a friend, I know—I am confident, that something will happen, when I am gone, that will discover to thee my faithfulness. Death will soon be past, and thou wilt live to be a prosperous gentleman, and wilt sometimes think of one—my evil fame will not—thou wilt think, ay, wilt speak good of Violet Murrey, when all beside speak evil. Thou wilt not—*(bursts into tears)*.

Dun. *(embracing her passionately)*. My dear, dear creature! dear as nothing else has ever been to me, thou shalt not die: the very thought of it makes me distracted!

Vio. Be not so: it is the manner of it that distresses thee. But has it not been the death of the martyrs, of the holy and the just; of those, the dust of whose feet I had been unworthy to wipe? Think of this, and be assured, that I shall be strengthened to bear it.

Dun. Oh, oh, oh! If deliverance should be frustrated!

Vio. What art thou talking of? thou art, indeed, distracted. Nay, nay! let not my execution terrify thee so much. I, too, was terrified; but I have learnt from my gaoler, who has been present at such spectacles, that the sentence, though dreadful, is executed mercifully. The flames will not reach me till I have ceased to breathe; and many a natural disease doth end the course of life as mine will be terminated.

Dun. God forbid! God help and deliver us! *(Runs impatiently to a corner of the dungeon, and puts his ear close to the ground.)* I do not hear them yet: if they should fail to reach it in time, God help us!

Vio. What dost thou there? What dost thou listen for? What dost thou expect?

Dun. Means for thy deliverance,—thy escape.

Vio. Say not so; it is impossible.

Dun. It is possible, and will be, if there's a Providence on earth—if there's mercy in heaven. *(Puts his ear to the ground as before.)*

Vio. *(stooping and listening)*. I hear nothing. What is it thou expectest to hear?

Dun. I do hear it now: they are near; they will open upon us presently.

Vio. What dost thou hear?

Dun. The sound of their spades and their mattocks. O my brave miners! they will do their work nobly at last.

Vio. A way to escape under ground! my ears ring and my senses are confounded. Escape and deliverance?

Dun. Yes, love, and friend, and dear human creature! escape and deliverance are at hand.

Vio. How good and noble thou art to provide such deliverance for me, believing me unfaithful!

Dun. Come, come; that is nothing: be what thou wilt, if I can but save thee!—Life and death are now on the casting of a die.—The ground moves; it is life! *(Tossing up his arms exultingly.)*

Vio. The ground opens: wonderful, unlooked-for deliverance! Thank God! thank God! His mercy has sent it.

[The earthen floor of the dungeon at one corner falls in, making a small opening, and the miners are heard distinctly at work.]

Dun. *(calling down to them)*. May we descend? are you ready?

Voice *(beneath)*. In two minutes the passage will be practicable.

Dun. *(as before)*. Make no delay; we will pass any how.

Vio. How quickly they have worked, to mine so far under ground since yesterday!

Dun. That mine was completed many months ago to favour the escape of a prisoner, who died suddenly in prison before his projected rescue. The secret was revealed to me yesterday, by one of the miners, who had originally conducted the work.

Voice *(beneath)*. We are ready now.

Dun. Heaven be praised! I will first descend, and receive thee in my arms.

[As they are about to descend, the door of the dungeon opens, and enter RUTHERFORD and LADY DUNGAREN, accompanied by the sheriff and gaoler.]

Sheriff. Ha! company admitted without due permission! Dungaren here! Your underling, Mr. Gaoler, is a rogue. How is this?

Gaoler. As I am a Christian man, I know no more about it than the child that was born since yestreen.

Sheriff. It is only one born since yestreen that will believe thee. A hole in the floor, too, made for concealment and escape! Dungaren, you are my prisoner in the king's name. To favour the escape of a criminal is no slight offence against the laws of the land.

Dun. You distract me with your formal authorities: the laws of the land and the laws of God are at variance, for she is innocent.

Sheriff. She has abused and bewitched thee to think so; and a great proof it is of her guilt.

Dun. It is you and your coadjutors who are abused, dreadfully and wickedly abused, to hurry on, with such unrighteous obduracy, the destruction of one whom a savage would have spared. Tremble to think of it. At your peril do this.

Sheriff. I am as sorry as any man to have such work to do, but yet it must be done; and at your peril resist the law. Holloa, you without! *(Calling loud.)*

Enter his Officers, armed.

Take Robert Kennedy, of Dunganren, into custody, in the king's name.

[*The officers endeavour to lay hold of DUNGAREN, who paces about in a state of distraction.*

Dun. Witecraft! heaven grant me patience! her life to be taken for witecraft? senseless idiotical delusion!

Sheriff (to officers). Do your duty, fellows: he is beside himself; distracted outright.

Vio. Noble Dunganren! submit to the will of heaven. I am appointed to my hard fate; and God will enable me to bear it. Leave me, my dear friend! be patient, and leave me.

Dun. They shall hack me to pieces ere I leave thee.

Vio. Dear Robert, these are wild distracted words, and can be of no avail.—Good Mr. Rutherford, and Lady Dunganren, too; ye came here to comfort me: this I know was your errand, but O comfort him! speak to him, and move him to submission!

Ruth. Your present vain resistance, Dunganren, does injury to her whom you wish to preserve.

Lady Dun. My son, my Robert, thou art acting like a maniac. Retire with these men, who are only doing their duty, and neither wish to injure nor insult you. I will stay with Violet, and Mr. Rutherford will go with you.

Dun. Leave her, to see her no more!

Lady Dun. Not so; the sheriff will consent, that you may see her again in the morning, ere—

Sheriff. I do consent: you shall see her in the morning, before she goes forth to—to the—to her—

Dun. To that which is so revolting and horrible, that no one dare utter it in words. Oh! oh! oh!

[*Groans heavily, and leans his back to the wall, while his arms drop listlessly by his side, and the officers, laying hold of him, lead him out in a state of faintness and apathy.*

Ruth. His mind is now exhausted, and unfit for present soothing; attempts to appease and console him must come hereafter; there is time enough for that. (*To VIOLET, with tenderness.*) But thy time is short; I would prepare thee for an awful change. Unless thou be altogether hostile to thoughts of religion and grace, which I can never believe thee to be.

Vio. O no, no! that were a dreadful hostility; and thou, even thou, the good and enlightened Rutherford, my long-tried monitor and friend, canst express a doubt whether I am so fearfully perverted. Alas! death is terrible when it comes with disgrace,—with the execration of Christian fellow-creatures! O pray to God for me! pray to God fervently, that I be not overwhelmed with despair!

Ruth. I will pray for thee most fervently; and thou wilt be supported.

Vio. I have been at times, since my condemnation, most wonderfully composed and resigned, as if I floated on a boundless ocean, beneath His eye who says, "Be calm, be still; it is my doing." But, oh! returning surges soon swell on every side, tossing, and raging, and yawning tremendously, like gulfs of perdition, so that my senses are utterly confounded. My soul has much need of thy ghostly comfort.

Lady Dun. Comfort her, good Rutherford! I forgive her all that she has done against my poor child, and may God forgive her!

Vio. And will nothing, dear madam, remove from your mind that miserable notion, that I have practised witecraft against the health and life of your child? Can you believe this and pity me? No, no! were I the fiend-possessed wretch you suppose me to be, a natural antipathy would rise in your breast at the sight of me, making all touch of sympathy impossible. I am innocent of this, and of all great crime; and you will know it, when I am laid in a dishonoured grave, and have passed through the fearful pass of death, from which there is no return.

Lady Dun. You make me tremble, Violet Murrey; if you are innocent, who can be guilty?

Vio. Be it so deemed! it is God's will: I must be meek when such words are uttered against me. (*After a pause.*) And you think it possible that I have practised with evil powers for the torment and destruction of your child; of poor Jessie, who was my little companion and playfellow, whom I loved, and do love so truly; who hung round my neck so kindly, and called me—ay, sister was a sweet word from her guileless lips, and seemed to be— (*bursts into an agony of tears.*)

Lady Dun. (*to RUTHERFORD.*) She may well weep and wring her hands: it makes me weep to think of the power of the Evil One over poor unassisted nature. Had she been less gentle and lovely, he had tempted her less strongly. I would give the best part of all that I possess to make and to prove her innocent. But it cannot be; O no! it cannot be!

Ruth. (*to LADY DUNGAREN.*) Forbear! forbear! Prayer and supplication to the throne of mercy for that grace which can change all hearts, convert misery into happiness, and set humble chastised penitence by the side of undeviating virtue,—prayer and supplication for a poor stricken sister, and for our sinful selves, are our fittest employment now.

Vio. Thanks, my good sir; you are worthy of your sacred charge. I am, indeed, a poor stricken sister; one of the flock given you to lead, and humbly penitent for all the sins and faults I have really committed. Pray for me, that I may be more perfectly penitent, and strengthened for the fearful trial that awaits me.

Ruth. Thou wilt be strengthened.

Vio. O! I have great need! I am afraid of death; I am afraid of disgrace; I am afraid of my own sinking pusillanimous weakness.

Ruth. But thou needst not be afraid, my dear child; trust in His almighty protection, who strengthens the weak in the hour of need, and gives nothing to destruction which in penitence and love can put its trust in Him.

Vio. (*weeping on his shoulder*). I will strive to do it, my kind pastor; and the prayers of a good man will help me.

Ruth. Let us kneel, then, in humble faith.

Sheriff (*advancing from the bottom of the stage*). Not here, good sir; I cannot leave her here, even with a man of your cloth, and that opening for escape in the floor.

Ruth. As you please, sir: remove her to another cell: or, if it must be, let a guard remain in this.

Enter an Attendant.

Att. (*to sheriff*). It is ready, sir.

Sheriff (*to VIOLET*). You must be removed to another prison-room.

Vio. As you please, sheriff.

Sheriff. Lean upon me, madam: woe the day that I should lodge so fair a lady in such unseemly chambers!

Vio. I thank you for your courtesy, good sheriff:—you do what you deem to be your duty; and when you are at last undeceived, and convinced of my innocence, as I know you will one day be, you will be glad to remember that you did it with courtesy.

Sheriff. Blessings on thy lovely face, witch or no witch! dost thou speak to me so gently?

[*Exit VIOLET, leaning on the sheriff.*]

Manet gaoler, who mutters to himself as he prepares to follow them.

Gaoler. A bonny witch, and a cunning ane, as ever signed compact wi' Satan! I wonder what cantrap she'll devise for the morn, when the pinching time comes. I wish it were over.

[*Exit, locking the door.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A mean chamber, with a window looking upon the market-place of Paisley.

Enter ANNABELLA and the landlord of the house.

Land. Here, madam, you can remain concealed from every body, and see the execution distinctly from the window.

Anna. Yes; this is what I want. And you must let no creature come here, on any account. Keep your promise upon this point, I charge you.

Land. Trust me, madam, nobody shall enter this room, though they carried a bag of gold in their hand. I have refused a large sum for the use of that window; and excepting some schoolboys and apprentices who have climbed up to the roof of the house, there is not a creature in the tenement, but Grizeld Bane and Black Bawldy, each in their place of confinement.

Anna. I thank thee, landlord, and will reward thee well: thou shalt be no loser for the money thou hast refused on my account. What is the hour?

Land. The abbey church struck eight, as I reckon, half an hour ago.

Anna. Longer than that—much longer. The time should be close at hand for leading out the criminals. (*Going to the window.*) What a concourse of people are assembled! and such a deep silence through the whole!

Land. Ay; in the day of doom they will scarcely stand closer and quieter.

Anna. Hold thy tongue; we know nothing of such matters.

Land. But what the holy book reveals to us.

Anna. Leave me, I pray thee. I would be alone. (*Landlord retires.*) Half an hour! no half hour was ever of such a length.—Landlord! ho! Landlord!

Re-enter Landlord.

Land. What is your pleasure, madam?

Anna. Art thou sure that no reprieve has arrived? It must be past the hour. (*Bell tolls.*) Ha! the time is true.

Land. That awful sound! It gives notice that the prisoners will soon be led forth. Lord have mercy on their sinful souls! on all sinful souls!

Anna. Thou mayst go: I would be alone.

[*Exit Landlord.*]

[*Bell tolls again, and at intervals through the whole scene.*]

Anna. (*alone*). Now comes the fearful consummation! Her arts, her allurements, her seeming beauty, her glamour, and her power,—what will they all amount to when the noon of this day shall be past? a few black ashes, and a few scorched bones.—Fy upon these cowardly thoughts,—this sinking confidence! Revenge is sweet; revenge is noble; revenge is natural; what price is too dear for revenge?—Why this tormenting commotion? To procure false evidence for the conviction of one whom we know or believe to be guilty,—is this a sin past redemption? No; it is but the sacrifice of truth for right and useful ends. I know it is; reason says it is; and I will be firm and bold, in spite of human infirmity.

Enter GRIZELD BANE.

Grizeld Bane. Yes, dearest; thou art very bold. There is not a cloven foot, nor a horned head of them all, wickeder and bolder than thou art.

Anna. (*shrinking back*). What brings thee here?

Grizeld Bane. To be in such noble company.

Anna. What dost thou mean by that?

Grizeld Bane. Every word hath its meaning, lady, though every meaning hath not its word, as thou very well knowest. I am great; thou art great; but the greatest of all stands yonder.

[*Pointing to the further corner of the room.*

Anna. What dost thou point at? I see nothing.

Grizeld Bane. But thou wilt soon, dearest. The master we both serve is standing near us. His stature is lofty; his robe is princely; his eyes are two flames of fire. And one stands behind him, like a chieftain of elrich degree.—But why is he thus? Can no power undo that hateful noose? It wavers before my eyes so distractingly!

Anna. Thou art, indeed, distracted and visionary. There is nobody here but ourselves.

Grizeld Bane. The master of us all is waiting yonder; and he will not sink to his nether court again till the fair lady is with him.

Anna. O! I understand thy moody fancy now. The master thou meanest is waiting for Violet Murray.

Grizeld Bane. Yes, dearest, if he can get her. If not, he will have some one else, who is worthy to bear him company. He must have his meed and his mate: he will not return empty-handed, when a fair lady is to be had.

Anna. Heaven forefend! (*The bell now sounds quicker*). That bell sounds differently: they are now leading them forth.

Grizeld Bane (*running to the window and beckoning her*). Come, come here, darling: here is a sight to make the eyes flash, and the heart's blood stir in its core. Here is a brave sight for thee!

[*They both go to the window, and the scene closes.*

SCENE II.

The market-place prepared for the execution, with two stakes, and fagots heaped round them, erected in the middle, but nearer the bottom than the front of the stage. A great crowd of people are discovered. The bell tolls rapidly, and then stops.

Enter the Sheriff and Magistrates, and MARY MACMURREN, supported by a Clergyman, and guarded.

Cler. Now, prisoner, may God be merciful to thee! Make use of the few moments of life that remain, by making confession before these good people of the wickedness thou hast committed, and the justice of the sentence that condemns thee. It

is all the reparation now in thy power; and may God accept it of thee!

Mary Mac. Oh, hone! oh, hone!

Cler. Dost thou not understand what I say? Make confession.

Mary Mac. Oh, hone! oh, hone!

Cler. Dost thou hear me, woman? Make confession.

Mary Mac. Confession?

Cler. Yes, confession, woman.

Mary Mac. Tell me what it is, an' I'll say 't.

Baillie. How cunning she is to the last!

Cler. (*to MARY MACMURREN*). Didst thou not confess on thy trial that thou wast a witch, and hadst tryste-meetings and dealings with the devil?

Mary Mac. Lord hae mercy on me: I said what I thought, and I thought as ye bade me. The Lord hae mercy on a wicked woman! for that, I know, I am.

Baillie. How cunning she is again! She calls herself wicked, but will not call herself witch.

Cler. Mary Macmurren, make confession ere you die, and God will be more merciful to you.

Mary Mac. Oh, hone! oh, hone! miserable wretch that I am! Do ye mak confession for me, sir, and I'll say't after you, as weel as I dow. Oh, hone! oh, hone!

Sheriff (*to clergyman*). There is no making any thing of her now, miserable wretch! Lead her on to the stake, and make her pray with you there, if the Evil One hath not got the entire mastery over her to the very last. (*The clergyman leads MARY MACMURREN to the stake.*) And now there is a sadder duty to perform; the fair, the young, and the gentle must be brought forth to shame and to punishment.

[*He goes to the gate of the prison, and returns, conducting VIOLET MURREY, who enters, leaning on the arm of RUTHERFORD.*

Sheriff. Now, madam, it is time that I should receive from you any commands you may wish to entrust me with: they shall be faithfully obeyed.

Vio. I thank you, Mr. Sheriff. What may be allowed for mitigating my sufferings, I know you have already ordered: have you also given similar directions in behalf of my miserable companion?

Sheriff. I have, madam.

Vio. Thanks for your mercy! My passage to a better state will be short: and of God's mercy there I have no misgivings; for of the crime laid to my charge I am as innocent as the child newly born; as you yourself, worthy sir, or this good man on whose arm I now lean.

Sheriff. If this be so, lady, woe to the witnesses, the judges, and the jury by whom you are condemned!

Vio. Say not so. I am condemned by what honest, though erring men, believed to be the truth. What God alone knows to be the truth, is not for

man's direction.—(To RUTHERFORD.) Weep not for me, my kind friend. You had good cause to believe that you had seen me in company with a creature not of this world, and you were compelled to declare it.

Ruth. I wish I had died, ere that evidence had been given!

Vio. Be comforted! be comforted! for you make me good amends, in that your heart refuses, in spite of such belief, to think me guilty of the crime for which I am to suffer. There is another—you know whom I mean—who thinks me innocent. When I am gone, ye will be often together, and speak and think of Violet Murrey. This is the memory I shall leave behind me: my evil fame with others is of little moment. And yet I needs must weep to think of it; 'tis human weakness.

Ruth. God bless and strengthen thee, my daughter, in this thy last extremity!

Vio. Fear not for that: I am strengthened. You have prayed for me fervently, and I have prayed for myself; and think ye I shall not be supported? (Looking round on the crowd.) And these good people, too, some of them, I trust, will pray for me. They will one day know that I am innocent.

Several voices (from the crowd, calling out in succession). We know it already.—She must be so.—She is innocent.

Baillie. I command silence!—Mr. Sheriff, your duty calls upon you.

Sheriff (to VIOLET). Madam. (Turns away.)

Vio. You speak, and turn from me: I understand you.

Sheriff. I am compelled to say, though most unwillingly, our time is run.

Vio. And I am ready.—(Turning to RUTHERFORD.) The last fearful step of my unhappy course only remains: you have gone far enough, my good sir. Receive my dying thanks for all your kindness, and let us part. Farewell! till we meet in a better world!

Ruth. Nay, nay; I will be with thee till all is over, cost what it may,—though it should kill me.

Vio. Most generous man! thou art as a parent to me, and, woe the day! thy heart will be wrong as though thou wert so in truth.

Baillie (to sheriff). Why so dilatory? Proceed to the place of execution.

Sheriff. Not so hasty, sir! The psalm must first be sung.

Baillie. It will be sung when she is at the stake.

Sheriff (aside). Would thou wert there in her stead, heartless bigot!—(Aloud.) Raise the psalm here.

Vio. You are very humane, good sheriff, but we shall, if you please, proceed to the place appointed.

[She is led towards the stake, when a loud cry is heard without.

Voice. Stop! stop! stop the execution.

Enter MURREY, darting through the crowd, who give way to let him pass.

Mur. She is innocent! she is innocent! Ye shall not murder the innocent!

Sheriff (to MURREY). Who art thou, who wouldst stop the completion of the law?

Mur. One whom you have known; whom you have looked on often.

Sheriff. The holy faith preserve us! art thou a living man?

Ruth. Murrey of Torwood! doth the grave give up its dead, when the sun is shining in the sky?

Sheriff. Look to the lady, she is in a swoon.

Mur. (supporting VIOLET). My dear, my noble child! thine own misery thou couldst sustain, but mine has overwhelmed thee: dear, dear child!

Enter DUNGAREN, running distractedly.

Baillie (fronting him). Dungarren broke from prison, in defiance of the law!

Dun. In defiance of all earthly things. (Pushing the baillie aside, and rushing on to VIOLET.) Who art thou? (Looking sternly at MURREY.) What right hast thou to support Violet Murrey?

Mur. The right of a father; a miserable father.

Dun. Her father is dead.

Mur. Not so, Dungarren: I would I were dead, if it could save her life.

Dun. (pointing to RUTHERFORD). This good man, whose word is truth itself, laid Murrey of Torwood in the grave with his own hands.

Mur. Did he examine the face of the corpse which he so piously interred? I had changed clothes with my faithful servant.—But it is a story tedious to tell; and can ye doubt his claims to identity, who, in the very act of making them, subjects his own life to the forfeit of the law?

Baillie (aside to the sheriff's officers). By my faith! he is a condemned murderer, and will be required of our hands; keep well on the watch, that he may not escape.

Dun. She seems to revive; she will soon recover. (To MURREY.) And it was you who were with her on the heath, and in the cave?

Mur. It was I, Dungarren.

Dun. No apparition, no clandestine lover, but her own father!

Vio. (recovering, and much alarmed). Call him not father! I own him not! Send him away, send him away, dear Robert!

Mur. (embracing her). My generous child! the strength of thy affection is wonderful, but it is all vain: I here submit myself willingly to the authority of the law, though innocent of the crime for which I am condemned—the wilful murder of a worthy gentleman. And now, Mr. Sheriff, you cannot refuse to reprieve her, who is mainly convicted for that, in being seen with me, she seemed

to hold intercourse with apparitions, or beings of another world.

Sheriff. You speak reason: God be praised for it!

Dun. God be praised, she is safe!

Baillie. There be other proofs against her besides that.

Dun. Be they what they may, they are false!

Enter BLACK BAWLDY, *letting himself down from the wall of a low building, and running eagerly to the sheriff.*

Bawldy. Hear, my lord sheriff,—hear me, your honour—hear me, Dungarren;—hear me, a' present! She's innocent;—I stole it, I stole it mysel: the Lady Annabel tempted me, and I stole it.

Sheriff. Simple fool! it is not for theft she is condemned.

Bawldy. I ken that weel, your honour. She's condemned for being a witch, and she's nae witch: I stole it mysel and gied it to the Lady Annabel, wha cuttet the hole i' the sleeve o't, I'll be sworn. Little did I think what wicked purpose she was after.

Sheriff. Yes, yes, my callant! I comprehend thee now: it is that gown which was produced in court, thou art talking of. Thou stol'st it for the Lady Annabel, and she cut a piece out of it, which she pretended to have found in the sick-chamber?

Bawldy. E'en sac, your honour. Whip me, banish me, or hang me, an' it maun be sae, but let the innocent leddy abee.

Sheriff. Well, well; I'll take the punishing of thee into my own hands, knave. What shrieks are these?

[Repeated shrieks are heard from the window of a house, and two figures are seen indistinctly within, struggling: a dull stifled sound succeeds, and then a sudden silence.]

There is mischief going on in that house.

Baillie *(running to the door of the house, and knocking).* Let me enter: I charge you within, whoever ye be, to open the door. No answer! *(Knocks again.)* Still no answer! Open the door, or it shall be forced open.

Grizeld Bane *(looking over the window).* Ha, ha! what want ye, good Mr. Magistrate?

Baillie. Somebody has suffered violence in this house; open the door immediately.

Grizeld Bane. And what would you have from the house that ye are so impatient to enter? There be corpses enow in the churchyard, I trow; ye need not come here for them.

Sheriff. She is a mad woman, and has murdered somebody.

1st offi. Mad, your honour! she's the witch we ha' been seeking in vain to apprehend, and the blackest, chiefest hag o' them a'.

2d offi. By my faith, we maun deal cannily wi'

her, or she'll mak her escape fra' us again through the air.

Baillie *(calling up to her).* Open the door, woman, and you sha'n't be forced; we want to enter peaceably. Who is with you, there? Who was it that shrieked so fearfully?

Grizeld Bane. Never trouble thy head about that, Mr. Magistrate; she'll never disturb you more.

Sheriff. Who is it you have with you?

Grizeld Bane *(throwing down to them the scarf of ANNABELLA).* Know ye that token? It was a fair lady who owned it, but she has no need of it now: hand me up a winding-sheet.

Sheriff. The cursed hag has destroyed some lady. —Officers, enter by force, and do your duty. Witch or no witch, she cannot injure strong men like you, in the open light of day.

[The door is burst open, and the officers go into the house, and presently re-enter, bearing the dead body of ANNABELLA, which they place on the front of the stage, the crowd gathering round to stare at it.]

Baillie. Stand back, every one of you, and leave clear room round the body. It is the Lady Annabella. She has been strangled:—she has struggled fearfully; her features are swollen, and her eyes starting from her head; she has struggled fearfully. —Stand back, I say; retire to your places, every one of you, or I'll deal with you as breakers of the peace.

Sheriff. Be not so angry with them, good baillie: they must have some frightful sight to stare at, and they will be disappointed of that which they came for.

Baillie. Disappointed, sheriff! You do not mean, I hope, to reprieve that foul witch at the other stake: is not one execution enough for them? It makes me sick to see such blood-thirsting in a Christian land.

Sheriff. Ay, you say true; that poor wretch had gone out of my head.

Baillie. Wretch enough, good sooth! the blackest witch in Renfrewshire, Grizeld Bane excepted.

Sheriff. But we need not burn her now: her evidence may be wanted to convict the other.

Baillie. Not a whit! we have evidence at command to burn her twenty times over. A bird in hand is a wise proverb. If we spare her now, she may be in Norway or Lapland when we want her again for the stake.

Dun. *(approaching the body of ANNABELLA).* And this is thy fearful end, most miserable woman! It wrings my heart to think of what thou wast, and what thou mightst have been.

Murrey *(to sheriff).* Your authority having, on these undoubted proofs of her innocence, reprieved her, may I request that she be now withdrawn from the public gaze? It is not fit that she should be further exposed.

Sheriff. True, Torwood; you shall lead her back to prison, where she shall only remain till safe and commodious apartments are prepared for her. As for yourself, I am sorry to say, we have no power to lodge you otherwise than as a condemned man, obnoxious to the last punishment of the law.

Vio. O say not so, dear sir! He had made his escape, he was safe, he was free, and he surrendered himself into your hands to save the life of his child. Will ye take advantage of that? it were cruel and ungenerous.

Sheriff. We act, lady, under authority, and must not be guided by private opinions and affections.

Baillie. Most assuredly! it is our duty to obey the law and to make it be obeyed, without fear or favour.

Vio. On my knees, I beseech you! (*Kneeling and catching hold of the baillie and sheriff.*) I beseech you for an innocent man! Royal mercy may be obtained, if ye will grant the time—time to save the life of the innocent—innocent, I mean, of intentional murder.

Sheriff. Has he further proof of such innocence to produce than was shown on his trial?

Baillie. If he has not, all application for mercy were vain. He slew the man with whom he had a quarrel, without witnesses. If he is innocent, it is to God and his own conscience, but the law must deem him guilty.

Vio. He did it not without witnesses, but he who was present is dead. Alas, alas! if FATHERINGHAM had been alive, he had been justified.

Baillie. Forbear to urge that plea, lady: that the only person who was present at the quarrel or combat is dead or has disappeared, throws a greater shade of darkness on the transaction.

Sheriff. These are hard words, baillie, and unnecessary.

Baillie. You may think so, sheriff, but if you yield on this point, I entirely dissent from it; ay, from granting any delay to the execution of his sentence. Shall a man be made gainer for having defied the law and broken from his prison?

Sheriff (*to MURREY sorrowfully.*) I am afraid we can do nothing for you. You must prepare for the worst.

Mur. I came here so prepared, worthy sir: I knew you could do nothing for me. (*To VIOLET, who again kneels imploringly.*) Forbear, dearest child! thou humblest thyself in vain. I will meet fate as a man: do not add to my suffering by giving way to such frantic humiliation. (*Raising her from the ground.*) Dungarren, I commit her to your protection. You will be her honourable friend.

Dun. Ay, and her devoted husband, also, if you esteem me worthy to be so.

Mur. Worthy to be her husband, were she the daughter of a king, my noble Robert Kennedy! But thou must not be the son-in-law of such a

one as I am,—one whose life has been terminated by—

Dun. I despise the prejudice!

Vio. But I do not! O! I cannot despise it! If my father must suffer, I will never marry thee, and I will never marry another.—My fate is sealed. Thou and this good man (*pointing to RUTHERFORD*) will be my friends, and Heaven will, in pity, make my earthly course a short one. A creature so stricken with sorrow and disgrace has nothing to do in this world but to wait, in humble patience, till God in His mercy shall take her out of it.

Mur. Come from this hateful spot, my sweet child! Cruel as our lot is, we shall be, for what remains of this day, together.

[*Endeavours to lead her out, but is prevented by the crowd, who gather close on the front of the stage, as GRIZELD BANE issues with frantic gestures from the house.*

Voices (*from the crowd in succession.*) Ay, there she comes, and the de'il raging within her.—The blackest witch of a'!—Let her be brunt at the stake that was meant for the ledly.—Hurra! hurra! mair fagots and a fiercer fire for Grizeld!—Hurra! and defiance to Satan and his agents!

[*A trumpet sounds without, and the tumult increases, till a company of soldiers appears under arms, and enter an Officer, accompanied by FATHERINGHAM.*

Offi. (*giving a paper to the sheriff.*) You will please, Mr. Sheriff, to make the contents of this paper public.

Sheriff. I charge every one here, at his peril, to be silent. (*Reading.*)

“Be it known unto all men, that the King's Majesty, with the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, have decreed that the law punishing what has been called the crime of witchcraft as a felonious offence be repealed; and it is therefore repealed accordingly. Henceforth there shall no person be prosecuted at law as a wizard or witch, throughout these realms; and any person or persons who shall offer injury to any one, as being guilty of the supposed crime of witchcraft, shall be punished for such aggression. God save the King!”

[*A pause of dead silence, followed by low, then loud murmurs, and then voices call out in succession.*

Voices. My certes! the de'il has been better represented in the house of Parliament than a' the braid shires in the kingdom.—Sic a decree as that in a Christian land!—To mak Satan triumphant!—There 'll be fine gambols on moors and in kirkyards for this, I trow.—Parliament, forsooth! we hae sent bonnic members there, indeed, gin thae be the laws they mak.—And will Mary Macmurren escape after a'?—Out upon 't! She may be brunt at any rate, for she is condemned by the gude auld

law of our forefathers. — Ay, so she may; that stands to reason.

[*Crowd close round the stake where MARY MACMURREN is bound.*

Sheriff (to the crowd). Desist, I say, or the soldiers shall disperse you forthwith.

Fath. Would they burn the miserable creature for an imaginary crime; one may say, for a pastime?

Baillie (to FATHERINGHAM). No, good sir; not imaginary. She is a witch by her own confession. And that woman (pointing to GRIZELD BANE) is also, by her own words, convicted of consorting and colloquing with Satan,—an awful and mischievous witch.

Fath. Is she so?

Grizeld Bane (looking at him fiercely). Who says otherwise? The sun shines now, and that makes thee bold; but my time of power is coming.

Fath. (approaching her). Is this you, Grizeld Bane? What brought you to this part of the country?

Grizeld Bane. The prince of the power of the air.

Baillie. There, sir! you hear her confess it. And who is she? for you seem to know her.

Fath. A miserable woman whose husband was hanged for murder, at Inverness, some years ago, and who thereupon became distracted. She was, when I left that country, kept in close custody. But she has, no doubt, escaped from her keepers, who may not be very anxious to reclaim her.

Baillie. We must secure her, then, and send her back to the north.

Grizeld Bane. Lay hands on me who dare! I defy you: my master is stronger than you all, since you sent him to his kingdom of darkness. Ye cannot stop the breath of a spirit, though you had a score of executioners at your beck. Lay hands upon me who dare!

Fath. Nobody will do you any violence, dame; but you will quietly retire with these two friends of yours (motioning significantly to two soldiers, who advance and take charge of her). Nay; make no resistance: look steadfastly in my face, and you will plainly perceive that you must go.

[*Fixes his eyes upon her sternly, while she suffers herself to be led off.*

Offi. Now, Mr. Sheriff, release your prisoners, since the laws against witchcraft are abrogated.

Sheriff. I do it most gladly. Would you had authority to command the release of all my prisoners!

Offi. It is only those condemned for witchcraft, whose enlargement I have authority to command.

Mur. (stepping sternly from the opposite side of the stage, and fronting FATHERINGHAM closely). But there is a prisoner condemned for murder whom thou, James Fotheringham, knowest to be innocent,

and therefore thou art by nature authorized, yea, compelled, to demand his release,—I mean, the reversion of his sentence.

Fath. (starting back). Murrey of Torwood in the land of the living!

Mur. No thanks to thee that I am so! To desert me, and leave the country too, circumstanced as thou knowest me to be,—the only witness of that fatal quarrel,—was it the act of a friend, of a Christian, of a man?

Fath. No, neither of a Christian, nor a heathen, had it been a voluntary act. But you were not yet in custody, when I left the country, with no intention of going further than the southern coast of Ireland, to visit a dying relation.

Mur. In Ireland all these years?

Fath. Be not so hasty. That coast I never reached: a violent storm drove our vessel out to sea, where she was boarded and captured by a pirate. My varied tale, dear Murrey, you shall hear on a fitter occasion. Thank God, that I am now here! and have this day accompanied my friend (pointing to the officer) on his public errand, still in time to save thee. For hearing, on my return to England, some weeks ago, thy sad story, how thou hadst been condemned, hadst made thy escape from prison, how thy dead body was found in a pit, and interred,—I was in no hurry to proceed northwards, as the justification of thy memory could not be disappointed.

Mur. Thou shouldst not have suffered even my memory to rest under such imputation,—no, not an hour.

Vio. Dear father, be not so stern when deliverance—a blessed deliverance, is sent to thee. See; there is a tear in his eye. It was not want of friendship that detained him.

Fath. I thank thee, sweet lady, for taking my part. It was not want of friendship that detained me; though Murrey has always been so hasty and ardent, and I so deliberate and procrastinating, it is wonderful we should ever have been friends.

Dun. No, not wonderful: though slow yourself, you loved him, perhaps, for his ardour.

Fath. Yes, young man, you are right. But how was it that he loved me? if, indeed, he ever loved me. Perhaps he never did.

Mur. (rushing into his arms). I did—I do—and will ever love thee, wert thou as slow and inert as a beetle.

Dun. Now ye are friends, and this terrible tempest has past over us! May such scenes as we have this day witnessed never again disgrace a free and a Christian land!

[*A murmur among the crowd.*

Sheriff. Good people, be pacified; and instead of the burning of a witch, ye shall have six hog-heads of ale set abroad at the cross, to drink the

health of Violet Murrey, and a grand funeral into the bargain.

Dun. Forbear, sheriff : the body of this unhappy lady is no subject for pageantry. She shall be

interred with decent privacy ; and those who have felt the tyranny of uncontrolled passions will think, with conscious awe, of her end.

[*The curtain drops.*]

THE HOMICIDE:

A TRAGEDY IN PROSE, WITH OCCASIONAL PASSAGES IN VERSE, IN THREE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

CLAUDIEN, a Danish nobleman.

VAN MAURICE, his friend.

BARON HARTMAN, a near relation of VAN MAURICE.

KRANZBERG, a citizen of Lubeck, related to VAN

MAURICE and HARTMAN.

ARDUSOFFE, } advocates.

BORION, }

CORMAN, confidential servant to KRANZBERG.

Judges, confessors, officers of justice, mariners,
&c. &c.

WOMEN.

ROSELLA, sister to VAN MAURICE.

MARGARET, her confidential and domestic friend.

Scene, the free imperial city of Lubeck, and at sea.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

An ante-chamber in the house of VAN MAURICE.

Enter BARON HARTMAN and MARGARET, by different sides.

Hart. Good morning, fair Margaret ! I come to have the felicity of half an hour's conversation with Rosella. I hope this will prove to her, as well as myself, the most agreeable way of receiving an answer to the billet which I had the honour to send her this morning.

Marg. Indeed, honoured sir, she is in no spirits to receive company at present, and wishes to be alone.

Hart. Ha ! she is considering of it then. It is indeed a serious consideration ; but after the favour — I may indeed call it so — the condescension at least with which she has received my devoted at-

tentions, I might fairly have supposed that a short time would have sufficed for the ceremony of consideration.

Marg. I believe, baron, that ceremony, as you are pleased to term it, has been gone through already. At least, I believe, this billet which she desired me to put into your own hands, along with this case of jewels, will convince you that further consideration were needless. I was just going to your house to deliver them to you.

Hart. What does she mean ? return my present !

Marg. The letter will, no doubt, explain it.

Hart. (*snatches the letter, opens it with agitation, reading it half aloud and half to himself.*) "Only friendship to return for all.—Pleasure in your society as a neighbour and a kinsman.—Beg of you to accept my grateful acknowledgments." What is all this ? Would she prolong the fooling of attendance another half year ? Let her beware how she sports with devoted affection like mine ! (*Walks to and fro somewhat disturbed, then returns to MARGARET.*) I understand all this well enough. Let me find her in her own apartment.

Marg. (*preventing him as he endeavours to pass on.*) Nay, sir, you must not.

Hart. Foolish girl ! I know thy fair friend better than thou dost. Let me pass to her apartment, and I'll soon make her glowing lips contradict the cold words of her letter.

Marg. Indeed, Baron Hartman, you must not pass.

Hart. Why so ? Nonsensical mummery !

Marg. She wishes to be alone.

Hart. Alone ! wishes to be alone ! that is not her usual inclination. What is the matter ?

Marg. She is indisposed, and can see no one. And I must take the liberty to say that you are deluding yourself when you mistake that cheerful gaiety of her manner, which is natural to her, for a proof of partiality to your company.

Hart. If what you say be true, young mistress, — if this answer of hers be a serious one, I have not deluded myself, but she has deluded me.

Marg. Then every pleasant man of her acquaintance might say the same thing, for she is cheerful and affable with them all.

Hart. No, madam; affable and cheerful as you please, but she has not demeaned herself towards them as she has done towards me: and I will know the cause why I am so treated, before another hour passes over my head. (*Going.*)

Marg. But you will be pleased to take this with you, baron. (*Offering him the case of jewels, which he casts from him indignantly.*)

Hart. Let any jilt in Lubeck wear the paltry baubles for me. [*Exit.*]

Marg. (alone). The vanity of that man is un conquerable; and yet I cannot help pitying him a little; for Rosella, to conceal her betrothment to Claudien, has amused herself with his folly too long. (*Picking up the case.*) I must keep these rich jewels carefully, however, and restore them to him at a more favourable moment. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

The apartment of ROSELLA. She is discovered sitting by a table writing, and CLAUDIEN standing behind her chair, overlooking her as she writes.

Claudien. That pretty hand, and those fair characters

So delicate! they should alone express
Words of a sweet and sisterly affection,—
Words of the dearer tenderness of love.
Have done with cold notes of formality;
Let Marg'ret henceforth write such things as those.
[*Lifting her hand from the paper and caressing it.*]

No, this white hand, this soft, this delicate hand,
As delicate, as if the early dew
Dropp'd from the lily's bell or hawthorn's blossom,
A fresh collection of all summer sweetness,
Had been its daily unguent, it is mine;
Thou'st given it to me; ay, and it shall write
To me, to me alone, when I am gone.

Ros. A wise precaution, mask'd with seeming love.

When I shall think of nobody but thee,
I might, perhaps, betray our secret bond,
Beginning thus to some old gouty kinsman
A dull epistle—"My dear Claudien."

Claudien. Alas, that secret, that constraining secret!

It is a galling weight about our necks,
Would we were rid of it!

Ros. But when the king of Denmark, thy good master,

Shall know how thou art circumstanced, he surely
Will not enforce upon thee an alliance
Unsought by thee, now thought of with repug-
nance,

Because he did at first, on thy behalf,
Propose it to the parent of the maid,—
A maid thou'st scarcely seen, and never wo'd?

Claudien. I trust he will not, and should lose no time

In reaching Copenhagen ere the court
Remove to Elsinour, that speedily
I may return to thee, my sweet Rosella,
A free and happy man.

Ros. A free man, sayst thou, Claudien?

Claudien. Yes, gentle mistress, for the bonds of love

Are very freedom, or are something better.
Still, to protect thee from all harm, to be
Near to thee always; sit by thee unchidden—
Read to thee pleasant tales—look in thy face,
And, all thy smiles and meaning glances scanning,
To do what they desire—will this be thralldom?
Will this be servitude?

Ros. Ah, no! that is not servitude from which,
When tired of it, thou wilt break loose, my friend.

Claudien. And so I will, my love, when thou art tiresome,

But when will that be; say?

Ros. E'en when thou seest what thou mayst shortly find,

A face to gaze on, fairer than Rosella's.

Claudien. Be not offended; such an one already
I've seen, and yet the latchet of thy shoe
I'd rather tie and have one smile of thanks,
Than press a score of kisses on her lips.

Ros. She may be also wittier than I.

Claudien. And pardon me again; that may be possible;

Yet would I rather hear thy cheerful voice
Bidding me a good morrow, faith and truth!
Than all her wit and wisdom, were she learn'd
As Gottenburgh professor.

Ros. Fy on thee, Claudien! Wouldst thou then insinuate

That I am not thy reasonable choice,
But one that has been fasten'd on thy fancy
By spells of witchcraft?

Claudien. Thou hast it, love; by very spells of witchcraft;

For how could that be reasonable choice
Which no deliberation knew? Thy countenance,
Such as it is—thy joyous playful countenance,
I look'd upon, and look'd upon again,
Till I became a fascinated thing,
As helpless as an infant.

Ros. Alas, poor child! this was a sudden change.

Claudien. Nay, I am wrong; it was not quite so sudden;

For after I had seen thy face, I waited—
Waited with eager ears to hear thy voice, [ments,
And then I watch'd thee to observe thy move-
Light step and graceful gesture—then I waited
To hear thy voice again, and then—

Ros. I pray thee
Have done with such a foolish list of *thens!*
Dost thou forget thou hast already won me?
I'll have thee presently, I do suppose,
Repeating all thy courtship o'er again,
And kneeling at my feet for perfect idleness.

Claudien. And so thou shalt, were't only for the
pleasure

Of being raised again by that white hand.

[*Kneeling to her playfully.*

Ros. (*laying her hand upon his head.*) It will not
raise thee up, thou saucy mimic!
But keep thee down, for this thy mock humility,
Which is but vanity in cloak and vizard;
The bearing of success without misgiving
Or fear of change; the full security
Of an affianced lord.

Enter BARON HARTMAN *behind.*

Claudien. To keep me down,
Whilst thy soft fingers, mixing with my hair,
Gives thrilling so delightful! on such terms,
I'd gladly at thy feet kneel by the hour,
So to be mortified—

Hart. (*rushing forward.*) Oh, woman, woman!

[*CLAUDIEN starts up from the feet of his
mistress, and both seem surprised and embarrased.*

Ros. Baron Hartman here!

Hart. Yes, madam; and, as I perceive, not alto-
gether welcome.

Ros. In this place and at this hour, baron!

Hart. An injured man, madam, regards nor
time nor place. As a near kinsman, had there
been no other plea, I might have been admitted for
one half hour into your presence, to know the cause
why, after such long and well-received attentions, I
am now to be discarded from your favour. But
this, forsooth, could not be: you were indisposed;
you were alone, and wished to be alone. I have, no
doubt, grievously offended in breaking thus upon
the privacy of one who loves so very much to be alone.

Claudien. Truly, baron, I have, like yourself,
come unbidden into this lady's presence, and have
cast myself at her feet, as you have witnessed; for
which humiliation she has only rewarded me with
mocking: had you done the same, baron, you
would, perhaps, have fared no better.

Hart. Count Claudien, the freedom of a careless
stranger may be some excuse for your intrusion
here, but can be none for her excluding me on
pretences so frivolous; for the alleged indisposition
is, I perceive, only the being indisposed for *my*
company, who am an old and faithful friend; ay,
and her kinsman to boot.

Claudien. My noble baron, you and I are rivals,
and rest our pretensions here on very different
foundations; for you being known to the lady, I on
the reverse. But I am the wiser of the two.

Hart. How so, I pray?

Claudien. Is it not a notorious fact, that strangers
of any apparent likelihood always occupy the van-
tage ground in every woman's favour? Had the
fair Rosella known me as long as she has known
you, she might have discovered in me as many
faults, perhaps, as would have excluded me from
the very threshold of her vestibule.

Ros. So you see, my dear cousin, that the wisest
thing you can do, is to leave the count and me
time enough to discover how foolish we both are.

Hart. The wisest thing I can do, madam, is to
forget and despise the heartless caprice of a fickle,
fantastical beauty.

Ros. Be wise, then, good cousin, since you have
found out the way.

Hart. Heartless woman! canst thou treat with
such levity the misery thou hast occasioned?

Ros. O pardon me, my dear Hartman! thou
takest this matter more deeply than I dreamt of.
Think not so severely of me; if I have erred, lend
me of thine own generosity some further credit on
thy good opinion, and I will redeem it. Have you
not always known me as your gay and thoughtless
cousin? and why will you tax me now as a grave
and prudent dame? Come to me to-morrow; I
shall then have seen my brother, and will talk to
you seriously on a subject which to-day I would
avoid.

Hart. At what hour shall I meet you?

Ros. Not at an early hour.—At noon.—No, not
so soon.—In the afternoon—in the evening: that
will suit me best.

Hart. Well, since it must be deferred so long, let
the evening be the time. But remember, madam,
I will submit no longer to be the sport of female
caprice. If this gay stranger takes such treatment
more lightly, he is of a different temperament, per-
haps, and it may agree with him; but it will not
pass with Baron Hartman. [*Exit, proudly.*

Claudien. My dear Rosella! I fear thou hast
been leading on this poor man in a fool's chase. I
pity him.

Ros. I fear I have, and do repent me of it.

Claudien. It was but the foible of thy gay and
thoughtless nature.

Ros. Ah no! I fear I have not that excuse.

Claudien. Intentional deceit!

Ros. Dearest Claudien! kill me not with that
word and that look! It was to conceal my con-
nection with thee, that I have of late received the
gallantries of Hartman with more than usual gra-
ciousness; but it was to deceive the world rather
than himself. Fool that I was!

Claudien. Yes, it was foolish.

Ros. But though I might have guessed that his
inordinate vanity would construe my behaviour
into downright love of his fine form and mental
endowments, I never imagined he would feel more

pain in the disappointment than a little wounded vanity might inflict, nor am I sure that he really feels more deeply.

Claudien. I fear thou dost him wrong. I pity him from my heart; and were it possible for me to chide what is so dear, I should inflict upon thee, at this moment, words of grave rebuke.

Ros. Nay, not now, dear *Claudien!* reserve them till thy return, for then I shall be so happy that they will sound in my ear like harmony. I cannot bear them now. *(Weeping.)*

Claudien. Nay, nay, mistress of my soul! I meant not to distress thee so much. Those tears are a greater punishment to me than I can bear. And let me wipe them off,—kiss them off. Thou shalt never shed tears again for *Claudien's* sternness.

Enter MARGARET.

Ros. What is the matter?

Marg. Nothing; I am only come to inform the count that the master of the vessel is below, and wishes to know his will concerning the removal of his luggage.

Claudien. Ha! very true; I should have waited for him at home, and it slipped from my memory entirely. Keep thee from being in love, fair *Margaret*, it makes one's head not worth a maravedi.

Marg. But the heart finds what the head loses, and where is the waste?

Claudien. True, girl; and be pleasant and amusing to thy friend here, while I am absent.

[Exit.

Ros. My dear *Margaret*, didst thou see *Hartman* when he left the house?

Marg. Only a glimpse of him.

Ros. Did he look very miserable?

Marg. I do think he did, poor man; but he is so vain, he will be the better for his mortification.

Ros. I thank thee, *Margaret*; it does me good to hear thee say so; for I know that thy thoughts and thy words are the same.

Marg. Come along, my dear child, and I will tell thee a new story of his consummate conceit as we go: shall not we take our usual turn on the terrace?
[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A public garden.

Enter HARTMAN, walking backward and forward in a perturbed manner, and presently enter KRANZBERG, who stands observing him curiously before he speaks.

Kranz. Good morning, kinsman; nothing, I hope, has happened to disturb you: I have marked you at a distance, striding along with a quick unusual pace: pardon the solicitude of friendship, if I am anxious to know what discomposes you so much.

Hart. Let it pass, let it pass! I know my place and my pretensions as well as any man; she shall neither break my heart nor discompose me long.

Kranz. It is a woman, then, who is the cause of your agitation. What kind of woman can she be who is unfavourable to the suit of *Baron Hartman*?

Hart. Thou mayst well ask that question, my friend; it would, I believe, cause some surprise in many a noble citizen of *Lubeck*.

Kranz. In many a noble lady of *Lubeck* we may, at least, aver; though strange unnatural things will sometimes happen, as if by witchery. But let her have her way; she will be glad enough at last to bring you back to her toils again by humble submission, if you will have spirit enough to forswear her company for a time.

Hart. A time!

Kranz. Ay, some weeks or so.

Hart. Perhaps thou art right. I had good reason to believe my company was agreeable to her. But—but—

Kranz. Out with it, *baron!* you cannot question my friendship or secrecy, and perhaps I may be of use to you.

Hart. This cousin of mine—

Kranz. What, the fair *Rosella*; she is the culprit!—I had almost guessed as much.

Hart. But thou canst not guess the excess of her fickleness.

Kranz. I will not attempt it, for you shall tell me.

Hart. She denied me access to her presence this very morning, on the pretence of being unwell, and wishing to be alone; and when I made my entry by stealth through the private door of her apartment, I found her engaged in playful coquetry with *Claudien*.

Kranz. I fear there is something more than play concerned in this coquetry.

Hart. But she has not regarded him of late; her smiles were bestowed upon me.

Kranz. Deceitful smiles, to cover secret passion. Believe me, kinsman, she has only made you the cover for her wiles; and I am well assured, that when he is returned from *Copenhagen*, where he goes to remove some obstacle to their wishes, they will, with the approbation of her brother *Van Maurice*, throw aside all disguise, and be married. He sails in the *Mermaid* to-morrow.

Hart. May the waves of the sea be his winding-sheet! May the fishes of the ocean devour his loathly carcass!

Kranz. It may, indeed, be loathly enough when it falls to their share, but for his living carcass, at least, you must own that is noble and goodly.

Hart. I own it not: to me there is something in his air, his form, his mien, in the glance of his eye, yea, in the garb that he wears, which is intolerable.

Kranz. The ladies of *Lubeck* think differently.

Hart. Let them think as they will! it makes me mad to hear of such stupid, such perverse, such blind partiality. Senseless, fickle fools!

Kranz. True, they are fickle enough; but never mind it, that will cure the evil. They will praise him for an Apollo till he marry Rosella, and abuse him for a scarecrow afterwards.

Hart. Marry Rosella! I will have the heart's blood from his body ere I endure this misery for one day longer.

Kranz. Fy, fy, good baron! I am very sorry I have said so much to you on this subject; but the friendly,—I may truly say, affectionate regard I feel for you, besides the admiration I have long entertained for your merits, made me unable to conceal from you longer the unworthy deceit which has been practised upon you. When I saw her smile upon you, and glance secret looks of fondness to Claudien, —

Hart. Say no more of it; my very ears are ringing with the sound. I will have vengeance ere another day pass over my head. [*Exit furiously.*]

Kranz. (alone). Let the fool work upon this! it will embroil him at least with Van Maurice and his sister, and I shall have the management of himself and his fortune in my own hands. [*In a calculating posture, after having taken a turn across the stage, muttering to himself.*] Well, two thousand good acres, corn-land and forest, though encumbered with the due maintenance of the proprietor, may be as profitable to me as a third part of the fee-simple. What idiots they are who put their throats in jeopardy of the hangman, to have the actual property of money, when without risk or trouble they may have the actual spending thereof!—O there is nothing one may not procure, when one is happy enough to have a rich fool for one's friend—one's very dear, noble, feeling, high-minded friend! To soil one's hands with crime for but a little more than one can safely wheedle from him, is the act of a hot-headed idiot! [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

A library, with globes, cabinets, and other furniture, denoting the apartment of a student; a table in front, on which burns a lamp, the back of the stage being entirely in shade.

Enter CLAUDIEN by a concealed door at the bottom of the stage, who walks once or twice across it in a distracted manner, and then leaning his back against the wall, continues motionless.

Enter VAN MAURICE by the front, with a book in his hand, which he lays upon the table.

Van Mau. (after having turned over the leaves for some time). It is very strange; the passage opened to my hand in this very book but the other

day, and now it is nowhere to be found. (*A heavy sigh is uttered by CLAUDIEN.*) I thought I heard something. (*Looking round.*) It is fancy. (*Turning over the leaves again.*) I will not give up the search; it was certainly here, and it will bear me out in every thing I have advanced on the subject. (*A deep sigh, uttered as before.*) There is somebody near me. (*Looking round the room more perfectly, and discovering CLAUDIEN.*) Who art thou, lurking yonder in the shade? Come forward to the light, be thy designs hostile or friendly. Speak; say who thou art!

Claudien (advancing). Thy friend.

Van Mau. My friend, here at this hour in such a plight!

What is the matter, Claudien? what has happen'd?

Claudien. Something has happen'd—I will tell thee all,

When I am able.

Van Mau. Thou'rt deadly pale; thy face is strangely haggard.

Sit down, sit down; thou art too weak to stand.

Claudien (sinking, half supported by VAN MAURICE, into a chair). The light bewilders me.

Van Mau. There's fever on thee; let me feel thy hand.

Ha! there is blood upon it; thou art wounded;

Thou'rt faint and needst assistance. [*Going.*]

Claudien (preventing him). Call no one here, but stay with me thyself.

'Tis not my own blood, Maurice; would it were!

Van Mau. Hast thou slain any one?

Claudien. He did attack me; from his hand I wrested

The clenched dagger—plunged it in his breast.

Van Mau. Then God be praised thou hast escaped, dear Claudien!

Claudien. Oh say not so! I've taken human life, I've sent a sinful soul to its dread reck'ning.

Van Mau. Be not so overcome; there is no cause.

His death is thy deliv'rance; and the laws

Of God and man will fully justify

An act of self-defence.

Claudien. But me they will not justify! Beneath me—

My knee upon his breast. (*Starting from his seat with a gesture of despair.*)—Oh! what availed

The poor offence of a few spiteful words, That I should do a fell—a ruffian's deed!

Van Mau. Be patient, Claudien, nor against thyself

Speak with such vehemence of condemnation.

Hadst thou resisted provocation, surely

It had been well. Thou'st done a fearful deed,

But 'twas a reckless, instantaneous impulse.

Claudien. No, no! Oh, no! there was a fearful moment, [*him.*]

And thoughts cross'd o'er my mind before I struck
Would it had been an instantaneous impulse!

Van Mau. Distress of mind obscures thine understanding. [men;

Claudien. I've loved and been beloved by worthy
A noble, gen'rous heart dwelt in my breast,
As they believed, and so, alas, did I.

Put Providence has brought it to the proof;
It was a fiend's heart; not a noble one.

Maurice, Van Maurice, when upon thy shoulder
I leant this morning, list'ning to the praise
Which thy too partial friendship lavish'd on me,
That I deserved it not, full well I knew,
But little did I think a deed like this—

[*Bursting into tears.*

Van Mau. My dear, dear *Claudien!* I will love
thee still,

Will praise thee still; thou art a noble creature.

Claudien. Call me not so! it is excruciating.

I was a happy man, he was unhappy;

I at the moment arm'd, he weaponless;

I was the victor, he upon the ground.

I might have saved his life, and meant to save it;

But keen suggestions rush'd, I know not how,

Like blasts from hell, all nature's virtue searing;

Like poison'd arrows from an ambush'd foe;

Like gleams, revealing for one fearful instant

The weltering billows of a midnight deep,—

Athwart my mind they rush'd; and what came
after!

O God! thy boundless mercy may forgive,

But I for ever am a wretched man!

Van Mau. But tell thy story more connectedly;
Whom hast thou slain?—Hush, hush! there's
people coming.

I hear strange voices and the sound of feet.

[*Runs to the door and locks it.*

Haste to the garden-gate,—go to thy lodgings,

Thou wast at any rate to sail to-morrow

For Copenhagen by the early tide;

Thy quitting Lubeck will not raise suspicion.

Take leave, then, of *Rosella*, at the hour

When she expects thee, as if nought gave pain

But leaving her. Go home, all will go well.

[*Knocking at the door.*

Dost thou not hear? art spell-bound to the spot?

Go home immediately.

[*Leads him hastily to the private door, and
pushes him gently away. Exit CLAUDIEN.*

[*The knocking repeated still louder without:*

*VAN MAURICE returns to the opposite side
and unlocks the door.*

Enter KRANZBERG and two officers of justice.

Kranz. How intent you have been on your
studies, good baron! to let us knock so long at
your door!

Van Mau. I expected no visitors at this hour.

Kranz. Visitors will come at all hours when
matters of moment compel them. I have that to
tell you of which it concerns you much to know.—

But you look as if you knew it already, for your
face is as white as your neckcloth.

Van Mau. I know not what you mean; but I
expect to hear something very dreadful from the
alarm of your manner. What concern have I in
your tale? which you had better tell me quickly in
as few words as may be. What has happened?

Kranz. Your cousin, *Baron Hartman*, is mur-
dered; the body has been found in a field, under
the northern rampart.

Van Mau. Are you sure he is dead? The dag-
ger, perhaps, has not gone so deep as you imagine;
and he may but have fainted from loss of blood.

1st offi. (stepping eagerly up to VAN MAURICE).
And how do you know, sir, that it is a dagger,
which has given the wound?

Van Mau. (in confusion). I guess—I suppose
—it is the common weapon of an assassin.

2d offi. (aside to KRANZBERG). Did you mark
that? I have my suspicions.

*Kranz. (after a pause, during which they all look
on VAN MAURICE and on one another significantly).*
But you give us no orders, *Van Maurice?* You are
his nearest kinsman: it belongs to you to act on
this unhappy occasion.

[*Whilst they are speaking, 1st offi. goes round
the room, looking into every corner, and at last
steeps and lifts something from the floor, at the
bottom of the stage.*

Van Mau. Yes, true; something should be done.
Let the body be removed to his house, and try if
it can possibly be recovered.

Kranz. That has been done already, and it is as
dead as the corpse of your grandfather. Are these
all the orders you have to give? Shall not we send
an armed party through the country to track out
the murderer?

1st offi. (advancing). We need not track him far.
(*Holding up the dagger.*) Here is his mark: and,
Baron Van Maurice, I arrest thee in the name of
the state! (*Laying hold of him.*)

Van Mau. (repelling him). Lay no hands on me,
or ye may dearly answer for such an outrage. I
am most innocent of the crime with which you
would charge me; though I may well look dis-
turbed on hearing such terrible intelligence.

Kranz. Ay, so thou mayst; but there is more
than looks to condemn thee. (*Showing him the dag-
ger, upon which he recoils some paces back, and seems
confounded.*) Does this appal thee? We arrest thee
in the name of the state, and this shall be our
witness that we have not acted rashly.

[*They all endeavour to seize him, while he strug-
gles with them; and then enter several servants.*

1st serv. Lay hands on our master! Ye shall take
our lives, hell-hounds, ere ye wring one hair of his
head.

1st offi. We arrest him in the name of the state,
and take of our lawful prisoner.

1st *serv.* (*showing a pistol*). And I will blow your brains out in my own name, if ye do not let him go i' the instant.

[*More armed servants rushing in, surround KRANZBERG and the officers, and rescue VAN MAURICE.*]

Van Mau. (*recovering his composure*). Ye see I am freed from your grasp, and ye are now prisoners in this house during my pleasure.

(*All the servants, speaking at once*). Yes, noble baron; give them to our charge, and we will keep them securely, I warrant you.

Van Mau. (*to the servants*). I thank you, my friends; but I have somewhat more to say to these gentlemen. Ye see that I might detain you here, as long as my own convenience or safety, granting I were guilty, might require it; but I release you freely, upon this condition, that I shall remain at liberty, unmolested, till to-morrow mid-day; after that hour, I bind myself, as a man of honour, to be found here in my own house, ready without resistance to obey the laws of my country.

1st *offi.* Spoken like a man of honour, and we will trust you.

Van Mau. (*to KRANZBERG*). And you promise this? (*To 2d officer*). And you?

Kranz. and 2d *offi.* (*both at once*). We do.

Van Mau. (*to servants*). Let these gentlemen retire freely when it is their pleasure. (*To KRANZBERG*.) Kinsman, good night. [*Exit.*]

[*KRANZBERG and officers remain on the front, whilst the servants retire to the bottom of the stage.*]

1st *offi.* (*to KRANZBERG*). Had we not better go hence and return by-and-bye with a guard, to hover concealed round the house, and watch his motions? He may make his escape else, for all his fair promises.

Kranz. Let him do so; if he fly the country he is outlawed, and that will serve the purpose as effectually.

1st *offi.* Purpose! is there any other purpose but the vindication of the law, which says, "He who sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed."

[*KRANZBERG turns away in confusion, and pretends to speak to the servants at the bottom of the stage.*]

2d *offi.* What! man, dost thou not understand him?

1st *offi.* No, faith! and thy wit is sharper than I reckon for, if thou dost.

2d *offi.* Yet the mystery is not very deep neither. The baron here is heir to Baron Hartman, and Kranzberg again is next heir after him, the lands being strictly so destined; and an outlaw, thou knowest, is a dead man as to all inheritance.

1st *offi.* Why, there's some sense in that. And by my faith! if Van Maurice has murdered Hart-

man to transfer his large estate to Kranzberg, he has sold himself to the devil for a ducat.

2d *offi.* Yes; hell will have a good bargain of it every way, for the revenues of the land will be as much spent for its interest in the possession of Kranzberg, as if given in fee simple to Beelzebub.

1st *offi.* Nay, nay; he lives in good repute,—thou art uncharitable.

Kranz. (*advancing to the front*). Come, friends; let us return to our homes; to-morrow, at mid-day, we meet here again. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

The apartment of ROSELLA; she enters, followed by an old seaman, speaking as she enters.

Ros. And the wind is fair, thou sayest, but the sky foretelling change. Thou art an old mariner, good Jacome, and hast skill in sky and weather; tell me, then, faithfully, does it forbode a storm?

Jacome. No, madam; not to say a storm; nothing to make you or any of the friends of Count Claudien uneasy: a stiff gale or so; and that, with a tight new vessel to trust to, is but a passing rouse for sailors or passengers either. It only makes a stir on board and the blood circulate more quickly. No, no, no! nothing to make one uneasy.

Ros. God grant it may be so!

Jacome. Fear not, madam, fear not! You know I never speak but as I think; and I would not disgrace my former calling now by lying like a landsman.

Ros. I hear them coming; do what I desired thee, quickly. [*Exit JACOME.*]

Thank heaven! the voyage is but short; the time Of his return fix'd as the calendar,
If that the fickle winds will give permission.

Enter CLAUDIEN and VAN MAURICE.

True to the hour of taking leave, my Claudien:

Ah! be as punctual to the promised time

Of thy return. And wilt thou not?

Claudien. At least,

The fault shall not be mine, if I am not.

Ros. How gravely and how solemnly thou sayest so!

Has aught befallen to make thee on this point Less sure than thou wast yesterday?—Dear brother, You spoke so lightly of our parting then,
But now your cheer is wonderfully changed.

Van Mau. Something indeed has happen'd, dear Rosella,

That may defer thy Claudien's return For a short month or so.

Ros. (*after looking at them inquiringly*). No, no, Van Maurice,
Upon your faces I do plainly read

A more distressing tale. Deceive me not :
Tell me the worst at once ; I'm his betroth'd,
And have a right to know it. Have I not ?
Have I not, gentle Claudien ?

Claudien. Thou hast a right to every thing, my
love,

That a devoted heart can give. My life,
All that deserves the name of life, I have
But in thy presence ; to be absent from thee
Longer than strict necessity compels,
Would be a wanton act of self-destruction.
Trust, then, that he who is so strongly bound
Will soon return. The carrier-bird, released,
Points to one cherish'd spot her arrowy flight ;
Not air's bright insects, nor earth's alpine peaks,
With purple berries clothed, her wonted lures,
From its true line can warp it e'en so much
As the vibration of a stricken cord.

Ros. This is no answer : art thou not my own, —
Almost my husband, and here stands a brother,
And yet you deal with me in mysteries.
Fy ! is this well ? Have I deserved this wrong ?

Van Mau. Be satisfied, Rosella ; urge us not.
It is not want of confidence in thee
Which makes us so reserved ; urge no further.

Ros. Nay, but I will ; for ye conceal from me
Some recent and disastrous event
To spare me pain. But ye mistake your aim.
Uncertainty is aggravated pain.
Is he a ruin'd man ? then I am ready
With heart and hand to soothe his poverty.
Is he proscribed by law ? then I am ready
My country to abandon for his sake.
Say any thing, and I will bear it firmly
And meekly as I may.

Claudien. My dearest love, I thought to have
parted from thee

With brighter omens of a glad return :
But now thou weepst because the very day
Of my return is doubtful. If I stay
Two weeks or three weeks longer than we reckon'd,
Shall I not still be welcome ?

Ros. O, mock me not with weeks ! thou knowest
well

No time can make thee otherwise than welcome ;
To me most dearly welcome.

Keep thy mysterious secret, if thou must ;
But make amends by swearing on this hand,
Not to extend thine absence for a day
Beyond the added time which thou hast mention'd.

Claudien. Upon this hand, so lovely and so
dear,

Not to be absent for a day — an hour
Longer than sad necessity compels me.
But thou meanwhile wilt keep me in thy thoughts.
Write to me often ; wilt thou not, Rosella ?
And be to me, in whate'er clime or country
A wayward fate may doom me to reside,
The very gleam and warmth of my existence.

Ros. A wayward fate may doom thee to reside !
What words are these ? Thou never wilt return !

[*Wringing her hands in anguish.*

Van Mau. (*aside to CLAUDIEN.*) Begone, begone!
thy weakness will betray us.

Sister ; thou givest way to apprehension,
Like a poor perverse wife who has been spoil'd
With long indulgence. 'Tis a paltry proof
Of thy affection in an hour like this,
To add to his distress. Fy ! be more generous !

Ros. And art thou angry with me, gentle Mau-
rice ?

Thou art not wont to chide. O, woe is me !
There must be something wrong — far wrong,
indeed,

When he is sorrowful and thou unkind.

Van Mau. Pardon me, sister, something has dis-
tress'd me ;

I meant not to have told thee till to-morrow.
Our cousin Hartman died last night.

Ros. So suddenly !

Awfully sudden ! I am sorry for it ;
Yes ; very, very sorry. Ah ! poor Hartman !
I have, with too much levity, I fear,
Made his last days pass most uneasily.

He was vindictive, vain, and irritable :
But when the storm of passion passed away,
Who was more ready to repair a wrong
With generous amends ? Alas ; poor Hartman !
And thou too, gentle Claudien, weepst for him,
Although he loved thee not. Well mayst thou
weep ;

For thou wast also one of his tormentors :
Ay, we did both of us too hardly press
Upon his natural infirmity.

Claudien. Detested wretch ! I've been a fiend,
a —

Van Mau. (*laying hold of him, and pressing his
mouth.*) Claudien,

Art thou a madman ? — Come, the wind is fair,
The vessel is already weighing anchor.
Bid to your mistress, then, a short adieu,
As cheerly as you may.

[*They embrace and separate.*
Yes ; bravely done, Rosella ! — bravely done !
Thou art the firmest now.

Ros. (*stepping after CLAUDIEN.*) Take this, and
this, and wear them for my sake.

Enter MARGARET.

Marg. There is a ship-boy below with notice that
the Mermaid is just leaving port.

Van Mau. (*to CLAUDIEN.*) Come then, my friend ;
we may no longer tarry.

Ros. Go, Claudien : I will hie me to the roof
Of my pavilion ; there I'll watch thy ship,
Till, like a sea-bird, on the distant waves
It fades away to nothing. Two hours still
It will be visible. Cast up thy mantle ;

Make me, I pray, some signal from the deck.

Farewell, heaven prosper thee! farewell, farewell!
 [*Exeunt CLAUDIEN and VAN MAURICE, but the latter returns hastily, and whispers to MARGARET.*]

Ros. What did he whisper to thee, Margaret? I am frightened at every thing.

Marg. Nothing of importance: it was only to tell me that some necessary business might detain him from home the whole day; and, if so, you must not be uneasy.

Ros. Uneasy! I may be as I will now; it matters not how I am till Claudien return again. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The deck of a ship, with a stormy sea seen dimly beyond it. Sailors and passengers are discovered, some on their knees, some clinging to the shrouds, some staggering about with wild gestures of despair, whilst some are endeavouring to work the ship, and disputing about what should be done; and a great confusion of voices is heard through the noise of the storm. The whole light should proceed from one part of the deck; viz. the binnacle, by which means want of expression of countenance in the under-actors will not be discovered, as none need come within the gleam of its light but those who can give expression. CLAUDIEN is discovered busy in assisting those who are endeavouring to save the vessel, near the bottom of the stage.

Captain (*on the front*). I say it must be done; she cannot else be saved. Boatswain, thy refractory spirit is more dangerous than the tempest. (*A great confusion of sounds and voices.*) All hands to work! the instant! Cut down the mast; lighten her of every thing, bales, casks, and chests—cast all to the deep!

Boatswain. By our Lady, it were downright cowardice to spoil ourselves of every thing for such a risk as this!

Captain. Thou knowst nothing of the matter.

Boatswain. I have been in worse peril before, when both mast and freightage have been saved.

Captain. Be silent, madman! I am to judge of the peril, not thou. We are driving on the rocks of that very coast from which we departed: yonder gleams the lighthouse on the cliff.

Many voices (*at once*). Lord have mercy on us! heaven have mercy on us!

Captain. Silence, and hear my commands. All hands to work! life and death hang on your present exertions.

[*Great noise and confusion, and they begin to cut down the mast and cast things overboard.*]

1st sailor (*with a loud voice*). It is all in vain! lighten her as you will, it can avail nothing as long as there is a murderer on board.

Captain (*catching hold of him*). What meanst thou? On which of my passengers or crew dost thou fix such a horrible charge?

1st sailor (*pointing to CLAUDIEN*). To that man yonder, your noble Danish passenger. If the devil have him not presently under the waves, neither ship nor one soul of all her living freight will be afloat one hour longer.

Captain. Thou speakest in distraction.

1st sailor. I know that sound in the blast: no natural tempest ever bellows so.

Many voices (*as before*). Heaven have mercy upon us! it is a fearful sound!

1st sailor. There be fiends on the clouds and on the waves; they are roaring for their prey, and in God's name cast it to them instantly.

Captain. Thou art beside thyself! how knowest thou he is a murderer?

1st sailor. I heard him utter exclamations when he thought there was no one near him. Question him thyself; if he will swear himself innocent of blood, send me to the bottom in his stead.

Captain (*beckoning CLAUDIEN to the front*). Sir passenger, come hither. This man (*pointing to 1st sailor*) has heard thee utter such words as compels him to accuse thee of murder. We may all be summoned few moments hence into the presence of our Great Judge, who cannot be deceived: if thou art guilty, cry to God for mercy and confess it; a ship in peril may not be laden with such an unblest freight. Art thou innocent of blood?

Claudien. I am innocent of deliberate murder, but not of blood.

1st sailor. He confesses.

Many voices. He confesses! he confesses! away with him!

Other voices. Cast him overboard, or we shall be all dead men presently.

Claudien. Hear me first, before ye be so rash.

Voices (*again*). No, no, no! we cannot sacrifice our own lives for thine: cast him overboard.

1st sailor. Bind him hand and foot, and cast him to the fiends that are roaring for him.

[*They surround CLAUDIEN to bind him, when he draws his sword.*]

Claudien. I will cut down the first man who dares to lay hands on me. Bind a fellow-creature and cast him to the waves! ye are worse than the fiends ye are afraid of: and if they be roaring for me, as ye apprehend, doubt not but they will have me, whether I am bound or free.

Captain. He says well; cast him overboard unbound, that he may save himself if possible.

[*They again close round him to seize him, and he still keeps them off with his sword.*]

Claudien. Lay hands upon me at your peril!

You need not be so fierce; for I will myself commit this body to the sea, that will, perhaps, be more merciful than you.

[*He retires to the farther side of the deck, with his face to the crew and his back to the sea; then holding up his hand, as if uttering a short prayer, turns quickly round, and jumps overboard, the whole crew raising a wild cry, and remaining for a few moments after it in deep silence; the sound of the storm only heard.*]

Captain. He is a brave man, let him be what he may. God have mercy on us, and send us safe on our voyage! We have paid for it a fearful price! (*Calling to some who are looking over the side of the vessel.*) Can you see aught? Does he sink or swim?

Boatswain. I saw his dark head once above the waves.

2d sailor. I saw it too.

3d sailor. So did I. God help him, and us too!

2d sailor. Look, look, yonder, I see it again! but a huge billow breaks over it: we shall see it no more.

3d sailor. He is too deep now under water, to rise a living man.

[*The sound of the storm as before, very loud.*]

Captain. The tempest is as violent as ever! we must lighten the ship after all!

[*A great clamour and commotion among the crew, and the scene closes.*]

SCENE II.

A Lawyer's study, lumbered with tables, books, and papers, &c.

Enter BORION, with a scroll in his hand, which he examines attentively. He then pauses, and considers before he speaks to himself.

Bor. Proofs like these should condemn any man; why should I recoil from the task? (*Paces up and down, and then stopping short.*) Would this business were put into other hands! My client is candid and specious, as far as speech is concerned, but that sinister eye, the play of those muscles by the mouth, the widening of the nostrils at every virtuous sentiment he utters:—physiognomy is the whimsey of simpletons, if there be any truth or sincerity in that man. But here he comes.

Enter KRANZBERG.

Kranz. Well, learned sir, having had full time for consideration, what think you of it now? (*A pause.*) You see, I found my prosecution on no slight or fanciful proofs. Thus it stands: next heir to the deceased; his confusion when we told him of the murder; that unwary expression which fell from him, showing that he knew with what weapon the wound was inflicted; and, above all, the dagger

found in his apartment,—every thing combines to fix the foul deed upon him. There is no judge in the land who will hesitate to give sentence in my favour.

Bor. In your favour, sir! is it favour to you that your near relation should be publicly executed as a murderer? I thought you had prosecuted unwillingly, as nearest of kin to the deceased, and therefore compelled to it.

Kranz. True—very true, learned Borion; in my favour as a prosecutor, who, from duty, would make good his accusation. But as a man and a kinsman, with the affections of both, which heaven knows how deeply I feel! most keenly and severely against me. You perceive the distinction here?

Bor. It had escaped me.

Kranz. I am drawn two different ways by two powerful ties; but my duty to the public must be preferred. O, dear sir! you little know the painful conflict in this bosom.

Bor. I can guess at it, sir. But does Van Maurice, since his imprisonment, still continue to assert his innocence?

Kranz. Of course he does. Is any man's assertion or oath regarded in a matter of this nature?

Bor. Yes, sir; there are some men, whose simple word will go far in a matter of any nature, and Van Maurice is one of those.

Kranz. Ah, my good sir; there is a prepossession in your mind, but let my wretched kinsman have the benefit of it; I wish not to remove it. Indeed I knew of this prepossession beforehand; and that I applied to you for the conduct of this prosecution, notwithstanding, shows how little I am disposed to deal hardly with the prisoner.—But here come the men whom you may question.

Enter a Servant, showing in the two Officers of Justice.

Bor. (*waving his hand.*) Let them pass into the further apartment. [*Exeunt officers.*]

Kranz. You are cautious, I see, and would question them apart from me. But you are right; I am novise offended; on the contrary, even your distrust of myself gives me confidence in your integrity. (*Exit BORION, following the officers, while KRANZBERG looks angrily after him.*) The devil take his incredulous nature! who would demur on such flagrant proof as this? If it were not that the trial comes on to-morrow, and I dare not delay it, lest he should, after all, be innocent, I would put it into other hands that would undertake it more heartily. (*After consideration.*) No, no! I must press him to retain it. Were it known that he had given it up, that would create a strong prejudice against me. I must press him to retain it. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

A prison: VAN MAURICE is discovered at the bottom of the stage in a thoughtful disconsolate posture; he then comes forward and remains a short time, muttering to himself, before he speaks aloud.

Van Mau. And infancy and death must be my portion

For my adherence to the manly ties
Of honour and of friendship!—No alternative!
Betray his confidence to save my life!
Do what is *base* to save me from disgrace!
Surely, some fiend of darkness must be dealing
With my necessity, when thoughts like these
Contaminate my mind.

He came to me in misery, in secret
His soul pour'd out its bitterness before me.
Away, away! ye *base* and mean suggestions!
God will deliver me.—Or should His will
Appoint my life to be the sacrifice,
The mem'ry of the just shall be at length
Redeem'd from all dishonour.

[*Noise at the door. Enter Gaoler.*

Who's there? let no one enter but my sister
Or the good priest; have I not told thee so?

Enter ARDUSOFFE.

Ard. And may not your faithful counsellor also be admitted?

Van Mau. Ay, true; I forgot thee, good Ardu-soffe.—Well, what hast thou done for me? Hast thou discovered any thing that may tend to my ex-culpation?—Alas! thou shakest thy head: thou hast not been successful.

Ard. Not, I fear, in any material degree. Your servants unanimously declare their belief that you did not quit your apartments for the whole of that evening on which the fatal deed was committed: but as you were entirely shut up from the hour of twilight to almost midnight, the grounds of their belief are not satisfactory; your apartments, un-happily, having a private door leading to the garden, and from thence into the street.

Van Mau. True; their belief only, under such circumstances, is but weak evidence.

Ard. It was your custom, they say, to ring your bell for some slight refreshment between nine and ten o'clock, but on that night, most unfortunately, you omitted it.

Van Mau. My studies occupied me so entirely, that I forgot it.

Ard. I do most perfectly believe you: but who, sitting in judgment on attested facts, and compelled to pronounce sentence accordingly, will regard such asseveration? In short, my dear client, I am obliged to forewarn you, that if you still persist in refusing to account for the dagger being found in your chamber, and your previous knowledge that the

deceased was slain by a wound from such a weapon, I see not how your judges can acquit you.

Van Mau. Be it so! I am innocent: Heaven will protect me.

Ard. God grant you deliverance! But the ways of Divine Providence are mysterious as to this world. In the next, most assuredly, the innocent are always delivered.

Van Mau. Have you then, in the course of your legal experience, known instances of the innocent suffering death for imputed crimes?

Ard. I have; even when tried by an impartial judge, and the fair laws of their country.

Van Mau. But their memory was vindicated afterwards, else you had never been acquainted with such dismal perversion of circumstances.

Ard. After many years,—nearly the lapse of half a century, it was discovered.

Van Mau. (shuddering.) Awful dispensation! Almost all his contemporaries—those whom he had loved and regarded, would go down to their graves, believing him guilty and depraved.

[*Turns away from him much distressed.*

Ard. Let me conjure you, then, to do justice to yourself! It is a fearful thing to be cut off in the prime of your days,—to die by the hands of an executioner,—to finish your course in disgrace.

Van Mau. It is a fearful thing! You tempt my mortal weakness almost beyond resistance.

Ard. Let nature have its way! O, consider of it! Run not on self-destruction!

Van Mau. (supporting himself on the shoulder of ARDUSOFFE.) Forbear a few moments, good Ardu-soffe; I am considering of it.

Ard. (after a pause.) The dew-drops stand upon thy forehead, and thy whole frame is moved: decide as nature bids thee, and let this conflict cease.

[*A pause, in which VAN MAURICE, sinking from the shoulder of ARDUSOFFE, covers his face with both his hands.*

O, have mercy on thyself, and let this conflict cease!

Van Mau. (raising himself suddenly, with vehemence of gesture and voice.) It hath ceased, Ardu-soffe, I'm now a man:

I will die honour'd in my inward mind,
And in the sight of heav'n. Betide what will,
I'll not betray my trust!

Ard. Alas, alas! may heav'n have pity on thee,
Since thou repellst all pity for thyself!

Enter ROSELLA.

Ros. I left thee, dearest Maurice, cheer'd and tranquil,

Like one possessing hope; what is the matter?

Ard. Dear lady, circumstances bear hard against your brother; and, from some point of honour which I am not permitted to know, he refrains from exculpating himself. Join your entreaties with mine; you who are so deeply concerned in

his safety and justification. Death and disgrace must not be incurred from romantic adherence to honour.

Van Mau. If I could gain a respite for some weeks!

Ard. You may apply for it, and I will urge your suit; but it will be refused. Kranzberg, for his own sordid interest, pushes on the trial; and he is in high credit and favour with the judges.

Ros. O for my sake, if not thine own, my brother, For my sake be entreated! In thy ruin I shall be ruin'd, agonized, and crush'd! Think not I could survive it!

Van Mau. Leave me, oh leave me; I am only fit With mine own thoughts to commune. Your entreaties

Do but the more distract me.

(*Aside to ARDUSOFFE.*) Return to me again, but leave me now. [*Exit ARDUSOFFE.*]

Ros. Alas! and wilt thou not relent, dear Maurice? [*A pause.*]

Why dost thou shake thy head, and look on me So ruefully? there is a meaning in it.

Van Mau. God save thee, my poor sister!

Ros. Yes, God will save me, saving thee, my brother.

Not else; for if thou die a felon's death, I never can survive it. For my sake And for the sake of him, thine absent friend, Our gentle Claudien: would that he were here To join with mine his earnest, strong entreaties!

Van Mau. (*putting his hand upon her lips in an alarmed manner, and speaking low.*) Hush! utter not his name; 'tis good for thee

That he is absent.

Ros. Why that emotion at his name? Speak, speak!

Is he concerned in this?

Van Mau. Inquire no further, seek no further misery:

Thou hast enough already.

Ros. A dreadful light breaks in upon me now;

Is Claudien concern'd? [*Looks earnestly in his face.* He is, he is! [*Faints in the arms of her brother.*]

Van Mau. It is a death-blow to her stricken heart.

How fix'd and pale that lovely countenance, More like my mother's than I ever saw it.

Like her who loved us both and rear'd us tenderly, Who daily shed her widow's blessing o'er us, And little thought for what calamities We both might be reserved.

But she revives. How art thou, sweet Rosella?

Ros. I've been asleep, and thought some fearful thing

Was girding me.—O no! it was not sleep: I know it now distinctly.

Van Mau. Thou tremblest violently.

Ros. I tremble, but thou needst not be afraid; I shall not faint again.

Van Mau. Fear not for Claudien.

Ros. My own dear brother; gen'rous and devoted;

Is any thing more precious than thyself?

No, right is right; thou shalt not die for Claudien. Thank God he's absent! let him so remain:

I'll to the judges; I'll declare the truth;

I'll vindicate thy innocence, my Maurice.

Van Mau. (*embracing her.*) I thank thee, kind Rosella; but thy plea

Were altogether fruitless.—

Who would give credit to thy testimony?

For they will deem, to save a brother's life,

Thou dost accuse an absent man. Beside,

Who will corroborate what thou averst? [nothing, And what couldst thou aver? I've told thee

And, so God strengthen me! I never will.

Ros. I'll to the judges; cast me at their feet,

And beg respite till I can write to Claudien.

Van Mau. And wouldst thou have him now return to Lubeck

That he may put himself into my place?

Ros. (*distractedly.*) I know not what I would, or what I wish;

But thou, my noble Maurice, shalt not die.

Van Mau. Here comes the good confessor: leave me, sister.

Enter the Confessor, shown in by the Turnkey.

You're welcome, reverend father. (*To the turnkey.*) Does any attendant on this lady wait without?

Turn. Yes, baron; a lady waits for her, who accompanied her to the gate.

Van Mau. Desire her to enter; I would speak with her. (*Exit turnkey.*) Good Father, comfort this afflicted daughter.

(*Speaking aside to ROSELLA, as he leads her to the friar.*) Let nothing pass your lips that hath a reference

To what we spoke of: take good heed; be secret.

Soothe her, good father; thou hast words of consolation for every earthly affliction.

Enter MARGARET.

I thank thee, friendly Margaret, for thy kind attendance on my poor distressed sister. Come near to me. (*Draws her to the front of the stage, whilst the confessor speaks in dumb show to ROSELLA behind.*) Rosella is not well; there is fever upon her spirits, and her mind wanders wildly. Be not alarmed at this, but give her an opiate,—a very powerful opiate: she has need of rest, and nature has no sleep for one so distracted with anxiety.

Marg. I will do so: she has been overwatched and greatly distressed. And I pray heaven, dear baron, that you may also have rest!

Van Mau. I thank thee, Margaret. But do not tarry here: lead her away immediately. I do not wish to see her till the trial is over. (*Returning to ROSELLA.*) Farewell, dear sister! I must now give my thoughts to things which regard not this world. (*Exeunt ROSELLA and MARGARET.*) We will, if you please, good father, retire to the inner cell.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The house of KRANZBERG.

Enter KRANZBERG, followed by CORMAN, bearing a salver with wine, &c., which he sets upon a table.

Kranz. (*speaking as they enter.*) Thou art right, Corman; a cup of this old Rhenish will do good. I have been the whole day in a state of presentation; the eyes of many have been upon me; my cumbersome suit of decorum sits heavily upon me now; I must drop it for awhile and unbrace myself.

Cor. (*pouring out wine and presenting it.*) Here, sir; this will refresh you in the mean time, and your repast will be ready presently.

Kranz. (*after drinking.*) Ha, ha, ha! what a mountebank world we live in, full of inconsistencies; every body eagerly running after some wild delusion or other! To think, now, that a sober philosopher like Van Maurice should start up from his books, his globes, and compass, to put a foolish kinsman out of the world, and all for the enriching of Simon Kranzberg, whom he likes as much as thou dost a bit of musty stock-fish. By my faith, it is some waggish devil that hath tempted him to this imbecility of wickedness.

Cor. Yes, master; and the devil will take care of your interest for his own advantage.

Kranz. But I'll cheat him, too, in the long run.

Cor. It must be some clever device, indeed, that cheats him.

Kranz. I'll give donations to the church; or I'll endow a chapel, and appoint a priest to pray my soul out of purgatory.

Cor. Ah, sir! that will be a hard work for a simple priest of your appointment; it would be work enough for an archbishop. But it will help at least to put you into credit with the world.

Kranz. Put me into credit with the world! Am I not in very good credit with the world?—Why dost thou shake thy head so? Am I not? I have broken no laws: I have disregarded no rules of decency. I have preserved a show of kindness to all men: ay, and have felt real kindness for some. What does the world know against me, that thou shouldst look so significantly?

Cor. I don't say that they know any thing against you; but there is something in human

nature called suspicion, that will sometimes contravene most provokingly all the good seeming that a painstaking man can put on.

Kranz. And what do they suspect? What cause have I given for suspicion?

Cor. Why, my dear sir, that story of the heiress stands somewhat between you and their good opinion.

Kranz. They stumble at a small impediment, methinks. Was it my fault that her needy uncle ran off with her fortune? Would they have had me marry a beggar, because I had inadvertently made suit to her?

Cor. Nay, heaven forbid! that were too romantic for a sane burgher of Lubeck; but they are not yet become liberal enough to tolerate inadvertent oaths.

Kranz. Out on thee! Hadst thou managed that business for me with three grains of common sense, the transaction would never have been known.

Cor. Ah, my dear master! but you forget that my three grains of common sense were coupled with your three grains of cunning, and they did not prove prosperous yoke-fellows.

Kranz. Go to! it is a fair character that has but one blot upon it.

Cor. True, if there were but one.

Kranz. Lay they any thing else to my charge?

Cor. That matter of the poor widow's leasehold, which you deprived her of so cleverly, was not exactly to their mind.

Kranz. Devil take them! and they boggle at that too! Had I not law on my side?

Cor. I fear you had only decision.

Kranz. No, no! I had law. But those noodles are always canting about equity and natural justice; and one is obliged to do so too, till it is enough to make one sick.

Cor. To be sure this last effect is rather sickening.

Kranz. And thy untimely bantering is little better. Say what thou wilt, I know that I stand in as good credit with the world as any man in our imperial city. But who comes here? Pshaw! It is Ardusoffe; I must on with my buckrams again.

Enter ARDUOFFE.

Ard. Sir, I am come from the prison of your unhappy kinsman, on a most earnest suit, which your known goodness and humanity will not, I am confident, suffer you to refuse.

Kranz. Speak it plainly and freely, sir. He is, indeed, unhappy, and I am little less so, in being forced to prosecute a near relation for such an atrocious deed. You don't know how much I feel on this unfortunate occasion.

Ard. Better, perhaps, than you are aware of. Your inward dispositions are too well depicted on your countenance to leave any one in doubt of your real worth. My present suit will give you an op-

portunity of proving your professions. I come most earnestly to request that you will use your interest with the judges to have this trial put off for a few weeks.

Kranz. Ah, good Ardusoffe! would that my bounden duty to society did not pull me the contrary way; and I would, on my bended knees, pray that it might be put off, not only for a few weeks, but a few months, a few years; ay, for ever.

Ard. Nay, nay! you exceed in tender sympathy: a few weeks is all that we desire, and I will this moment go with you to the judges to beseech them to grant us this indulgence.

Kranz. No, that won't do; I must go to the judges alone. On such occasions a third party creates embarrassment. You understand me?

Ard. I think I do, sir; and will trust to your exertions accordingly.

Kranz. My dear sir, you do not understand me. I will leave no entreaty untried to gain what you desire for your client. But what is your object in this delay? is there any witness that could exculpate your client, who might be summoned in that time?

Ard. Yes; this is our reason for soliciting delay.

Kranz. And who is this witness? and from what place do you call him?

Ard. (*drawing back from him.*) That is a matter, good sir, less material for you to know than for us to conceal.

Kranz. Very true; I should have remembered this: I respect you for your caution, though it is not my way of proceeding. I am so free and open myself, that I forget the prudent habits of concealment, which may be commendable in others. And now I will honestly tell you that I am certain my suit to the judges for delay will be of no avail.

Ard. That you are certain, may be true; for you can make it so.

Kranz. You mistake me again. But I am not angry at this. I can forgive the jealousy which arises from the excess of laudable zeal; and to prove this I will frankly serve your client in the only way in my power. I will gain over the guard, who are appointed for this evening's watch, and favour his escape from prison. Do you pause at this when there is such damning evidence against him?

Ard. (*drily.*) I shall report to him what you say.

Kranz. At the hour of twilight he will find his prison doors unbarred, and let him come forth fearlessly.

Ard. I will go forthwith and report to him what you say. [*Exit.*]

Kranz. Have I cozened that suspicious fellow at last? (*Re-enter CORMAN, who had retired upon ARDUSOFFE'S coming in.*) I have cozened that suspicious fellow at last. If Van Maurice be caught

making his escape, the trial will proceed immediately. The bright thought came into my head of a sudden; I wonder I did not think of it before.

Cor. But if he were really to escape and be outlawed, would not that serve your turn sufficiently.

Kranz. Ay, if the present senior judge were to retain his office; but he will resign it in a month to one who is most partially attached to the family of Van Maurice. No, no! we should have him returning from his outlawry again, and submitting to a mock trial, which would declare him innocent, and restore him to his rights. No, no! the trial must proceed immediately; and it will do so if he be caught in an attempt to escape.

Cor. Think you he will fall into the snare?

Kranz. I think he will; I am sure he will; and even if he should refuse, we can raise a great clamour and confusion about the prison walls as if he had attempted it, which may turn to our account nearly as well as the reality. I say *our*, for thou knowest well that when I take possession of the inheritance, a good portion of it will fall to thy share. Let me have my meal first, and I'll give thee thy directions about this matter afterwards.

Cor. It is ready, sir.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Before the walls of a prison: a sentinel is discovered walking to and fro by an arched gateway, and several men muffled in cloaks, peeping occasionally from behind an outer buttress near the front. A small door at the further end of the arch opens slowly, and ARDUSOFFE enters by it, through the gateway, his face hid by his cloak.

Sen. Ho! you pass not so slyly as you think: who are you? let me see your face!

Ard. (*in a feigned voice.*) A friend to the noble prisoner, and the same who passed into that door half an hour ago.

Sen. Thou dost not speak with the same voice, I'm certain.

Ard. Nay, my good friend; thine ears are deceived by thine own suspicion. (*In a whisper.*) Behold my face; dost thou not remember it?

[*Going close to the sentinel and turning his back to the front of the stage, he uncovers his face for a moment, on which the other, with a nod, suffers him to pass. He then proceeds on his way, and is about to go off, when CORMAN and his companions burst upon him from behind the buttress.*]

Cor. We seize thee in the name of the law.

Ard. (*still concealing his face.*) Go to! you mistake me for another; suffer me to pass. Ye have no right to detain me.

Cor. Come under the lamp here, and let us see your face.

[*They drag him towards the light, he making great resistance, when KRANZBERG enters suddenly and lays hold of him.*

Kranz. Resistance is in vain, Van Maurice : we seize thee in the act of making escape from prison ; and in the name of the state we secure thee.

Ard. (*uncovering his face, and speaking in his natural voice.*) I make no resistance to the will of the state, signified to me by such a worthy member thereof.

Kranz. Ardusoffe !

Ard. Yea, the same, and thy accomplice in endeavouring to persuade a prisoner to escape from the hands of justice. (*Seeing him look round significantly to CORMAN, who, thereupon, draws the other men to a distance.*) What, art thou afraid those men should hear us ; thou who art so free and open, even to imprudence ? Thou wilt become a character of perfection by-and-bye, since thou correctest thy errors so completely.

Kranz. Is Van Maurice then so assured of his innocence that he refuses to fly ?

Ard. Yes ; right well assured of that or of thy perfidy ; either assurance was sufficient ; and if the one be as well grounded as the other, there is a higher agent at work for his deliverance than thou hast any knowledge of.

Kranz. What agent ?

Ard. Providence, which protects the innocent, and returns the cruelty of the wicked into his own portion.

Kranz. Art thou become his confessor, too ? Why dost thou detain me here with thy homilies ?

Ard. (*smiling archly.*) Being so artless thyself, thou canst not possibly guess my reason.

Kranz. (*furiously.*) He has escaped ! Ho, there ! — to the search ! to the pursuit ! the prisoner has escaped ! (*CORMAN and the others run to him, and he gives them orders confusedly.*) Go by the street, no — by the south walk — no, no, give the alarm there — lose not a moment.

[*Great bustle ; running different ways, while the alarm bell rings from the tower.*

Ard. (*aside, as he goes off.*) Let him take this alarm for his pains : would what he apprehends were true !

[*Exit.*

Cor. (*to KRANZBERG.*) Perhaps it would be better to enter the prison first, and ascertain if the prisoner be really absent from his cell.

Kranz. Thou'rt right ; let us go immediately.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

The house of the senior judge. Enter the judge with a paper in his hand, followed by his secretary.

Judge (*as they enter.*) And tell my worthy colleague that I wish to have a conference with him,

as soon as possible, on the subject of this petition to put off the trial for a month. It comes from those who must at least be treated with respect. What noise is that without ? Go, see what it is.

[*Exit secretary.*

While the judge employs himself reading other papers, re-enter secretary.

Sec. There has been an attempt to favour the prisoner's escape, and the whole neighbourhood has been in commotion.

Judge. But he has not escaped ?

Sec. They believe not. Shall I go with the message ?

Judge. By no means, till we see how the matter stands.

Enter KRANZBERG.

You come in good time, Kranzberg : know you any thing of this escape, or attempted escape, of Van Maurice ?

Kran. An escape has no doubt been attempted, and has been as certainly foiled. But there is such a confusion of accounts, that it would be difficult to come at the real truth, as is generally the case in such matters.

Judge. It is very bad to petition for delay, and in the mean time attempt to elude justice.

Kranz. The cause, I fear, is desperate, and that must be their excuse who counsel the unhappy man ; and it is for you now to consider whether, after this account, any request for deferring the trial should be granted.

Judge. Granted ! most assuredly not. Ought it to be ?

Kranz. It becomes not me to give any opinion as to that, though I must confess it might be dangerous : my errand here has a different object.

Judge. Speak out, worthy Kranzberg ; what is it ?

Kranz. It is my earnest request that, in judging of my unhappy kinsman, you would cast this attempt from your consideration altogether, and let no mention of it be made in court.

Judge. Is it not an additional proof of guilt ?

Kranz. Nay, my very learned and excellent sir, do not so consider it. Who would not, in similar circumstances, with such strong presumptive evidence against him, do the same thing, even if he were conscious of being innocent ? Life is sweet to every one, and the jeopardy of it appalling.

Judge. Thy humanity equals thy candour. But thou art too tender on this point.

Kranz. Do not say so, my excellent sir. Let not this untoward attempt act on your mind to the prejudice of my miserable kinsman, if other evidence be not sufficient to condemn him.

Judge. Let it be as thou wilt, then ; but we must have no delays. The trial shall commence to-mor-

row at the hour which was originally fixed. Excuse me, I am busy now; good-night. [*Exit.*]

Kranz. Well, thanks to my good stars! I am not baffled, though I have been deceived. Matters still go as I wish. [*Exit.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

VAN MAURICE'S house; an ante-room in the apartments of ROSELLA.

Enter MARGARET and a maid-servant by opposite sides.

Marg. I hope thy lady is still asleep?

Maid. O, no! I wish she were. She called me a few minutes since, and I am going to her again.

Marg. Is she aware how long she has slept?

Maid. No; she thinks it still early, and I have not undeceived her.

Marg. Thou hast done right, Jeannette. Ha! she is up already!

Enter ROSELLA.

Ros. I have had a deep and death-like sleep. It was strange that I should sleep so at such a time as this.

Marg. And you feel yourself refreshed, I hope?

Ros. I know not: I waked in confused bewilderment, which gave me a few moments of idiot-like insensibility; but the dismal truth broke upon me at once: it was the blow of a leaden mace upon my breast; I had better not have slept at all. But I am early enough to get to him ere he leave the prison. (*Looking at a timepiece on the wall of the room.*) Good heaven! it is long past the hour! he is already at the court, and I have not seen him. Why was I not called? Bring me my mantle. No, I'll stay for nothing.

[*As she is about to go off, she is stopped by the entering of a servant.*]

Serv. There is a person below, who would speak with you, lady, on particular and important business.

Ros. His business should be such, indeed, who comes at an hour like the present.

Marg. (to servant). Didst thou ever see him before?

Serv. I can scarcely say, madam; his face is so concealed by his bonnet and the buttoned-up collar of his cloak: but he is tall, and somewhat stately.

Ros. Let him come to me immediately. [*Exit servant.*] (*To MARGARET and the maid.*) Leave me; I would see him alone.

Marg. I dare not leave you, you tremble so.

Ros. Don't mind that, but leave me.

[*Exit MARGARET, &c.*]

If it should be! I fear—why do I fear?
Should I not wish it earnestly? Wild thought!
For such a quick return no natural means
Could have effected: he it cannot be.

Enter CLAUDIEN in disguise.

[*She remains motionless, eyeing him from head to foot, while he looks round to ascertain that there is nobody in the room, and then discovers himself, on which she utters a suppressed cry.*]

Thou here! O, Claudien, wherefore art thou come? But oh! I know it well;—thou shouldst be here. My brother must not die.

Claudien. Must not, and shall not, be thou well assured.

Thou knowst it then; he has to thee reveal'd?

Ros. To me nor one else has he reveal'd it.

Claudien. Yet is it known to thee.

Ros. I have by instinct learnt it. This poor heart!

Fear and affection have divined the truth.

The horror he express'd, when I proposed

To write to thee and hasten thy return,

Came like a flash of lightning on my mind,

And then the truth was instantly reveal'd.

Claudien. Noble Van Maurice! generous, matchless friend!

Be comforted, my dearest; he is safe.

Ros. But thou art not—O, thou art not, my

Claudien! [*Wringing her hands distractedly.*]

Alas, alas! we're dreadfully beset.

The innocent must not die; and with the guilty

Is twined the dearest chord of my existence.

Oh, words of misery! to call thee guilty!

[*Taking his hands and pressing them tenderly.*]

There has been blood upon these hands—I know it;

But 'twas the blood of a fell enemy

Who would have shed thy blood; and may I not

Press them and bless thee still?

Claudien. Thou precious creature! thy affection gleams

Like sunshine through one solitary loophole,

In a dark firmament of gather'd clouds,

Gilding one spot of ocean, hill, or plain,

With brightness beautiful though circumscribed.

Thou cheerst my soul, and be thou also cheer'd!

I must and I will save thy brother's life.

And for that thou hast made my own so precious,

I will be wary to preserve it also.

Ros. Yes, thou shalt live; for heaven has been thy help,

Else thou couldst never, in so short a time,

Have reach'd this shore again.

Claudien. The gale was rough; the ship was driven back

Upon the breakers of a rocky shore;

But I swam stoutly, and, when quite exhausted,
I caught a floating raft and gain'd the shore.

Ros. 'Twas Providence preserved thee: thanks
to Heaven!

And will preserve thee still.

Claudien. That is my trust.

Ros. But, O, be cautious! I will go forthwith,
And to the Court declare the simple truth,
As to the deed, yet speaking of thee still
As one far distant in another land.

I am bold now; I am braced for the task;
Trust it to me.

Claudien. Forbear, thou heart of tenderness and
courage;

I've better means than this to save thy brother.

Ros. (eagerly.) And save thyself besides?

Claudien. Yes, even so; my life is precious now:
Thou'st made it so. There is no time, my love,
For further explanation. Fare thee well!

I'm glad that I have seen thee first; have heard
Thy words of strong affection, and have felt
This dear and gentle hand press'd to my heart.
Farewell, farewell!

Ros. Thy voice sounds sadly, as though many a
league

Were going to divide us. How is this?

Farewell pronounced with such solemnity!

Claudien. But there be other obstacles than dis-
tance

May separate the dearest.

Ros. I apprehend thee well;— the prison's
walls,—

The dungeon and the chain.—O, God of heaven!
(*Seizing him wildly.*) Thou shalt not go; thou shalt
not leave this house:

I'll lock thee up within my chamber; go
To this dread court myself; I have no fear,
For heaven will teach me what I ought to say
When I am there; will give me words of power
To save a brother's life—ay, and a life
Dear as a brother's. Now I feel assuredly
I shall prevail. There is no time to lose:
Go to my chamber; haste thee to the cover.

[*Dragging him to the door of an inner room.*]

Claudien. Art thou not mad, Rosella?

Ros. (*dragging him still.*) Not mad; but thou wilt
make me so: haste, haste—

Alas! I have no strength; but let my weakness
Compel thee, generous Claudien! [*Kneeling to him.*]

Claudien. Dear love! alarm bereaves thee of thy
reason,

If thou believst thy chamber would protect me.
Shouldst thou before the judges speak of me,
As of an absent man, would they believe thee?
Thy servants too; they have admitted here
A stranger muffled up in mystery,
And must confess they saw him not depart.
Thou'lt run me into danger from the dread
And apprehension of it.—

Withhold me not; I will be very prudent;
I will not rashly risk my life. No longer
Must I remain; moments are precious now;
Let me depart.

Ros. Go instantly; I am a hateful wretch
To keep thee here so long.

[*Catching hold of him as he hurries off.*
Button thee closer, take this handkerchief,
And press it to thy mouth like one in pain.

[*Giving a handkerchief.*
Claudien. I thank thee, kind Rosella. [*Going.*
Ros. (*running after him again.*) Halt in thy gait,
and stoop thy shoulders too;

Thy step and graceful bearing will betray thee.
Claudien. Trust me, my love; I'll not betray
myself. [*Exit.*
[*ROSSELLA alone, who continues to pace to and
fro in a hurried way, and presently MARGARET enters.*

Mar. My dear friend—

Ros. Who art thou?

Mar. Dost thou not know me?
I met the stranger going hence, and thought
I might return to thee: have I done wrong?
[*ROSSELLA gives no answer, but walks about as
before.*

Move not so rapidly, my dear Rosella,
But let thy body have a little rest.

Ros. Cease! thou art foolish; should my body
rest,

My mind would go distracted.

Mar. Walk as much as thou wilt within thy
chamber,

Where no one will observe thee. Take my arm—
Heaven aid and pity thee, poor sufferer!

There is a cruel conflict in thy breast. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*A narrow lobby or passage, leading to the hall of
justice. Several people discovered, passing or
loitering about.*

Enter FATHER FRANCIS.

Father (*to an under officer*). Stop, friend: thou
art from the court?

Offi. Ay, with half the learning even of a monk,
you may guess that.

Father. Thou shalt enjoy thy joke unanswered,
officer. Thou art by office indifferent to the fate
of an unhappy panel; but thou wast an obliging
fellow once, before thou wast spoil'd by preferment,
and now thou canst do me a favour.

Offi. Mention it, good father. I ought to have
reverenced your cloth for your sake, if I do not
reverence you for the sake of your cloth.

Father. Has the advocate for the prisoner finished
his defence?

Offi. Ay, heaven be thanked! I thought it would never have an end. He has just concluded it.

Father. Return to the court, then, and desire him to come to me here, without loss of time. I have something of importance to communicate to him.

Offi. I will, father. [*Exit.*]

Father. Woe is me that human nature should come to this! The pride and spirits of that creature, now, rise on an occasion like this. The condemnation or execution of a fellow-creature creates no other feeling in him, but the enjoyment of increased importance and comparative security! Yet there was some good in him once. (*Pauses thoughtfully.*) There was good in him once: his first confession consisted of one petty crime, for which he seemed to be most penitent. But the steps of the confessional are a spot which he has long forsaken.

Enter ARDUSOFFE.

Ard. You have something to communicate, good father?

Father. Move a little this way: I have words for thy ear in secret.

Ard. Has any thing occurred to throw light on this mystery? any thing in favour of my unhappy client? who comports himself with the sober dejection of a man resigned to his fate, though he firmly asserts his innocence; and I, so help me God! as firmly believe him.

Father. I am glad thou dost.

Ard. I could sit down and weep for his sake, he has so wound himself round my heart in the course of this dismal transaction.

Father. Be comforted, my son; thou canst do better things for him than that.

Ard. Instruct me, reverend father.

Father. Produce in court the voluntary evidence of his confessor.

Ard. How is this? You said to me last night that he had confessed nothing.

Father. There is no time to question me on this point now. I shall presently present myself before the judges, as evidence to exculpate the prisoner; and when the oath has been administered—I pray thee move further this way: we may be overheard. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The hall of justice. Two judges sitting in state; the prisoner at the bar; KRANZBERG and BORION, and all the attendants, &c. of a full court.

Senior judge. Maurice Van Maurice, baron and citizen of this imperial city, we have heard your defence from the mouth of your advocate, pleaded with eloquence and ability, though opposed to much strong uncontradicted evidence against you: is

there any thing further which you wish to urge in your own behalf? [*VAN MAURICE remains silent.*]

Junior judge. Baron; if you can offer any good plea why the sentence of the law should not be pronounced against you, as the murderer of your kinsman, Baron Hartman, let not this opportunity pass. We must otherwise proceed without delay.

Van Mau. Most honourable judges: The evidences against me are so strong, that I am compelled to confess, were such insufficient to convict a prisoner, there is scarcely a panel who at this or any other bar could be convicted. I have nothing to urge against your sentence, but that which I know you cannot and ought not to receive,—a simple and unqualified assertion of mine own innocence.

Senior judge. There is no occasion to say further.

Van Mau. Pardon me, my lord, there is occasion; and I am permitted so to do.

Senior judge. Proceed, then.

Van Mau. I am well aware that an assertion of mine own innocence cannot be received for my exculpation, even when I recall to your consideration, that I am the son of an honourable father, who has served the state in the senate and the field, and shed his blood for that service in the only way in which it becomes blood to be shed, that is derived from a source so honourable: that I have been reared under his eye, in rectitude and truth, which has never yet on any occasion been impugned: that love of worldly wealth, the only motive for committing the crime with which I am charged, is a propensity from which I am known to be altogether free. It cannot, I repeat, be received for my exculpation, but may surely, when joined to such considerations, well justify your acceding to my earnest request, that you would grant me three weeks' delay, ere your verdict be pronounced, that I may if possible prove mine innocence.

Yes, I request it earnestly; for who, Of woman born, shrinks not from death inflicted Before the gazing eyes of multitudes,—
Inflicted with disgrace? I do entreat you, For that I leave behind me those most dear, Who will, if such my punishment, receive
A stroke more terrible than headsman's axe, The wretch's momentary bane, can give.—
I do beseech you, for that ye yourselves Hereafter may be wrung with deep compunction,
When the good citizens of Lubeck, moved With gratitude for the brave father, coupled
With pity for the son of such a parent, Shall scowl upon you as ye pass along
Her public streets, as those who, in his misery, Denied some weeks of respite to the offspring
Of their once loved commander. I do appeal to all within these walls,
The citizens of this my native city; I do appeal to every honest man

Of whate'er town or kingdom; yea, to those
Who, banish'd forth from the community
Of social man, have but the forest waste
For their wild home, and for their polity
The light of untaught reason, whether this,
Your pitiless refusal of my suit,
Be not at enmity with every sympathy
Of common nature. I appeal to all.

Many voices (at once). He's right, he's right; he speaks good reason, sooth!

Senior judge. Silence in the court.

Van Mau. (looking round on the spectators). Ye pity me, and I do thank you for it.
I know I shall hereafter be restored

To lost esteem and good men's love. — Alas!
The fisherman in his small boat, when drifted
To the wild cat'rac's brink, is seen no more
Till, from the boiling nether gulf cast up,
Amid the fierce turmoil of warring eddies,
Jagg'd rocks and churning foam, a sorry sight
Of mangled, stripp'd, and sever'd limbs appears.
I may be so restored, with praise shed o'er me,
As unavailing as the rainbow tints,
That through the cat'rac's cloudy spray may gleam
Upon the perish'd wretch.

Enter ARDUSOFFE and FATHER FRANCIS.

Senior judge. Again I say, keep silence in the court! (*Turning to the prisoner.*) You aver that you are innocent; and if this be so, it is at least known to you, who is the guilty person. Name him, then, that justice may take its course, and you shall have full time allowed you to prove your assertion. Refusing to do this, you become your own destroyer, and have no right to cast the blame upon us.

Van Mau. I have said, my lords, that I cannot do this without betraying confidence; and were I to do so, should I deserve to be believed in any thing I might reveal? He who betrays confidence to save himself, may utter falsehoods also from the same urgent temptation.

Senior judge. And this is your determination? (*VAN MAURICE bows.*)

Junior judge. You screw your sense of honour, noble baron, to the romantic pitch. Consider better of it. Is this your final determination? (*VAN MAURICE bows again.*) Then, though most painfully, we must proceed to give sentence as the law directs.

Ard. (advancing). Stop, my lords. In this extremity, I am warranted to bring forward evidence to exculpate my client, which might not otherwise have been justifiable. This holy father hath that to reveal which concerns the life and honour of the prisoner, and I claim that he may be heard.

Senior judge. Reveal penitential confessions!

Ard. Yes, my lord, to save the life of an innocent person; and show me that law of God or man which forbids it.

Junior judge. He must speak upon oath.

Ard. Let it be administered to him as you please.

Senior judge. Let him be sworn.

[*FATHER FRANCIS is led to the further end of the hall, where the oath is administered to him in dumb show. He then advances slowly to the front, as if unwell.*]

Ard. What is the matter, good father?

Father. I am somewhat faint; may I be permitted to withdraw for a few moments?

Ard. (after looking to the judges, who nod assent). You are permitted. [*Exit FATHER FRANCIS.*]

Kranz. This monk, methinks, is strangely seized on the sudden. Will a lie or two choke a friar?

Ard. (to KRANZBERG). If thou canst find one man in Lubeck who doubts the veracity of Father Francis, make that a plea for setting aside his evidence: thou hast my leave to do so.

Van Mau. (aside to ARDUSOFFE). Has Father Francis confessed any one concerned in this matter?

Ard. (aside to VAN MAURICE). Why else should he volunteer this evidence?

After a pause, enter CLAUDIEN, disguised as FATHER FRANCIS.

Senior judge. Declare to us what thou knowest of this atrocious deed.

Con. That which is only known to heaven, the prisoner, and myself, I will declare; and nothing but the truth shall pass these lips.

Senior judge. Proceed without further prelude.

Con. The panel at your bar was, on the fatal evening when Baron Hartman was slain —

Kranz. Gentle expression! I should say — murdered.

Junior judge. Interrupt not the witness.

Con. Well, be it termed as you please. I say, he, your panel, was the whole of that evening shut up within the walls of his own library, when Count Claudien, his friend, entered the room by a private door from the garden, with blood on his hands and agony in his heart.

Van Mau. Thou liest, false priest! I made to thee no such confession. Mine own sins, and mine own alone, were revealed to thee. (*To the judges.*) Regard not what he says, for he is perjured.

Junior judge. Silence! do not interrupt him: it is for us to judge of this matter. (*To the confessor.*) Proceed.

Con. He entered, as I have said, with blood upon his hands, and told, in much agony of mind, to this, your noble prisoner, that he had been, a short half-hour before, attacked near the ramparts by Baron Hartman, who rushed furiously upon him with his drawn sword: that they fought, and Hartman was disarmed; upon which he treacherously drew his dagger, attempting to stab him; but he, this Claudien, being the stronger man, threw the other upon the ground, and bent over him with one knee upon his breast. (*A pause.*)

Senior judge. Proceed; art thou ill again?

Ard. He will recover breath presently; give him time.

Con. In this position were those unfortunate adversaries, when Hartman, in passion, uttered words most false and injurious of a lady beloved by Claudien; upon which, this unhappy Claudien drew his own dagger from his belt, and stabbed him to the heart. That was the blood-stained dagger found in the apartment of Van Maurice.

Van Mau. I can forbear no longer; if this monk Tell such a tale as drawn from my confession, By all most sacred held in earth or heaven, He lies a thousand times!

Con. But wilt thou also swear that Claudien did not come into thy library on that fatal night; and did not tell thee a story similar to that which I now repeat?

Van Mau. Do not beset me thus! the Count is absent,

And cannot now defend himself. Whatever May be your good intentions in my favour, As friendly aid I utterly reject them.

Kranz. Will any one be fooled by such bungling jugglers playing into one another's hands so palpably?

Borion. Most honourable judges, I think you cannot admit of such evidence as this. There is collusion here.

Senior judge. Is there any farther evidence to produce? (*A pause.*) I presume there is none.

[*The judges confer closely together in dumb show, while the prisoner and others speak in an under-voice.*]

Van Mau. (*beckoning to the confessor.*) Come this way, friar.

Kranz. No speaking privately to a witness in court.

Ard. The evidence being closed, it may now be admitted.

Van Mau. Come hither, stealthy monk, for holy father

I never more may call thee. [*Beckoning as before. (Confessor goes nearer.)*] So unwilling!

What fiend of darkness hast thou tamper'd with?

No earthly man but one could to thy ear,

What thou revealst, convey, and he's far distant.

Con. (*in a low voice to VAN MAURICE.*) Not far distant, Maurice.

[*VAN MAURICE pushes him away, and with an eager expression of countenance points to the door; then sitting hastily down, remains in a stooping posture, covering his face with his hands.*]

Kranz. (*to ARDUSOFFE.*) We shall know presently what all those juggling deceptions of yours will produce. Thou hast trained thy actors to admiration. But honesty is the best policy after all; this good saying I have always maintained.

Ard. As far as words will go, sapient sir; and

the fate of thy last night's treachery has confirmed it. A laudable consistency of character, when both words and actions teach the same lesson.

Van Mau. (*starting up.*) They are long of coming to a decision.

Ard. Nay, they have consulted but a little while.

Van Mau. I have sate on that bench a long time.

Ard. But a few minutes, dear baron.

Van Mau. (*looking to confessor, who stands at a distance.*) Not yet gone!

Ard. Did you expect him to go?

Van Mau. My understanding had left me: I knew not what to expect.

Ard. Hush! the judges are preparing to pronounce sentence.

Van Mau. (*looking up fearfully.*) Is it for life or death? (*Averting his eyes hastily.*) It is not life.

Senior judge. Baron Van Maurice, having duly considered the evidence against you, and that also which has been produced in your favour, we feel ourselves constrained to pronounce upon you the sentence of the law. And forasmuch as murders have, of late years, become more frequent among people of noble condition, we see good to revive, upon this occasion, a law that has been too long laid aside.—Maurice Van Maurice, for this atrocious murder which you have committed, we condemn you to be broken alive upon the wheel; and to-morrow, before mid-day, this sentence shall be executed on your mortal body. May God be merciful to your immortal soul, which you have put into such fearful jeopardy!

[*VAN MAURICE stands motionless on the spot; a murmur of horror sounds through the hall, KRANZBERG alone looking triumphant; while the confessor sinks into the arms of ARDUSOFFE, who prevents him from falling to the ground.*]

Offi. (*of the court.*) Undo his cowl, and give him a cup of water.

Ard. (*drawing his cowl still closer.*) Let him alone. It is only a momentary weakness; he revives.

Con. (*aside to ARDUSOFFE.*) Let go thy hold: I am well now, and think I shall be strong. (*Advancing with a stately step in front of the judges.*) My lords, I needs must strongly raise my voice against this sentence which ye have pronounced upon a man most innocent.

O, more than innocent! a man most virtuous.

Ay, more than virtuous; e'en to honour's summit Most nobly raised, whereon he stands aloft, 'Twixt heaven and earth, so godlike, that the mind Scarcely believes this nether world of sin Hath been his previous home.—He is most guiltless.

Senior judge. What proof givest thou of this, and who art thou who hast twice this day addressed us with mien and air so varied, and two such different voices? —

Con. (*dropping his disguise.*) The man who did the deed: the unhappy Claudien.

Senior judge. And thou confessest thyself to be the murderer of Hartman?

Claudian. You call it murder—so it may be called.

He at the moment lay unarm'd ; I, therefore, Can make no plea of self-defence. But murder, Deliberately devised, ne'er stain'd these hands: And if there be a man in this assembly Who loves a virtuous woman—such, I trow, In every court and crowd are to be found— Let him declare how he should feel on hearing Her fair name outraged by a slanderous tongue, The caitiff struggling to elude his grasp : And if a fatal stroke by rage inflicted He can in conscience deem deliberate bloodshed, Being so circumstanced, I am a murderer.

Junior judge. How camest thou hither? Didst thou not sail in the Mermaid, bound for Copenhagen?

Claudian. I did : but agony of mind wrung from me, unawares, some words of exclamation and disclosure, which one of the crew overheard ; and when that tempest, which lately rocked your walls, began to vex our course, and put the ship in peril, this man accused me as a murderer. The frightened mariners would no longer share the risk with such an unblest passenger, and I was cast into the deep.

Junior judge. Fearful extremity ! How wast thou preserved?

Claudian. I swam while strength remain'd, and then embraced

A floating plank, which bore me to the land. The tempest and the sea had pity on me ; And will ye then destroy what they have spared ? I beg for mercy : I am not ashamed To ask, ay, to implore your clemency ; For, guilty as I am, I am so circumstanced That life is dear to me.

[*Pointing to VAN MAURICE, who is now on his knees, stretching out his hands to the judges, but unable to speak.*

And see, who kneels before you ! one who knelt not for his own life ; who never, till this moment, bent his honoured knee but to that Almighty Judge, who hath commanded weak and erring men to be merciful, that they may obtain mercy.

[*The judges whisper to one another.*

Junior judge. Thy case, Count Claudien, is piteous, though thou art very guilty. We must withdraw awhile before we make any reply to thy appeal for mercy.

[*The judges withdraw.*

[*CLAUDIEN turning to VAN MAURICE, spreads out his arms, and the latter, rushing into them, strains him to his bosom.*

Van Mau. Who would not live or die for such a man? My noble friend ! but thou shalt live. The very stones of these walls will cry out against them, if they have not mercy on thee.

Kranz. If the judges suffer themselves to be de-

luded with all this mummerly, they are no true successors of King Solomon.

Van Mau. Deceit dwells within thine own miserable breast, and thou perceivest deceit in every thing.

Kranz. There is little penetration required in this case. It is a mighty convenient thing to have the dagger of a friend and brother-in-law to clear one's way to a rich inheritance.

Van Mau. Thou liest most foully and most wickedly.

Kranz. (*drawing from his cloak a concealed weapon, and rushing furiously on him*). The lie to me ! thou half-condemned felon !

Claudian (*doing the same, and putting himself between them*). Attack an unarmed man, thou hellish caitiff !

[*They fight, and ARDUSOFFE and others endeavour to part them, but cannot effect it, till CLAUDIEN has run KRANZBERG through the body, and received a wound from him.*

This hand of mine is fated to shed blood. Caitiff as he is, I wish I had not slain him.

Ard. See how he gathers in his wrung and withering features, as if he cursed us all in the very agonies of death.

Claudian. Say not so ! say not so ! Who can divine the thoughts of a dying man, be he ever so wicked?—He is dead now, and I may soon be as he.

Van Mau. (*alarmed*). What sayest thou? There is blood from thy side : thou art wounded.

Claudian. I am faint and sick : let me have air, I pray you.

Re-enter the judges, and resume their seats.

Senior judge. This is our decision. Forasmuch as the murder of Hartman was not a premeditated act, but perpetrated, though unjustifiably, in a moment of provocation and passion ; and further, that the criminal hath delivered himself up to justice, making full confession of the crime, we remit the punishment of death, and condemn the Count Claudien of Denmark to perpetual banishment from the city and territories of Lubeck. In four and twenty hours from this time, thou must depart. Being ever again seen within the realm, after that period, death, according to the utmost rigour of the law, is thy portion.

Claudian. I thank your clemency. If my soul and body keep together so long, I will obey you ; but if otherwise, ye will not refuse to my mortal remains a spot of earth for their resting-place, and the dust of your land to cover them.—This is my request :—that I lie—may lie where my friend— (*Struggling in vain to keep down his emotion*).—I thank your clemency.

[*Is supported by VAN MAURICE.*

Junior judge (*descending hastily from his seat*).

What means this? has he slain himself?—And who lies here? Kranzberg dead, and bathed in blood! Such outrage in a court of justice!—Who permitted it? Every one present is answerable to the law for this.

Ard. Kranzberg, in the rage of disappointment, was, as Borion and all here present can witness, the aggressor. We endeavoured to separate them, but ere we could effect it, these bleeding wounds were given and received.

Enter ROSELLA, joyfully.

Ros. I have heard it—I have heard the joyful tidings!

(*To VAN MAURICE.*) Thou art acquitted, and Claudien not condemn'd.

Ay, well mayst thou so hold him to thy heart! I will embrace you both.

Van Mau. Forbear, dear sister; do not press upon him.

Ros. What is the matter? There is no joy here. Claudien, thou'rt very pale; there's blood upon thee. O, misery, misery! (*Wringing her hands.*)

Van Mau. Do not give way to such frantic lamentations; he is severely wounded, but may yet recover. Have patience and do not distract him with outrageous sorrow.

Ros. I will be patient! yes, I will be patient! 'Tis heaven chastises; I will bear it meekly.

But is there yet for me no sound of kindness,—No dear word of affection, gentle Claudien, From thy pale lips, so pale and so compress'd? Alas, alas! thou lookst upon the ground, And dost not look at me!

Van Mau. He is very faint, and hears not what thou sayest.

[*She embraces the knees of CLAUDIEN, who sinks slowly to the ground, supported by VAN MAURICE and ARDUSOFFE, and the curtain drops.*

NOTE.

As it has been thought, by a gentleman professionally conversant on these subjects, that the scene on board of ship is only fitted for a melodrama, and perhaps with justice, I have subjoined what follows, to be substituted in its room by any manager of a theatre, who may be of the same opinion, and who may, at the same time, consider this drama as worthy of representation. The simplest way, no doubt, would have been to have omitted the objectionable part altogether, and to have placed the following scenes in the body of the piece, but as my own opinion on the subject does not entirely coincide with that above mentioned, I have preferred this mode of removing the difficulty. Since our two principal theatres are of such large dimensions, and possess so many capabilities of effect from scenery and from light, I can see no reason why some of the divisions of a regular drama may not occasionally receive the advantage of such powerful auxiliaries. And, indeed, I am scarcely entitled to call this a regular piece, consisting, as it does, of three acts, and written chiefly in prose, that it might be the better adapted to a large theatre, in which blank verse cannot be so readily understood.

SCENE I.

The entrance-hall of a small inn on the sea-shore: knocking heard at the door.

Enter Landlady.

Land. Who can it be, making such a noise at this untimely hour? (*In a loud voice.*) What do you want at this late hour? and who are you?

Voic (without). I am a storm-beaten, benighted traveller, and shelter for the night is what I want, good dame; open your door and receive me.

Land. You travel late for a lone person. (*Opens the door.*)

Enter CLAUDIEN.

Come in, then, and I will do the best I can for you. The rain must have fallen in torrents, methinks, to put you in this condition.

Claudian. Yes, I have had water enough, good dame; let me dry myself by the fire, if there be one still burning in the house.

Land. (after looking at him steadfastly). Preserve me! is the Mermaid gone a wreck?

Claudian. What sayest thou of the Mermaid?

Land. She sailed from port yesterday morning, and my poor boy is on board.

Claudian. Where he is still in safety, I doubt not; so make thyself easy, and blow up the embers of thy fire, that I may dry myself.

Land. Lord be gracious to me! Did I not see thee embark with the other passengers?—If that ship be sailing on the sea, what art thou? (*He remains silent, and she looks at him still more intently.*) In the name of the blessed saints, depart from me! thou art nothing now that either fire may warm or roof may shelter. Leave me, in the holy name of St. Francis!

Claudian. Nay, if thou deny me succour, in my present condition, thou wilt make a ghost of me, indeed. Let me pass on to the fire, I beseech thee!

[*Exit, passing her quickly, and she follows him, holding up her hands in amazement.*

SCENE II.

The sea-shore by early dawn.

Enter Mariners and Passengers, carrying small packages and various matters in their hands.

1st pas. Thank God we are on dry land again, though we be driven back to the same coast.

1st mar. And ship and cargo safe, too; you may thank me for that.

2d mar. Thank thee for it!

1st mar. Ay, marry! had we not lightened our vessel of that unhallowed murderer, she and all she contained would have been, long ere now, at the bottom.

1st pas. Say no more of that: it makes the blood turn in my veins to think of it. If all the unhallowed part of our living freight had been so disposed of, we should have come to shore most grievously curtailed of our numbers.

Enter Landlady, with a small basket.

3d mar. By our blessed Lady! there comes my mother.

Land. My dear boy! art thou safe? Thou hast had a sad bout of it on that stormy sea, since I parted with thee yesterday morning.

1st mar. Good landlady, we are in want of food and a good fire to warm us by; show us the nearest way to thy house, which is not far off, as I guess.

Land. (pointing). Hold on your way along the shore, and I'll overtake you presently, when I have gathered a few more of these limpets.

[*Exit mariners, &c., manent only landlady and 3d mariner.*

3d mar. May the devil choke them with the first morsel they eat! I wish they would go to any house but thine.

Land. Why dost thou say so, my dear boy?

3d mar. I'll tell thee a secret, mother; I'll sail with those men no more, if I can effect my escape.

Land. What makes thee say so?

3d mar. I'll tell thee why, and in few words, too, though

It is a story to make one's ears tingle. There was a noble passenger on board, and when the storm raged at its pitch, and we were in jeopardy, some exclamations which fell from his lips made one who stood near him imagine that he must needs be a murderer.

Land. Mercy on us! did he own himself such? remorse wrings strange tales from parched lips in the hour of danger.

3d mar. He confessed having shed blood, but with no deliberate intention; and I could pawn my life upon it that he spoke the truth. Yet those cowardly devils durst not abide the peril of the storm in his company.

Land. (*tossing up her arms*). And they cast him overboard!

3d mar. Nay; the stoutest of them all durst not lay a finger on him. He kept them off with his drawn sword, till he gained the prow of the ship, which was driving towards land, and then, raising his arms to heaven (I shall never forget the sight of his noble figure as the passing lightning

gave it to our eyes for a moment), threw himself into the deep.

Land. It is, indeed, a fearful tale. But he is no murderer, I'll be sworn to it; and he is safe on shore at this moment, where he would never have been, had he done the deed of blood. He is in my house.

3d mar. Where those men must not find him. What shall we do?

Land. Run thou, and give him notice of their coming; and conduct him, if he pleases, to——, where he may get on board of some other vessel, and quit the country undiscovered.

3d mar. So I will, mother, and go to the world's end with him, too, if he will suffer me.

Land. Make haste; and I'll overtake those miscreants, and lead them to the house by any way but the nearest.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

THE BRIDE:

A DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS.

PREFACE.

To see the mind of a child awakening by degrees from the dreamy indistinctness of infancy to a clearer observation of what he beholds around, and a capacity to compare and to reason on the differences and resemblances he perceives, is a most pleasing and interesting sight; so in a far greater degree does the rousing a race or nation from its infancy of ignorance and delusion, interest and excite every mind of any feeling or reflection. It was from this natural sympathy that I heard with the most sensible pleasure, some months ago, of the intended translation of my drama, called "The Martyr," into the Cingalese language, as a work which might have some good effects upon a people of strong passions, emerging from a state of comparative barbarism, and whose most effectual mode of receiving instruction is frequently that of dramatic representation, according to the fashion of their country. A gentleman to whom Ceylon owes the great benefits conferred on a people by the pure and enlightened administration of justice, and to whose strenuous exertions they are also indebted for the invaluable institution of a trial by native juries*, entertained this opinion of the drama in question, and afterwards did me the farther honour to suppose that I might write something, more peculiarly appropriate to the circumstances of that island, which would naturally have a stronger moral effect on the minds of its inhabitants. Pleased to be made, in the humblest degree, an instrument for their good, I most readily promised to endeavour

at least to do so. And when they read this piece, or when it is brought before them in representation, they will regard it as a proof that their former judge and friend, though now absent and far separated from them, still continues to take a deep interest in their welfare. So considered, it will not fail to make an impression on their minds to which its own power or merit would be altogether unequal.

But should the individual effects of this drama be ever so inconsiderable, the profits arising from its publication in England may be the means of procuring translations into the Cingalese language of more able and useful works, and make, as it were, a first though a low step towards higher moral eminence. In these days, when many excellent men are striving, at the expense of health and ease, and all that is valued by the world, to spread the light of Christianity in the East; when the lamented Bishop Heber, with the disinterested devotion of an apostle, joined to the mildness, liberality, ability, courtesousness, and good sense which promote and grace every laudable undertaking, has proved himself to be the genuine and noble follower of his blessed Master—who would not be willing to lend some aid and encouragement to so excellent a purpose? I hope, and strongly hope, that good will be derived, even from such a feeble effort as the present; and that the time will come when the different races of the East will consider every human creature as a brother; while Englishmen, under whose rule or protection they may live, will condemn that policy which founds its security upon ignorance. All past experience is unfavourable to the

* The measures above alluded to are detailed in the Asiatic Journal for June, 1827. They are the different measures which were carried into effect by Sir Alexander Johnston

when he was President of His Majesty's Council in Ceylon, and of which Mr. Brougham made honourable mention in his speech on the present state of the law in February, 1828.

unmanly and ungenerous maxim. And in the present time, when perfect undisturbed ignorance cannot be obtained, the preservation of it in a middle state, to take no higher view of the subject, will be found to be a very precarious and expensive means of governing. But do I not wrong my countrymen, connected with the East, in supposing that the great proportion of them do entertain such narrow views? Of this at least I am thoroughly persuaded; that if such a supposition does not wrong them at present, it will do so grievously some years hence: for the ignorance I speak of is that which stands opposed to the useful, simple learning, which promotes industry and charity. Of those superfluous acquirements which the overstrained refinement of modern plans of education seems anxious to extend to the lower classes of society, I do not speak.

But I must beg leave to retract what I have said above as to making a first step in this desirable progress: one of Mrs. Hannah More's Sacred Dramas was translated into the language of Ceylon several, I believe many, years ago, and was much liked and admired by the natives. A second or third, or any rank, so as it be a step at all, is honour enough for me.

And now let me address a few words to those whom I shall never see, whom many, *many* leagues of ocean divide from any spot of earth on which my foot hath ever rested or shall ever rest; those for whose especial use the following drama was written, and in whose country the story of it is supposed to have happened.

I endeavour to set before you that leading precept of the Christian religion which distinguishes it from all other religions, the forgiveness of injuries. A bold and fiery-tempered people is apt to consider it as mean and pusillanimous to forgive; and I am persuaded that many a vindictive and fatal blow has been inflicted by those, whose hearts at the same moment have yearned to pardon their enemies. But Christians, who, notwithstanding the very imperfect manner in which they obey and have obeyed the precepts and example of Jesus Christ, do still acknowledge them, and have their general conduct influenced by them,—are *they* a feeble and un-

honoured race? Look round you in your own land, in other countries most connected with your own, and you will acknowledge that this is not the case. You will therefore, I hope, receive in good part the moral of my story.

I wished to have found some event in the real history of Ceylon, that might have served as a foundation for my drama; but not proving successful in my search, which, circumstanced as I am, could not but be very imperfect, I have of necessity had recourse to imagination. But there is one person or character in it which is truly your own, though placed in an imaginary situation; and any country in the world might be proud to claim it.—“Remember,” said the son of the first Adigar of the Candian country to his elder brother, who had clung for protection to his wretched mother, when she and all her children were condemned to death by a late king of Candy,—“remember that we are the sons of a brave mau, and should die as becomes his sons; I will be the first to receive the stroke of the headsman.” The land which hath produced a child so brave and noble, will also, under favourable circumstances, be fruitful of brave and noble men; and in proportion as her sons become generous and humane, they will also increase in valour and dignity. The little Samar, then, of my play, is what the son of the first Adigar would have been in his place, and as such I commend him to your favour and attention.

The views I have given of the religion of Juan de Creda are true to all that you will find in the history and precepts of Jesus Christ, whenever you are inclined to read those books of our sacred Scripture which we call the Gospels; containing His history, and written by men who were His immediate followers and disciples, being eye and ear witnesses of all that they relate; and let no peculiar opinions or creeds of different classes of Christians ever interfere with what you there perceive plainly and generally taught. It was given for the instruction of the simple and unlearned; as such receive it.

Wishing you all prosperity, as a brave and virtuous people,—for brave ye are, and virtuous I hope ye will become,—I bid you farewell!

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

RASINGA.

SAMARKOON, *his brother-in-law.*

JUAN DE CREDA, *a Spanish physician.*

SAMAR, *a child, and son of RASINGA.*

EHLEYPOLIE, } *officers of RASINGA.*

MHDOONY, }

Officers, domestics, robbers, spearmen, &c.

WOMEN.

ARTINA, *wife of RASINGA, and sister of SAMARKOON.*

MONTEBESA, *mother of RASINGA.*

THE BRIDE.

SABAWATTÉ.

Nurse, attendants, &c.

Scene, in Ceylon.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Before the castle of RASINGA.

Enter EHLEYPPOOLIE, meeting MIHDOONY and two officers of the chieftain's household.

Ehley. Well met, my comrades! I have words for you.

Mih. We doubt it not; thou'rt bountiful in words.

1st offi. Thou never wast a niggard of such treasure.

Ehley. Ay, but the words which ye shall now receive,

Are not the passing ware of daily traffic,
But such as in each list'ner's fancy wake
Responding sounds, such, as from twisted shell
On sea-beach found, come to the bended ear
Of wand'ring child; sounds strange and full of omen.

Mih. What! evil omen? storms and hurricanes?

Ehley. Fy on't! A stirring, tinkling, hopeful sound:

The ring of scatter'd largess, sweeter far
Than pipe, or chord, or chant of forest birds:
The sound of mummery and merriment:
The sound——

But wherefore stare ye on me

thus?

List: I will tell you what concerns us all.

Mih. Out with it then! for it concerns us all
To be no more tormented with thy folly.

Ehley. Our Lord Rasinga wills, that we, brave mates,

With fifty armed followers and *their* followers,
Shall be in readiness by early dawn,
To march in goodly order to the mountains.

1st offi. I like not mountain warfare.

2d offi. No, nor I.

Mih. To force our toilsome way through thick rank woods,

With bleeding limbs drained by a hundred leeches!*

Ehley. Fy, lazy cowards! shrink ye from adventures

Which gentle lady, in her palanquin,
Will share with you?

Mih. A gentle lady, sayst thou?

Ehley. Yes, ye dull dolts, I say so.—Brave Rasinga

Has with one wife, for a good term of years,
(Lulled by some charm of sorcery) been satisfied.

* Very small leeches which infest many of the woods of Ceylon, and torment travellers.

It is good time that he, like other chiefs,
Should have a first sultana and a second,
Or any such arrangement as becomes
His age and dignity. So, in gay trim
With our arm'd band, we by to-morrow's dawn
Must be in readiness.—These are your orders,
Sent by our lord through me.

Mih. Who is this honour'd lady of the mountains?

Ehley. Canst thou not guess?—The aged chieftain's daughter,

Whose petty hold was sack'd by daring robbers,
Not many weeks gone by. He and his daughter
Were dragg'd as prisoners from their ruin'd home.

In this sad plight, our chief, with Samarkoon,
The valiant brother of his present wife,
And a good strength of spearmen, met them;
charged

The bootied spoilers, conquer'd and released
Their wretched prey.—And ye may well suppose
The lady's veil, amidst the strange confusion,
Could not be clutch'd so close, but that Rasinga
Might see the lovely face it should have cover'd.

Mih. O now I understand it; for, methinks,
Rasinga had not else brought to his house
Another bride to share it with Artina.

[SAMARCOON, who has entered behind them unperceived, and overheard part of the preceding dialogue, now rushes forward indignantly.

Sam. Ye foul-tongued knaves, who so belie your master!

What words are these which ye have dared to utter?

Ehley. My lord, I crave your pardon; I have utter'd

The orders which Rasinga charged me with,
That these (*pointing to MIHDOONY and officers*)
should straight prepare an armed band
To take their way to-morrow for the mountains.

Sam. To bring a bride from thence? Speak out,
I charge thee,
Thou lying knave! Went not thy words thus far?

Ehley. If they be true or lying words, I wot not.
What may within a guarded palanquin
Be from the mountains brought, I may but guess.
Perhaps some speaking bird or jabb'ring ape.

Sam. (*striking him*). Take that—and that—thou false audacious slave:

Dar'st thou to answer me with mockery?

[*Exit EHLEYPPOOLIE sulkily, followed by MIHDOONY and officers.*

Manet SAMARCOON.

Base sordid reptiles! for some paltry largess
And passing revelry, they would right gladly

See peace and order and domestic bliss
To misery and wild confusion changed.
Hateful suggestions! base and vague conjectures,
That vulgar minds on slight foundation rear!
All false! —

And yet they are upon my heart
Like the compresure of a coiled boa,
Loathly, but irresistible.

A bride!

It cannot be! — although her unweild face
Was of surprising beauty — Oh how lovely!
Yet he bestow'd on her but frigid praise,
And still continued to repress my ardour,
Whene'er I spoke of the fair mountain maid,
With silent stern reserve. — Is this like love?
It is not natural.

Ah! but it is;

It is too natural, — deep subtle nature.
How was my idiot soul so far beguiled
That I ne'er thought of this?

Yes, yes, he loves her!

Loves her whom I so well — so dearly love,
That every female image but her own
Is from my heart effaced, like curling mists
That, rising from the vale, cling for awhile
To the tall cliff's brown breast, till the warm sun
Dissolves them utterly. — 'Tis so; e'en she
Whom I have thought of, dreamt of, talk'd of, — ay,
And talk'd to, though in absence, as a thing
Present and conscious of my words, and living,
Like the pure air around me, every where.
(After a pause.) And he must have this creature of
perfection!

It shall not be, whatever else may be!
As there is blood and manhood in this body,
It shall not be!

And thou, my gentle sister,
Must thy long course of wedded love and honour
Come to such end! — Thy noble heart will break,
When love and friendly confidence are fled.
Thou art not form'd to sit within thy bower
Like a dress'd idol in its carved alcove,
A thing of silk and gems and cold repose:
Thy keen but generous nature — Shall it be?
I'll sooner to the trampling elephant
Lay down this mortal frame, than see thee wrong'd.
(After a considerable pause.) Nay, nay! I am a
madman in my rage.

The words of that base varlet may be false.
Good Montebesa shall resolve my doubts.
Her son confides to her his secret thoughts:
To her I'll go, and be relieved from torment,
Or know the worst at once.

[Exit.

SCENE II.

The apartment of MONTEBESA.

SABAWATTÉ is discovered at work and singing.

SONG.

The gliding fish that takes his play
In shady nook of streamlet cool,
Thinks not how waters pass away,
And summer dries the pool.

The bird beneath his leafy dome,
Who trills his carol, loud and clear,
Thinks not how soon his verdant home
The lightning's breath may sear.

Shall I within my bridegroom's bower,
With braids of budding roses twined,
Look forward to a coming hour
When he may prove unkind?

The bee reigns in his waxen cell,
The chieftain in his stately hold,
To-morrow's earthquake, — who can tell?
May both in ruin fold.

Enter MONTEBESA, as the song is concluded.

Mont. Did I not hear thee singing, as I came,
The song my dear Artina loves to hear?

Sab. E'en so, good lady; many a time I sang it
When first I was attendant in her bower;
Ere, at your own desire, and for my honour,
She did resign me to your higher service.

Mont. Sing it no more: alas! she thought not
then

Of its contain'd allusions to a fate
Which now abides herself.

Sab. No, not her fate; you surely mean not so:
She is a happy wife, the only wife
Of brave Rasinga, honour'd and beloved.

Mont. She was and is as yet his only wife.

Sab. As yet his only wife! and think you then
She will not so continue?

Mont. Sabawatté,
It grieves me much to tell thee what perforce
Must soon be known to all; my son Rasinga
Hath set his heart upon a younger bride,
Perhaps a fairer too.

Sab. (eagerly). No; not a fairer.
I'd peril life and limb upon the bet,
She is not half so fair, nor half so good.

Mont. Be not so hasty. — Why dost thou regard it
As such a grievous thing? She has already
Enjoy'd his undivided love much longer
Than other dames have done with other lords,
And reason teaches she should now give place.

Sab. Reason and cruelty sort ill together;
A loorie haunting with a spotted pard.

Ah! woe the day! Why have you told me this?

Mont. Because I would upon your sadden'd
brow

Print traces that may lead our poor Artina
To question thee; and thou, who art her friend,
Canst by degrees, with gentle, wise precaution,
Reveal to her what she must needs be told.

Sab. I cannot: put not such a task on me,
I do implore your goodness!—No, I cannot.
Mont. Hush, hush! I hear the footsteps of a man,
But not Rasinga.—It is Samarkoon;
I know his rapid tread.—Be wise; be silent;
For her awhile must live in ignorance.

Enter SAMARKOON, and SABAWATTÉ retires to some distance.

A happy morning to you, youthful kinsman!
Sam. As it may prove, good lady: happy
morning
Oft leads to woeful eve, ay, woeful noon.

Mont. These are strange sombre words; what is
the matter?

Why dost thou look both sorrowful and stern?

Sam. I have good cause, if that which I have
heard

Be aught but a malignant, hateful tale,
On mere conjecture founded. Answer me,
If thou knowst nothing of a num'rous train
In preparation, †, Rasinga's orders,
To fetch home to his house a fair young bride?
There's no such thing.—Speak—speak! I will
believe thee;

For if to thee unknown, there's no such thing.—
[*A pause, he looking inquisitively in her face.*
Thou dost not speak; thou dost not answer me;
There's trouble in thine eye.—A with'ring curse
Light on his heartless heart, if this be true!

Mont. Brave Samarkoon! thou art not wise, so
fiercely

To question me of that which well may be
Without my knowledge;—that which, if it be,
Nor thou nor I have any power to alter.

Sam. Which if it be! that if betrays an answer;
A shameful answer, shunning open words.
Dear, dear Artina! thou hast climb'd already
The sunny side of Doombra's mountain ridge*,
And now with one short step must pass the bounds
Dividing ardent heat from chilling clouds
With drenching mist surcharged.

So suddenly
To bring this change upon her! Cruel craft!
He knows that it will break her tender heart,
And serve his fatal purpose.

Mont. Frantic man!
Thou art unjust, ungenerous, unwise;
For should Rasinga—no uncommon act,
Take to his princely bower a second bride,
Would not Artina still be held in honour,
Her children cherish'd, and their rank secured?

Sam. Such honour as unfeeling worldlings give

* A high mountainous ridge in Ceylon, where the one side is sunny, clear, and warm, the other cloudy, wet, and cold.

To fall'n deserted merit, she will have;
And such security as should-be heirs,
Who stand i' the way of younger, petted minions,
Find in the house of an estranged sire,
Her children will receive. Alas, alas!
The very bonds of soul-devoted love,
That did so long entwine a husband's heart,
For her own life the cord of execution
Will surely prove. Detested cruelty!
But is it so? My head is all confusion,
My heart all fire;—I know not what thou saist.

Mont. Indeed, young kinsman, thou art now unfit
To hold discourse on such a wayward subject.
She whom thou lovest so dearly as a brother,
I as a mother do most truly love.
Let this suffice thee, and retire awhile,
For I expect Artina, and 'tis meet
She be not now o'erwhelm'd with thy distress.
Ha! she is here already; tripping lightly
With sparkling eyes, like any happy child,
Who bears away the new-robb'd rock-bird's spoil.

*Enter ARTINA, gaily, with an embroidered scarf
of many colours in her hand, and running up to
MONTEBESA.*

Art. Dear mother, look at this! such tints, such
flowers!

The spirits of the Peak have done this work;
Not hands of flesh and blood. Nay, look more closely.
And thou too, Samarkoon. How cam'st thou here?
I pray you both admire the beauteous gift—
Rasinga's gift—which I have just received.

Sam. (*eagerly*). Received from his own hand, so
lately too? [hand?

Art. E'en now. But did I say, from his own
He sent it to me, the capricious man!
Ay, and another present, some days since,
Was also sent. Ay, so it was indeed.

Sam. Was he not wont to bring such gifts himself?

Art. With what a face of gravity thou askst
This most important question! Never mind:
I can devise a means to be revenged

For all this seeming lack of courtesy. [how?

Mont. Devise a means to be revenged! and
Art. I'll dress old nurse as my ambassadress,
With robe, and veil, and pall majestic,

And she shall thank him in a tiresome speech,
(He hates her formal prosing)—that I trow,
Will cure him of such princely modes of sending
His gifts to me. But ye are wondrous grave.
What ails thee, brother? Speak, good Montebesa;
I fear he is not well.

Mont. He is not very well.

Art. (*taking his hand affectionately*). Indeed he
is not.

Sam. (*turning away his face*). A passing fit of
fever has disturb'd me,

But mind it not, Artina.

Art. Nay, nay, but I will mind it, gentle brother.

And I have learnt this morning cheering news,
Good news for thee and all sick folk beside.

Mont. We want good news; what is it thou hast heard?

Art. De Creda, who, by physic magical,
Did cure Rasinga of his fearful malady,
When at the point of death, is just arrived.
Where he hath been these two long years and more,

There's not a creature knows. Perhaps 't the moon,
If magic knows the way to climb so high.

Mont. Perhaps in his own land.

Art. Ay, certes, Europe is a wondrous kingdom,
And well worth visiting, which sends forth men
So gifted and so good.

Sam. I pray thee say not *men*, but only *man*.
Hath it e'er sent another like to him?

Yet wherefore came he to these happier regions
With such a wicked crew?

Art. Nay, blame him not :
His fate hath been disastrous and sad,
As I have heard him say; and, woe is me!
Misfortune is not dainty in associates.

Sam. Associates! Solitude, in trackless deserts,
Where locusts, ants, and lizards poorly thrive,—
On the bare summit of a rugged peak,
Where birds of prey in dusky circles wing
The troubled air with loud and clam'rous din,
Were to an honest heart endurable,
Rather than such associates.

Art. Ha! does this rouse thee so? Yet, ne'er-
I'll send for him, and he will make thee well.

Sam. I'm well if thou art so, my gentle sister.

Art. And I am so; how canst thou doubt it,
brother,
Being so loving and so well beloved.

Sam. O yes! thou art indeed beloved most
Both thou and thine, and so shall ever be,
While life gives motion to thy brother's heart.

Art. A brother's heart!—How so? there is a
meaning,—

A meaning and a mystery in this.

Tears, too, are on my hand, dropt from thine
eyes;—

O, speak, and tell the worst!

Sam. I may not now.

I pray thee, let me go; I cannot speak.

[*Breaks from her and exit. Then SABAWATTÉ
comes forward and takes hold of her robe with
an action of soothing tenderness.*

Art. (to SABAWATTÉ). Dost thou, too, look on me
with pity? Speak;

I charge thee speak, and tell the fearful cause,
Since no one else will do it.

Mont. My dear Artina, thou shalt know the
Which can no longer be conceal'd; but listen,
Listen with patience to the previous story,

* The final reward of the virtuous after death, according to the Boodhoo religion, is perfect rest or insensibility; and

And thou wilt see how fated, strange events
Have caused within Rasinga's noble heart,
E'en he who has so long and dearly loved thee,
A growing possibility of change. [rest?]

Art. If he is changed, why should I know the
All is comprised in this. [With actions of despair.

Mont. Nay, do not wring thy hands, but listen
to me.

Sit on this seat and call up strength to hear me.
Thou giv'st no heed to me; thou dost not hear.

Art. (in a low voice, after a pause). I'm faint and
very cold; mine ears ring strangely;
But I will try to do whate'er thou wilt.

[After another pause.
There is a story then: I'll hear it now. [since,

Mont. Rasinga, as thou knowst, did, short while
A mountain chief and his fair daughter rescue
From ruffian robbers. In its youthful charms
He saw the virgin's unveiled face. Alas!
A sight so rare he could not see unmoved.
Restless and troubled, like a stricken wretch
Whom sorcery possesses, for awhile
He strove against his passion, but at length
Nature gave way; and thou mayst guess what
follows.

Art. What follows! What has followed? [bride;
Mont. Our gates must soon receive this youthful
And thou, dear daughter, must prepare thyself
To bear some natural change.

[ARTINA faints away in the arms of SABAWATTÉ.

Sab. I knew it would be so! Oh, my dear mis-
tress!

These cruel words have dealt the fatal blow.

Mont. Be not afraid of this infirmity,
Which, though it seems appalling, brings relief,
E'en like Niwané, when the virtuous soul*
Hath run, through many a change, its troubled
course.

Let us remove her gently to my couch! [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

The apartments of RASINGA.

He enters, followed by EHLEYPPOOLIE and MIHDOONY,
and is speaking as he enters.

Ras. (to EHLEYPPOOLIE). Thou hast done well.
Ehley. I am not given to boasting,

Yet I must say all things are so arranged,
That never bride's array, on such short notice,
Was better order'd, or for gallant show,
Or for security.

Ras. 'Tis rich and splendid?

Ehley. Our palanquin, with all its colour'd
streamers,

Will shine above the guards' encircling heads,

that state, or the region in which it takes place, is called
Niwané.

Like any crested mancka, proudly perch'd
Upon the summit of her bushy knoll.

Ras. And have ye pioneers to clear its way ?

Ehley. Ay, pioneers who through a tangled
thicket

Make room as quickly as the supple trunk
Of a wild elephant ; whilst forest birds,
From their rent haunts dislodged, fly up and wheel
In mazy circles, raising clam'rous cries,
And casting noon-day shadows, like a cloud,
On the green woods beneath.

Mih. In truth, my lord, he makes it well appear
He is not given to boasting.

Ras. (*smiling*). Not a whit !
As meek and modest as a Padur's child.
And having done so much for show and speed,
Good Ehleypoolie, I will take for granted
The chiefest point of all, *security*,
Has not been overlook'd ; for mountain robbers
May yet be lurking near some narrow pass. [*too* ;

Ehley. Well, let them lurk, and burst upon us
'Twill be as though a troop of moving monkeys,
With antic mimic motions of defiance,
Should front the brinded tiger and his brood.
Full soon, I trow, their hinder parts they turn,
Lank and unseemly, to the enemy,
In scamp'ring haste, to gain the nearest shelter.
It were good sport if they should dare to stand.

Mih. You see, my lord, he is in all things per-
fect.

Ras. I see it plainly. Thanks for all thy pains,
Brave Ehleypoolie.

Ehley. Shall we take with us
The pipes and doulas* that have hung so long
In the recess of Dame Artina's garden ?
Of all your instruments there are not any
That sound so loud and clear.

Ras. (*sternly*). No, no ! I charge thee,
Let nothing there be changed. Thy witless words
Have struck upon my heart a dismal note,
Depressing all its life and buoyancy.
Alas ! my joy is like the shimm'ring brightness
Of moving waves, touch'd by the half-risen moon,
Tracing her narrow pathway on the deep :
Between each brighten'd ridge black darkness lies,
While far on either side, the wat'ry waste
Spreads dim, and vague, and cheerless.

Mih. If such thy thoughts, dost thou repent thy
purpose ? [*gleams* ;

Ras. Not so ; there's ecstasy in those bright
Ay, and though cross'd with darkness black as
midnight,

I will enjoy this momentary radiance.

Enter a Slave, in haste.

What brings thee here with such a staring face ?

Slave. The lady's coming ; she is close at hand.

* Doulas, a kind of drums, beat on one end by the hand
and on the other with a stick.

Ras. Ha ! from her father's house, unsent for,
come ?

Slave. No, not that lady, sir ; it is Artina.

Ras. (*much disturbed*). I thought my mother
would have spared me this.

Is Montebesa with her ?

Slave. No, my lord ;

She has her children with her.

Ras. Wretched moment !
The sight of them will change my strength to cow-
ardice :

What shall I do ?

Ehley. I'll quickly run and say that you are
And cannot see her.

Ras. (*pulling EHLEYPOOLIE back as he is about to
go out*). Restrain thy heartless zeal ; it is most
odious.

Shall she so debar'd from entrance here,
Whose presence was a blessing and a grace !

*Enter ARTINA, leading her youngest child, and fol-
lowed by SAMAR, leading his little sister. RASINGA
hastens to meet her, and leads her in silence to the
principal seat, at the same time motioning to EH-
LEYPOOLIE and MIHDOONY to withdraw, who
immediately leave the apartment.*

Here, take this seat, Artina.

Art. No, my lord ;

I come not here to sit ; I come to kneel,
As now beseems a scorn'd forsaken wife,
Who pleads with strong affection for her children :
Who pleads in painful memory of love
Which thou for many years hast lavish'd on her,
Till, in the gladness of a foolish heart,
She did believe that she was worthy of it.

Ras. Yes, dear Artina, thou wast worthy of it !
Thou wast, and art, and shalt be loved and honour'd
While there is life within Rasinga's bosom.
Why didst thou think it could be otherwise,
Although another mate within my house
May take her place, to be with thee associated,
As younger sister with an elder born ?
Such union is in many houses found.

Art. I have no skill in words—no power to
reason :

How others live I little care to know :
But this I feel, there is no life for me,
No love, no honour, if thy alter'd heart
Hath put me from it for another mate.
Oh, woe is me ! these children on thy knees,
That were so oft caress'd, so dearly cherish'd,
Must then divide thy love with younger fav'rites,
Of younger mother born ? Alas ! alas !
Small will the portion be that falls to them.

Ras. Nay, say not so, Artina ; say not so.

Art. I know it well. Thou thinkest now, belike,
That thou wilt love them still ; but ah ! too soon
They'll be as things who do but haunt thy house,
Lacking another home, uncheer'd, uncared for

And who will heed their wants, will soothe their sorrow,

When their poor mother moulders in the grave,
And her vex'd spirit, in some other form,
Is on its way to gain the dreamless sleep?
Kneel, Samar, kneel! thy father loved thee first,
In our first happy days.—Wilt thou not, boy?
Why dost thou stand so sullen and so still?

Sam. Ne loves us not.

Art. Nay, nay, but he will love us.

Down on thy knees! up with thy clasped hands!
Rasinga, O Rasinga! did I think
So to implore thy pity—I and mine
So to implore thy pity, and in vain!

[*Sinks on the ground exhausted with agitation.*]

Ras. (*raising her gently in his arms.*) Dearest Artina! still most dear to me:

Thy passionate affections waste thy strength;
Let me support thee to another chamber,
More fitting for retirement and for rest.

Come also, children.—Come, my little playmates!

Sam. We're not thy playmates now.

Ras. What dost thou say?

Sam. Thou dost not speak and smile and sport with us

As thou wast wont: we're not thy playmates now.

Ras. Thou art a fearless knave to tell me so.

[*Exeunt, ARTINA leaning on her husband, and the children following.*]

SCENE IV.

A retired grove near the castle of RASINGA.

Enter SAMARKOON and a forest freebooter.

Sam. Now, stop we here; in this sequester'd spot,

We may with freedom commune on the purpose

For which I would engage thy speedy aid.

Thou knowest who I am; and dost remember

Where, how, and when I last encounter'd thee?

Free. I do, my lord; but though thou findest me thus,

Alone and slightly arm'd, be well assured

I will defend my life and liberty,

Against thyself (*looking suspiciously around*) or any ambush'd band,

To the last bloody push of desperation.

Sam. I know thou wilt; it is thy desperate prowess

That makes me now, all robber as thou art,

And lurking here disguis'd, as well I guess,

For no good end,—to seek thy amity.

Free. My amity! the noble Samarkoon—

A chief of rank, and brother of Rasinga! [*roused,*

Sam. Strong passion by strong provocation

Is not a scrup'ulous chooser of its means.

How many of these armed desperadoes,

From whose fell hands we did so lately rescue

That petty chieftain and his child, couldst thou Within short time assemble?

Free.

Few remain

Of those who once, at sound of my shrill horn,
With spear and bow in hand, and quiver'd back
The deadly arrows bearing, issued forth
From cave or woody jungle, fierce but stealthy,
Like glaring, tawny pards,—few, few remain.

Sam. But some remain?

Free.

Ay, some.

Sam. And they are brave?

Free. No braver bandits e'er in deadly strife

With man or tiger grappled.

Sam. Enough! hie quickly to thy forest haunts,

And near the narrow pass where ye sustain'd

The onset of Rasinga, wait my coming

With all the armed mates thou canst assemble;

And there I'll join thee with a trusty band.

Do this, and thou shalt be rewarded richly.

Free. I will; nor do I doubt the recompense

From such a noble chief will be most bountiful.

Sam. Tis well; be speedy, secret, faithful,—brave,

I need not say. So let us separate,

Nor stay for further parley; time is precious.

Free. I will but go to leave an offering

At the Wiharé yonder; then with speed

Wend to our woods.—But wherefore smilest thou?

Sam. Dost thou regard such duties?

Free.

Ay, good sooth!

Who has more need of favour from the gods

Than he who leads a life of lawless peril? [*Exit.*]

Sam. (*exultingly.*) Ay, now, Rasinga, set thy costly chamber,

While poor Artina sighs and weeps unheeded,

In gallant order for thy fair new bride!

Another bridegroom and another chamber

Abide her which thou little thinkest of. [*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The castle of SAMARKOON. Loud shouting heard without.

Enter several Domestics in confusion.

1st dom. What shouts are those? do enemies approach?

What can we do in our brave master's absence?

2d dom. Ha! hear it now! it is no enemy;

It is our lord himself; I know the sound.

And lo! his messenger arrived with tidings.

Enter a Messenger.

What are thy news?

Mess. Right joyful news, I warrant.

Our master brings a bride, by conquest won,

To be the bliss and sunshine of his house ;
A bride fair as the goddess, bright Patinè.

1st dom. Most unexpected tidings ; won by conquest ?

2d dom. With whom has he been fighting for such prize ?

Mess. Fy, fy, despatch and make such preparation

As may be fitting for a bride's reception :

There is no time for telling stories now.

Despatch, I say ; do ye not hear them nearer ?

They are not many furlongs from the gate.

[*Exeunt in haste, different ways.*]

SCENE II.

The hall or principal room of the castle.

Enter SAMARKOON, leading in a lady covered with a veil, and followed by two female attendants ; then a band of musicians and a train of armed men, with EHELYPOOLIE and several of his soldiers as prisoners. A nuptial chaunt or song is struck up.

SONG.

Open wide the frontal gate,
The lady comes in bridal state ;
Than wafted spices sweeter far,
Brighter than the morning star ;
Modest as the lily wild,
Gentle as a nurse's child.
A lovelier prize, of prouder boast,
Never chieftain's threshold cross'd.

Like the beams of early day,
Her eyes' quick flashes brightly play ;
Brightly play and gladden all
On whom their kindly glances fall.
Her lips in smiling weave a charm
To keep the peopled house from harm.
In happy moment is she come
To bless a noble chieftain's home.

Happy be her dwelling here,
Many a day and month and year !
Happy as the nested dove
In her fruitful ark of love !
Happy in her tented screen !
Happy in her garden green !
Thus we welcome, one and all,
The lady to her chieftain's hall.

Sam. I give you all large thanks, my valiant warriors,

For the good service ye have done to me
Upon this day of happy fate. Ere long,
This gentle lady too, I trust, will thank you,
Albeit her present tears and alter'd state
Have made her shrink and droop in cheerless
silence.

An ample recompense ye well have won,
That shall not with a sparing hand be dealt.
Meantime, partake our cheer and revelry ;
And let the wounded have attendance due ;
Let sorcery and medicine combine
To mitigate their pain.

(*Turning to the prisoners.*) Nay, Ehleypoolie,
Why from beneath those low'ring brows dost
thou

Cast on the ground such wan and wither'd looks ?

Thy martial enterprise fell somewhat short

Of thy predictions and thy master's pleasure ;

But thou and all thy band have bravely fought,

And no disgrace is coupled with your failure.

Ehley. Had not my amulets from this right
arm

Been at the onset torn, e'en ambush'd foes

Had not so master'd us.

Sam. Well, be it so ; good amulets hereafter
Thou mayst secure, and fight with better luck.

Ehley. Ay, luck was on your side, good sooth !
such luck

As fiends and magic give. Another time——

Sam. What thou wilt do another time, at present
We have no time to learn.

(*To his followers generally.*) Go where cool sparkling
cups and sav'ry viands

Will wasted strength recruit, and cheer your
hearts.

Ere long I'll join you at the board, and fill

A hearty cup of health and thanks to all.

[*Exeunt all but SAMARKOON, the bride, and her
female attendants.*]

And now, dear maid, thou pearl and gem of
beauty,

The prize for which this bloody fray was fought,

Wilt thou forgive a youthful lover's boldness,

And the rude outrage by his love committed ?

Wilt thou not speak to me ?

Bride. What can I say ?

I was the destined bride of great Rasinga ;

My father told me so.

Sam. But did thy heart——

Did thine own heart, sweet maid, repeat the tale ?

And did it say to thee, "The elder chieftain

Is he whom I approve ; his younger rival

Unworthy of my choice ?

Bride. My choice ! a modest virgin hath no
choice.

That I have seen you both ; that both have seen

My unveil'd face, alas ! is my dishonour,

Albeit most innocent of such exposure.

Sam. Say not dishonour ; innocence is honour ;

And thou art innocent and therefore honourable,

Though every slave and spearman of our train

Had gazed upon thy face. The morning star

Receives no faint for that a thousand eyes,

All heavenward turn'd, admire its lovely bright-
ness.

Let me again look in thy dark soft eyes,
And read my pardon in one beamy smile.

[*Attempting to draw aside her veil, while she gathers it the closer.*

Bride. Forbear, forbear! this is indignity.

Sam. And this, dear maid, is childish bashfulness.

[*The upper fastening of the veil gives way and falls over her hand.*

And look, the silly fence drops of itself;
An omen of good fortune to my love.
Oh! while those eyes are fix'd upon the ground,
Defended from too ardent admiration,
With patience hear my suit. — Two rival chiefs
Have look'd upon thy face, and thou perforce
Must choose or one or other for thy husband.
Rasinga, in his rich and noble mansion,
Hath years already pass'd in wedded love;
And is the husband of a virtuous dame,
Whose faithful heart, in giving place to thee,
Will be asunder torn. My house is humble;
No gay and costly treasures deck its walls;
But I am young, unmarried, and my heart
Shall be thine own, whilst thou reignst mistress
here,

As shares the lion's mate his forest cave,
In proud equality. Thou smilst at this;
And it doth please thy fancy; — yea, a tear
Falls on that smiling cheek; yes, thou art mine.

Bride. Too quickly dost thou scan a passing thought.

Sam. Thanks, thanks! O take my thanks for such dear words!

And speak them yet again with that sweet voice
Which makes my heart dance in its glowing cell.

1st att. (advancing to SAMARKOON). My lady is forspent with all this coil;

She has much need of quiet rest. I pray,
On her behalf, let this be granted to her.

Bride (to 1st att.). I thank thee, nurse! (To SAMARKOON.) My lord, I would retire.

Sam. I will retire, or do whate'er thou wilt.
Thy word or wish commands myself and mine.

[*Exit.*

1st att. Thyself and thine! a mighty rich dominion!

Alack, alack-a-day, the woeful change!
This rude unfurnish'd tower for the fair mansion
Of great Rasinga! Evil was the hour
When those fell demons stopp'd us on our way.

Bride. O, say not so! in great Rasinga's house
A noble wife already holds her state,
And here I shall have no divided pleasure.

1st att. Divided! Doth an elder faded wife
In love, in honour, or in riches share
Like portion with a youthful beauty? No!
She doth herself become the flatt'ring subject
Of her through whom the husband's favours flow;
And thereby doth increase her rival's power

Her state and dignity.
Thou art a simple child, and hast no sense
Of happiness or honour. Woe the day,
When those fell demons stopp'd our high career!

Bride. But for my father's anger, and the blood
Which has been shed in this untoward fray,
The day were one of joy and not of woe,
In my poor estimation.

1st att. Poor, indeed!

2d att. (advancing). Fy, nurse! how canst thou
so forget thyself?

Thy words are rude; my lady is offended.

1st att. Who would not, so provoked, forget herself?

Ah! the rich treasures of Rasinga's palace!
His gaudy slaves, his splendid palanquins!
They have pass'd from us like a mummer's show,
Seen for an hour and gone.

Enter a female domestic.

Dom. My master bids me say, the lady's chamber
Is now in readiness. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The court of the castle.

Enter two domestics, meeting.

1st dom. The merry revelry continues still
As if but just begun, though Samarkoon
Reminds them anxiously, that preparation
For the defence of this neglected hold,
Is pressing matter of necessity.

2d dom. Those glutton bandits will not leave a
board,
On which good viands smoke or wine-cups sparkle,
For all the words of threat'ning or entreaty,
That mortal tongue can utter.

Enter a third domestic, in great alarm.

3d dom. Where is our master?

1st dom. What alarms thee so?

3d dom. There is a power of armed men advancing.

I saw their dark heads winding through the pass
Above the bushes shown; a lengthen'd line,
Two hundred strong, I guess.

1st dom. It is Rasinga.

2d dom. Ring the larum bell,
And rouse those drunken thieves from their de-
bauch.

3d dom. But I must find our master; where is he?

1st dom. He was i' th' inner court some minutes since.

[*The alarm bell has rang, and many people in confusion cross the stage as the scene closes.*

SCENE IV.

An open space before the gate of the castle; armed men are discovered on the walls.

Enter RASINGA and his force.

Ras. (to those on the walls). Where is that villain whom ye call your lord?

Let him appear, and say, why, like a robber,—
A reckless, lawless traitor, he hath dared
My servants to attack, my bride to capture,
And do most foul dishonour to my state.
Am I a driv'ling fool,—a nerveless stripling,—
A widow'd Rany, propping infants' rights,
That thus he reckons with impunity
To pour on me such outrage?

Enter SAMARKOON above, and stands on the wall over the gate.

Sam. Rasinga, thou art robb'd and thou art wrong'd,

And hast good cause to utter stormy words.

Ras. Ay, and good cause to back those stormy words

With stormy blows, which soon shall force that gate,

Make desp'rate entrance through the rifted walls,
And leave within your paltry tower, of all
Who dare oppose my arms, no living thing,
Unless thou do restore the mountain beauty,
And all the spoil thou hast so basely won.

Sam. Though I have dared to wrong thee, brave Rasinga,

I've done it in the heat and agony
Of passions that, within a generous breast,
Are irresistible, and, be assured,
With no weak calculations of impunity.
The living treasure I have robb'd thee of
I will defend to the extremity

Of desp'rate effort, e'en in this poor hold,
Mann'd as it is.—I well might speak to thee
Of equal claims to that fair beauty's favour;
Of secret love; of strong fraternal sympathy
With her whose honour'd name I will not utter;
But that were vain.

Ras. Vain as a sea-bird's screams,
To check the wind-scour'd ocean's rising billows:
So far thou speakest wisely.—Stern defiance
I cast to thee; receive it as thou mayst,
Audacious traitor!

Sam. And I to thee do cast it back again
With words and heart as dauntless as thine own.

Ras. (to his followers). Here ends our waste of
breath and waste of time.

On, pioneers, and let your pond'rous mallets
Break down the gate! To it, my valiant bowmen!
Discharge a shower of arrows on that wall,
And clear it of yon load of miscreant life.

[RASINGA's followers raise a shout, which is

answered by one equally loud from the adverse party, and the attack commences. After great efforts of attack and defence, the gate is at last forced, and RASINGA, with his force, enters the castle. The scene then closes.

SCENE V.

A wild mountain pass, with a bridge swung from one high perpendicular rock to another. The course of a small stream, with its herby margin, seen beneath. Martial music is heard, and a military procession seen at some distance, winding among the rocks, and at length crossing the bridge. Then come the followers of RASINGA in triumph, leading SAMARKOON in chains, followed by men bearing a palanquin, and in the rear RASINGA himself, with his principal officers. As he is on the middle of the bridge, JUAN DE CREDA enters below, and calls to him with a loud voice.

Juan. Rasinga, ho! thou noble chief, Rasinga!

Ras. (above). Who calls on me?

Juan. Dost thou not know my voice?

Ras. Juan de Creda, is it thou indeed?

Why do I find thee here?

Juan. Because the power, that rules o'er heaven and earth,

Hath laid its high commission on my soul

Here to arrest thee on thy fatal way.

Ras. What mean such solemn words?

Juan. Descend to me, and thou shalt know their meaning.

[RASINGA crosses the bridge and re-appears below.

Ras. I have obey'd thee, and do bid thee welcome

To this fair land again.—But thou shrinkst back,
Casting on me looks of upbraiding sorrow:
With thee I may not lordly rights assert;
What is thy pleasure?

Juan. Is he, the prisoner now led before thee,
Loaded with chains, like a vile criminal,
Is he the noble Samarkoon, thy brother?

Ras. Miscall not by such names that fetter'd villain:

He, who once wore them with fair specious seeming,
Is now extinct to honour, base and treacherous.
The vilest carcass, trampled under foot
By pond'rous elephant, for lawless deeds,
Was ne'er inhabited by soul more worthless.

Juan. Thy bitter wrath ascribes to his offence
A ten-fold turpitude. Suspect thy judgment.

When two days' thought has communed with thy conscience,

Of all the strong temptations that beset
Unwary youth by potent passions urged,
Thou wilt not pass on him so harsh a censure.

Ras. When two days' thought! If that he be alive,

And wear a human semblance two days hence,
In the fell serpent's folds, the tiger's paws,
Or earthquake's pitchy crevice, with like speed,
Be my abhorred end!

Juan. Hold, hold, Rasinga!
The God, in whose high keeping is the fate
Of every mortal man, or prince, or slave,
Hath this behest declared,—that sinful man
Should pardon grant to a repentant brother;
Yea, more than this,—to his repentant enemies.
So God commands; and wilt thou prove rebellious?

Ras. Ha! hast thou been in heaven since last
we met,

To bring from hence this precious message? Truly
Thou speakest as if thou hadst.

Juan. No, I have found it in my native land,
Within the pages of a sacred book,
Which I and my compatriots do believe
Contains the high revealed will of God.

Ras. Ha! then those Europeans, whom the sea
Hath cast like fiends upon our eastern shores,
To wrong and spoil and steep the soil with blood,
Are not compatriots of thy book-taught land.
What! dost thou cast thine eyes upon the ground?
The stain of rushing blood is on thy cheek.

If they be so, methinks they have obey'd
That heavenly message sparingly.—Go to!
Tell me no more of this fantastic virtue,—

This mercy and forgiveness. E'en a woman,
A child, a simpleton would laugh to scorn
Such strange unnatural duty.

Juan. Call it not so, till I have told thee further—
[*Taking his hand.*]

Ras. Detain me not. But that to thee I owe
My life from fatal sickness rescued,—dearly,
Full dearly shouldst thou pay for such presumption.
Let go thy hold!

Juan. I will not till thou promise,
Before thy vengeful purpose be effected,
To see me once again.

Ras. I promise then, thou proud and dauntless
stranger;

For benefits are traced in my remembrance
With lines as ineffaceable as wrongs. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

*The house of MONTEBESA; who enters, meeting a
servant from the opposite side.*

Mont. What com'st thou to impart? thy busy
face

Is full of mingled meaning, grief and gladness.

Serv. My Lord Rasinga, madam, is returned,—
Return'd victorious; and the fair young bride
Again is rescued by his matchless valour.

Mont. All this is good; hast thou no more to
tell?

Serv. Alas! I have; for, by his spearmen guarded,

Loaded with chains, most rueful to behold,
Comes Samarkoon. For now it doth appear,
That he, enleagu'd with robbers, was the spoiler,
Who beat the gallant train of Ehleypoolie,
And bore away their prize.

Mont. Oh, this is dreadful! Clouds o'erlapping
clouds

Are weaving o'er our house an evil woof,—
A fearful canopy. It was to us

That ominous sign was sent, but few days past,
When Boodhoo's rays, beneath the noon's blue
dome*

With shiv'ring motion gleam'd in streaky bright-
ness,

Surpassing mid-day splendour. Woe is me!
I saw it not unmoved; but little thought,
Ah! little thought of misery like this.

Enter JUAN DE CREDIA.

Welcome, De Creda; thou in hour of need
Art ever wise and helpful. Dost thou know
Of this most strange event? Of Samarkoon
As lawless spoiler by Rasinga conquer'd,
And led—

Juan. I do; and come to entreat thee, lady,
That thou with thy enchafed and vengeful son
Mayst use a mother's influence to save him.

Mont. Entreaties are not wanted, good De Creda,
For herein I am zealous as thyself.

Juan. He must not die.

Mont. Nor shall, if I can save him.

Juan. Then let us meet Rasinga, as he passes,
Ere he can reach the shelter of his chamber,
Where men are wont to cherish moody wrath;
And we will so beset him with our prayers,
That we shall move his soul, if it be possible.
The fair Artina too must come with us
To beg her brother's life.

Mont. Yes, be it so; but first let us apprise her,
And do it warily, lest sudden grief
O'erwhelm her totally.

Juan. That will be necessary.

And, lady, let us find her instantly;
We have no time to spare. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

*A gallery or passage leading to RASINGA'S chamber.
Enter RASINGA, speaking to an officer, who follows
him.*

Ras. And let his dungeon be secured to the
utmost

With bolts and bars; and set a double guard
To watch the entry. Make it sure, I say:
For if thy prisoner escape, thy life

* Bright rays which appear in the middle of the day, sur-
passing the brightness of the sun, and are supposed to foretel
evil.

Shall pay the forfeit. This thou knowest well,
Therefore be vigilant. [*Exit officer.*]
The very blood is boiling in my veins,
Whilst the audacious braver of my rights,
My arms, my honour, e'en within a dungeon
And manacled with iron, breathes vital air.

Enter MONTEBESA by the farther end of the gallery, followed by ARTINA and JUAN DE CREDIA, who remain without advancing further, whilst she approaches her son with an air of dignity.

Mont. Rasinga, let a mother, who rejoices
In every victory thy arms achieve,
Be it o'er foreign, yea, or kindred foe,
Greet thee right heartily!

Ras. I thank you, lady!

Mont. But that my pride in thee may be un-
mix'd

With any sense of aught to taint thy glory,
Grant me a boon that will enhance thy triumph,
And make me say, with full, elated heart,
Rasinga is my son.

Ras. Name it; whate'er a man may grant is
thine.

Mont. The life of Samarkoon: that is my boon.

Ras. The life of Samarkoon! then thou dost ask
The foul disgrace and ruin of thy son.

Mont. Not so; for thine own peace and future
weal,

I do adjure thee to be merciful.

Ras. And wouldst thou see the son whom thou
didst bear,

An unrevenged, despised, derided man?
And have I gain'd from thee and my brave sire
This manly stature and these hands of strength
To play an idiot's or a woman's part?

If such indeed be Montebesa's wish,
Poor slight-boned, puny, shambling drivellers,
Or sickly maidens, should have been the offspring
Produced by her to mock a noble house.

Mont. O say not so! there will be no dishonour.

Ras. What! no dishonour in the mocking lips,
And pointing fingers of the meanest peasant,
Who would his whetted blade sheath in the heart
Of his own mother's son for half the wrong,—
Ay, half the wrong which that audacious traitor
Has done to me! Cease, lady; say no more:
I cannot henceforth live in ignominy;
Therefore, good sooth! I cannot grant your boon.

Art. (*rushing forward and catching hold of his hand
and his garments.*) Dear, dear Rasinga! wilt
thou make my life

One load of wretchedness? Thou'st cast me off,—
I who so loved thee and love thee still,—

Thou'st cast me off, and I will meekly bear it.

Then, wilt thou not make some amends to me,

In a saved brother's life, for all the tears,
The bitter tears and anguish this has caused me?

Ras. (*shaking her off*). Thy plea is also vain;
away, away!

Thy tears and anguish had been better com-
forted,

Had he a more successful spoiler proved.

[*Turning fiercely on JUAN DE CREDIA, who now
advances.*]

Ha! thou too art upon me! Thou whose kindred
And colleagues are of those who read good lore,
And speak like holy saints, and act like fiends.

By my brave father's soul, where'er it be,
Thou art a seemly suitor for such favour!

[*Bursts away from them and exit.*]

Art. De Credia, good De Credia, dear De Credia!
Wilt thou not follow him?

Juan. Not now; it were in vain; I might as
well,

While wreck of unroof'd cots and forest boughs,
And sand and rooted herbage whirl aloft,
Dark'ning the sky, bid the outrageous hurricane
Spare a rock-cresting palm. But yet despair not;
I'll find a season. Let me lead thee hence.

Mont. I fear the fierceness of his untamed spirit
Will never yield until it be too late;
And then he will, in brooding, vain repentance,
The more relentless be to future criminals;
As though the death of one he should have spared
Made it injustice e'er to spare another.

I know his dangerous nature all too well. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII.

A prison.

SAMARKOON is discovered in chains; a lamp burn-
ing on the ground near him, and a pitcher of water
by it.

Sam. And now the close of this my present being,
With all its hopes, its happiness, and pain,
Is near at hand,—a violent bloody close,
Perhaps with added torture and disgrace.

Oh, Kattragam, terrific deity!*
Thy stern decrees have compass'd all this misery.

Short, turbulent, and changeful, and disastrous,
Hath been this stage of my existence. What,

When this is past, abides me in my progress
To the still blessing of unvision'd rest,

Who may imagine or conjecture?—Blessing!

Alas! it is a dull unjoyous blessing

To lose, with consciousness of pain, all conscious-
ness:

The pleasure of sweet sounds and beauteous sights.

Bride, sister, friends,—all vanish'd and extinct,

That stilly, endless rest may be unbroken.

Oh, oh! he is a miserable man,

Who covets such a blessing!—Hush, bad thoughts!

* The name of the Cingalese Spirit of Evil, or God of Destruction.

Rebellious, faithless thoughts! My misery
Is deep enough to make e'en this a blessing.

Enter ARTINA.

It cannot be! is it some fantasy?
Who and what art thou?

Art. (approaching him softly). The thing I seem;
thy miserable sister.

Sam. My gen'rous, loving sister, in her love
Running such fearful risk to comfort me.

Art. Nay, more than this, dear brother; more
than comfort;

I come to set thee free.

Sam. Has he relented?

Art. No, no! Rasinga is most ruthless. I,
By means of this (*showing a signet*), which, in our
better days,

It was my privilege to use at will,
Have pass'd the guards, and may a short while hence
By the same means return,—return in safety.
Meantime let me undo those galling fetters;
I've brought fit tools, and thou shalt teach me how.

Sam. But canst thou think the guards will let
thee pass,

E'en with thy signet, leading a companion?

It cannot be; thou dost deceive thyself;

Thy misery and affection make thee foolish.

Art. Not so; there is a secret passage yonder.

That stone (*pointing to it*) like many others in the
wall,

But rougher still (*goes close to the stone and touches
it*), look at it! take good heed,

Has in its core a groove on which it turns:

A man's full strength will move it, and despair
Will make thee strong.

Sam. Were two men's strength required, I feel
within me

The means for such deliverance; if, indeed,
Thou hast not been deceived by some false tale.

Art. I'm not deceived. But wait, when I am gone,

With limbs yet seemingly enthral'd, until

The wary guard hath come to ascertain

Thy presence here; and then, when he retires,—
Thou knowst the rest.—Haste, let me loose thy
shackles.

Is this the way?

[*Kneeling down and using her implements for
breaking the chains, which she draws from the
folds of her robe.*]

Sam. Well done, my most incomparable sister!
Affection seems to teach thee craftsman's skill.

Art. This link is broken.

Sam. So it is indeed.

If I am fated yet to live on earth,
A prosp'rous man, I'll have thy figure graven,
As now thou art, with implements in hand,
And make of it a tutelary idol.

Art. (still working at the chains.) Ha! thou speakst
cheerly now; and thy changed voice

Is a good omen. Dost thou not remember
How once in play I bound thy stripling limbs
With braided reeds, as a mock criminal?

We little thought—Another link is conquer'd;
And one alone remains. [*Tries to unloose it.*]

But it is stubborn.

Oh, if that I should now lack needed strength!
Vile, hateful link, give way!

*Enter RASINGA, and she starts up, letting fall her
tools on the ground.*

Ras. And thou art here, thou most rebellious
woman!

A faithful spy had given me notice of it,
And yet, methought, it was impossible
Thou couldst be so rebellious, so bereft
Of female honour, matronly allegiance.

Art. Upbraid me not, my lord; I've at your feet
Implored you to relent and spare his life,
The last shoot of my father's honour'd house.
But thou, with unrelenting tyranny,
Hast chid me from thee.—Matronly allegiance,
E'en in a favour'd and beloved wife,
O'errules not every duty; and to her,
Who is despised, abandon'd, and disgraced,
Can it be more imperious? No, Rasinga;
I were unmeet to wear a woman's form,
If, with the means to save my brother's life,
Not implicating thine, I had, from fear
Of thy displeasure, grievous as it is,
Forborne to use them.

Ras. Ha! such bold words to justify the act,
Making rebellion virtue! Such audacity
Calls for the punishment which law provides
For faithless and for disobedient wives.

Sam. Rasinga, if that shameful threat be serious,
Thou art the fellest, fiercest, meanest tyrant,
That e'er joined human form to demon's spirit.

Ras. And dost thou also front me with a storm
Of loud injurious clamour?—Ho, without!

[*Calling aloud.*]

I came not here to hold a wordy war
With criminals and women.—Ho! I say.

Enter Guards.

Secure the prisoner, and fasten tightly [*stantly*]
His unlock'd chains.—And, lady, come thou in-
To such enthalment as becomes thy crime.

[*Exeunt RASINGA and ARTINA, who is led off
by guards, while motioning her last farewell
to SAMARCOON. The scene closes.*]

SCENE IX.

An apartment in the house of MONTEBESA.

*SAMAR is discovered playing on the floor with toys,
and SABAWATTÉ sitting by him.*

Samar (holding up a toy). This is the prettiest play-
thing of them all:

I will not use it till my mother come,
That she may see it fresh and beautiful.

Sab. Alas, sweet Samar! would that she were here!

Samar. Will she not soon? how long she stays away!

And she has been so kind to me of late.

Sab. Was she not always kind?

Samar. Yes, always very kind; but since my father

Has thought of that new bride—I hate that bride—

And spoken to me seldom and with looks
Not like his wonted looks, she has been kinder;
Has kiss'd me oftener, and has held me closer
To her soft bosom. O she loves me dearly!
And dearly I love her!—Where is she now,
That thou shouldst say, "I would that she were here!"

Sab. Dear boy; I may not tell thee.

Samar. May not tell me!

Then she is in some sad and hateful place,

And I will go to her.

Sab. Ah no! thou canst not.

Samar. I will; what shall withhold me, Sabawatté?

Sab. Strong bolts and bars, dear child!

Samar. Is she in prison?

Sab. She is.

Samar. And who hath dared to put her there?

Sab. Thy father.

Samar. Then he is a wicked man,

Most cruel and most wicked.

I'll stay no longer here; I'll go to her;
And if through bolts and bars I may not pass,
I at her door will live, as my poor dog
Close by my threshold lies and pines and moans,
When he's shut out from me.—I needs must go;

Rooms are too good for me when she's in prison.

Come, lead me to the place; I charge thee, do;

I'll stay no longer here.

Enter MONTEBESA, and he runs to her, clasping her knees, and bursting into tears.

Mont. What is the matter with thee, my dear child?

(*To SABAWATTÉ.*) Does he know aught?

Sab. I could not keep it from him.

Samar. I know it all; I know it all, good grand-dame.

O take me to her! take me to her prison!

I'll be with her; I'll be and bide with her;

No other place shall hold me.

Mont. Be pacified, dear child! be pacified,

And I myself will take thee to thy mother:

The guards will not refuse to let me pass.

Weep not so bitterly, my own dear Samar!

Fy! wipe away those tears and come with me.

Sab. A blessing on you, madam, for this goodness!

It had been cruelty to keep him here. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The private chamber of RASINGA, who is discovered walking backwards and forwards in great agitation.

Ras. That I—that I alone must be restrain'd!

The very meanest chief who holds a mansion

May therein take his pleasure with a second,

When that his earlier wife begins to fade,

Or that his wearied heart longs for another.

Ay, this may be; but I am deem'd a slave,

A tamed—a woman bound—a simple fool.

[*After a pause.*]

Nor did I seek for it; fate was my tempter.

That face of beauty was by fate unveil'd;

And I must needs forbear to look upon it,

Or looking, must forbear to love.—Bold traitor!

That he should also, in that very moment,

Catch the bright glimpse and dare to be my rival!

Fy, fy! His jealous sister set him on.

Why is my mind so rack'd and rent with this?

Jealous, rebellious, spiteful, as she is,

I need not, will not look upon her punishment.

Beneath the wat'ry gleam one moment's struggle,—

No more but this.

[*Tossing his arms in agony.*]

Oh, oh! there was a time,

A time but shortly passed, when such a thought

Had been—the cords of life had snapt asunder

At such a thought.—And it must come to this!

[*After another perturbed pause.*]

It needs must be: I'm driven to the brink.

What is a woman's life, or any life

That poisons his repose for whom it flourish'd?

I would have cherish'd, honour'd her, yet she,

Rejecting all, has e'en to this extremity—

No, no! it is that hateful fiend her brother,

Who for his damn'd desires and my dishonour

Hath urg'd her on.—The blood from his shorn

trunk

Shall to mine eyes be as the gushing fount

To the parch'd pilgrim—Blood! but that his rank

Forbids such execution, his marr'd carcass,

A trampled mass—a spectacle of horror,

Should—the detested traitor!

[*Noise at the door.*]

Who is there?

Juan (without). Juan de Creda: pray undo thy door.

Ras. No, not to thee; not e'en to thee, De Creda.

Juan (without). Nay, but thou must, or fail in honest truth.

I have thy promise once again to see me

Ere thy revengful purpose take effect ;
Yea, and I hold thee to it.

Ras. Turn from my door, for thou since then
hast seen me,
And hast no further claim.

Juan (*without*). Tamper not so unfairly with thy
words :

I saw thee as the forest peasant sees
A hunted tiger passing to his lair.
Is this sufficient to acquit thee ? No ;
I claim thy promise still, as unredeem'd.
Unbar thy chamber door and let me in.

Ras. (*opening the door, and as JUAN enters*). Come
in, come in then, if it must be so.

Is misery a pleasant sight to thee,
That thou dost beg and pray to look upon it ?

Juan. Forgive me, brave Rasinga, if I say,
The mis'ry of thine alter'd face, to me
Is sight more welcome than a brow composed.

But 'tis again to change that haggard face
To the composure of a peaceful mind,
That I am come. — O deign to listen to me !
Let me beseech thee not to wreck thy happiness
For fell revenge !

Ras. Well, well ; and were it so,
I wreck my happiness to save my honour.

Juan. To save thine honour ?

Ras. Yes ; the meanest slave
That turns the stubborn soil with dropping brow,
Would hold an outraged, unrevenged chief,
As more contemptible than torpid reptile
That cannot sting the foot which treads upon it.

Juan. When fear or sordid motives are imputed
As causes why revenge hath been forborne,
Contempt will follow, from the natural feelings
Of every breast, or savage or instructed.
But when the valiant and the gen'rous pardon,
E'en instantly as lightning rends the trunk
Of the strong Nahagaha*, pride of the wood,
A kindred glow of admiration passes
Through every manly bosom, proving surely,
That men are brethren, children of one sire,
The Lord of heaven and earth.

Ras. Perplex me not with vain and lofty words,
That to the stunn'd ear of an injured man
Are like the fitful sounds of a swoln torrent,
Noble, but void of all distinctive meaning.

Juan. Their meaning is distinct as well as noble,
Teaching to froward man the will of God.

Ras. And who taught thee to know this will of
God ?

Juan. Our sacred Scripture.

Ras. What ? your Christian Scripture,
Which, as I have been told, hath bred more dis-
cord

Than all the other firebrands of the earth,
With church opposed to church, and sect to sect,

In fierce contention ; ay, fell bloody strife.
Certes, if all from the same book be taught,
Its words may give, as I before have said,
A noble sound, but no distinctive meaning.

Juan. That which thou hast been told of shameful
discord,

Perversely drawn from the pure source of peace,
Is true ; and yet it is a book of wisdom,
Whose clear, important, general truths may guide
The simplest and the wisest : truths which still
Have been by every church and sect acknow-
ledged.

Ras. And what, I pray, are these acknowledged
precepts,

Which they but learn, it seems, to disobey ?

Juan. The love of God and of that blessed
Being,

Sent in His love to teach His will to men,
Imploring them their hearts to purify
From hatred, wrong, and ev'ry sensual excess,
That in a happier world, when this is past,
They may enjoy true blessedness for ever.

Ras. Then why hold all this coil concerning
that

Which is so plain, and excellent, and acknow-
ledged ?

Juan. Because they have in busy restless zeal
Raised to importance slight and trivial parts ;
Contenting for them, till they have at last
Believed them of more moment, e'en than all
The plain and lib'ral tenor of the whole.
As if we should maintain a wart or mole
To be the main distinctions of a man,
Rather than the fair brow and upright form, —
The graceful, general lineaments of nature.

Ras. This is indeed most strange : how hath it
been ?

Juan. The Scripture lay before them like the
sky,

With all its glorious stars, in some smooth pool
Clearly reflected, till in busy idleness,
Like children gath'ring pebbles on its brink,
Each needs must cast his mite of learning in
To try its depth, till sky, and stars, and glory,
Become one wrinkled maze of wild confusion.
But that good Scripture and its blessed Author
Stand far apart from such perplex'd contention,
As the bright sky from the distorted surface
Of broken waters wherein it was imaged.

Ras. And this good Scripture does, as thou
believest,

Contain the will of God.

Juan. I do believe it.
And therein is a noble duty taught,
To pardon injuries, — to pardon enemies.

Ras. I do not doubt it. 'Tis an easy matter
For holy sage or prophet in his cell,
Who lives aloof from wrongs and injuries
Which other men endure, to teach such precepts.

* The iron tree.

Juan. Most justly urged : but He who utter'd this
Did not enforce it at a rate so easy.
Though proved by many good and marv'ulous acts

To be the mission'd Son of the Most High,
He meekly bore the wrongs of wicked men ;
And in the agonies of crucifixion, —
The cruel death He died, — did from His cross
Look up to heav'n in earnest supplication
E'en for the men who were inflicting on Him
Those shameful suff'rings, — pardon e'en for them.

Ras. (*bowing his head, and covering his face with his hands*). Indeed, indeed, this was a noble Being.

Juan. Ay, brave Rasinga ; ireful as thou art,
Thou hast a heart to own such excellence.

[*Laying his hand soothingly on RASINGA'S*.
And do consider too how he who wrong'd thee, —
The youthful Samarkoon —

Ras. (*shaking off his hand impatiently*). Name not the villain !

Juan. That epithet belongs not to a youth,
Who in the fever'd madness of strong passion,
By beauty kindled, goaded by despair,
Perhaps with sympathy, for that he deem'd
A sister's sorrows —

Ras. Hold thy peace, De Creda ;
Thy words exasperate and stir within me
The half-spent flames of wrath.
He is a villain, an audacious villain ;
A most ungrateful, cunning, artful villain.
Leave me, I charge thee, lest thou utter that
Which might provoke me to unseemly outrage.
I owe my life to thee, and but for that —
Leave me, I charge thee.

Juan. I do not fear what thou mayst do to me.

Ras. No ; but I fear it : therefore quit me instantly.
Out, out ! [*Opening the door and pushing him away*.
Ho ! Ehleypoolie ! ye who wait without,
I want your presence here. [*Exit JUAN*.

Enter EHLEYPOOLIE and MIHDOONY.

Ehley. (*after having waited some time to receive the commands of his master, who, without noticing him, walks about the chamber in violent agitation*). My lord, we humbly wait for your commands.
(*Aside to MIHDOONY*.) He needs us not : as though we were not here.
(*Aloud*.) We humbly wait, my lord, to know your pleasure.

Ras. My pleasure is —

[*Stopping, and looking bewildered*.
I know not what it is.

Mih. Perhaps, my lord, you wish to countermand

Some orders that regard the executions
Fix'd for to-morrow, at an hour so early.

Ras. When did Rasinga countermand his orders,
So call'd for, and so given ? — Why wait ye here !

Ehley. You summon'd us, my lord ; and well you know
That Ehleypoolie hath a ready aptness
For —

Ras. Boasting, fooling, flattery, and lies.
Begone, I say ; I did not summon you.
At least I meant it not.

[*Turns away hastily, and exit by another door*.

Ehley. For boasting, fooling, flattery, and lies !
How angry men pervert all sober judgment !
If I commend myself, who, like myself,
Can know so well my actual claims to praise ?

Mih. Most true ; for surely no one else doth know it.

Ehley. And fooling is an angry name for wit.

Mih. Thy wit is fooling ; therefore should it seem,
Thy fooling may be wit. Then for thy flattery,
What dost thou say to that ?

Ehley. Had he disliked it,
It had been dealt to him in scantier measure.
And lies — to hear a prince whose fitful humours
Can mar or make the vassals who surround him,
Name this as special charge on any one !
His violent passions have reduced his judgment
To very childishness.

Mih. But dost thou think the fierceness of his wrath

Will make him really bring to execution
A wife who has so long and dearly loved him ?

Ehley. How should I know what he will really do ?

The words he spoke to me e'en now may show thee

His judgment is obscured. But if he do ;
Where is the harm when faded wives are cross
And will not live in quietness with a younger,
To help them on a step to their Newané ?

She never favour'd me, that dame Artina,
And I foresaw she would not come to good.

[*Exeunt*.

SCENE II.

A large court, or open space, with every thing prepared for the execution of SAMARKOON : a seat of state near the front of the stage. Spectators and guards discovered.

1st spec. There is a mass of life assembled here :
All eyes, no voice ; there is not e'en the murmur
Of stifled whispers. — Deep and solemn silence !

2d spec. Hush, hush ! Artina comes, and by her side,

Her son in the habiliments of one

Prepared for death. This surely cannot be :
It is impossible.

1st spec. I hope it is.

Enter ARTINA and SAMAR, with SABAWATTÉ on the one side of them, and JUAN DE CREDa on the other ; attendants following.

Art. Alas, for thee, my noble, generous child !

Samar. Fear not for me, dear mother ! Lean upon me.

Nay, let me feel your hand upon my shoulder,
And press'd more heavily. It pleases me,
Weak as I am, to think I am thy prop.

Art. O what a prop thou wouldst have been to me !

And what a creature for a loathly grave,—
For death to prey upon !—Turn, turn ! Oh, turn !
Advance no further on this dreadful path

Samar. I came not here to turn ; and for the path,

And what it leads to, if you can endure it,
Then so can I :—fear not for me, dear mother !
Nay, do not fear at all ; 'twill soon be over.

Art. Oh ! my brave heart ! my anguish and my pride,

E'en on the very margin of the grave.—

Good Sabawatté ! hold him ; take him from me.

Sab. I cannot, madam ; and De Creda says,
'Tis best that you should yield to his desire.

Art. It is a fearful—an appalling risk.

Sab. Is there aught else that you would charge me with ?

Art. Yes, dearest friend, there is—it is my last.

Let not my little daughters know of this ;
They are too young to miss me. Little Moora
Will soon forget that she has seen my face ;
Therefore whoe'er is kind to them they'll love.

Say this to her, who will so shortly fill
Their mother's place, and she will pity them.

Add, if thou wilt, that I such gentle dealings
Expected from her hands, and bade thee teach them
To love and honour her.

Sab. My heart will burst in uttering such words.

Art. Yet for my sake thou'lt do it ; wilt thou not ?

[SABAWATTÉ motions assent, but cannot speak.

Enter SAMARKOON chained and guarded.

Art. (*rushing on to meet him.*) My brother, my young Samarkoon ; my brother,

Whom I so loved in early, happy days ;
Thou top and blossom of my father's house !

Sam. Weep not, my sister ; death brings sure relief ;

And many a brave man's son has died the death
That now abideth me.

Art. Alas ! ere that bright sun which shines so brightly

Shall reach his noon, of my brave father's race

No male descendant shall remain alive,—
Not one to wear the honours of his name,—
And I the cursed cause of all this wreck !
Oh, what was I, that I presumptuously
Should think to keep his undivided heart !
'Twere better I had lived a drudge,—a slave,
To do the meanest service of his house,
Than see thee thus, my hapless, noble brother.

Sam. Lament not, gentle sister ; to have seen thee

Debased and scorn'd, and that most wondrous creature,

Whose name I will not utter, made the means
Of vexing thee—it would have driven me frantic.
Then do not thus lament ; nor think that I
Of aught accuse thee. No ; still let us be
In love most dearly link'd, which only death
Has power to sever.—

[To SAMAR, as first observing him.

Boy, why art thou here ?

Samar. To be my mother's partner and companion.

'Tis meet ; for who but me should cling to her ?

Enter RASINGA, and places himself in the seat : a deep silence follows for a considerable time.

Mih. (*who has kept guard with his spearmen over SAMARKOON, now approaching RASINGA.*)

The hour is past, my lord, that was appointed ;

And you commanded me to give you notice.

Is it your pleasure that the executioners
Proceed to do their office on the prisoners,
Who are all three prepared ?

Ras. What dost thou say ?

Mih. The three prepared for death abide your signal.

Ras. There are but two.

Mih. Forgive opposing words ; there is a third.

Ras. A third, sayst thou ? and who ?

Mih. Your son, my lord ;

A volunteer for death, whom no persuasion
Can move to be divided from his mother.

Ras. I cannot credit this ; it is some craft,—
Some poor device. Go, bring the boy to me.

[MIHDOONY leads SAMAR to his father.

Why art thou here, my child ? and is it so,
That thou dost wish to die ?

Samar. I wish to be where'er my mother is,
Alive or dead.

Ras. Think well of what thou sayst
It shall be so if thou indeed desire it.

But be advised ! death is a dreadful thing.

Samar. They say it is : but I will be with her ;
I'll die her death, and feel but what she suffers.

Ras. And art thou not afraid ? Thou'rt ignorant ;

Thou dost not know the misery of drowning ;—
The booming waters closing over thee,

And thou still sinking, struggling in the tank,
On whose deep bottom weeds and water snakes,
And filthy lizards will around thee twine,
While thou art choking. It is horrible.

Samar. The death that is appointed for my mother

Is good enough for me. We'll be together :
Clinging to her, I shall not be afraid,
No, nor will she.

Ras. But wherefore wilt thou leave thy father,
Samar ?

Thou'st not offended me ; I love thee dearly ;
I have no son but thee.

Samar. But thou wilt soon,
Thy new young wife will give thee soon another,
And he will be thy son ; but I will be
Son of Artina. We'll be still together :
When, in the form of antelope or loorie,
She wends her way to Boodhoo, I shall still
Be as her young one, sporting by her side.

Ras. (*catching him in his arms, and bursting into tears.*) My generous boy ! my noble valiant boy !

O such a son bestow'd on such a father !
Live, noble creature ! and thy mother also !
Her crime is pardon'd, if it was a crime ;
Ye shall not be divided.

Samar (*running back to ARTINA.*) O mother ! raise
your eyes ! you are to live ;
We're both to live ; my father says we are.
And he has wept, and he has kiss'd me too,
As he was wont to do, ay, fonder far.
Come, come ! [*Pulling her towards RASINGA.*]
He's good, you need not fear him now.

Ras. Artina, that brave child has won thy life ;
And he hath won for me — I have no words
That can express what he hath won for me.
But thou art sad and silent ; how is this,
With life, and such a son to make life sweet ?

Art. I have a son, but my brave father, soon, —
Who died an honour'd death, and in his grave
Lies like an honour'd chief, — will have no son,
No male descendant, living on the earth,
To keep his name and lineage from extinction.

[*RASINGA throws himself into his seat and buries his face in his mantle.*]

1st spec. (*in a low voice.*) Well timed and wisely
spoken : 'tis a woman

Worthy to be the mother of that boy.

2d spec. (*in a low voice to the first.*) Look, look,
I pray thee, how Rasinga's breast
Rises and falls beneath its silken vesture.

1st spec. (*as before.*) There is within a dreadful
conflict passing,

Known by these tokens, as swoln waves aloft
Betray the secret earthquake's deep-pent struggles.

2d spec. (*as before.*) But he is calmer now, and
puts away

The cover from his face : he seems relieved.

Ras. (*looking round him.*) Approach, De Creda ;
thou hast stood aloof :

Thou feelest my late rude passion and unkindness.
Misery makes better men than I unkind ;
But pardon me, and I will make amends.
I would not listen to thy friendly counsel,
But now I will most freely grant to thee
Whatever grace or favour thou desirest :
Even now, before thou nam'st it. [*amends.*]

Juan. Thanks, thanks, Rasinga ! this is brave
[*Runs to SAMARKOON, and commands his chains to be knocked off, speaking impatiently as it is doing.*]

Out on such tardy bungling ! Ye are craftsmen
Who know full well the art to bind men's limbs,
But not to set them free.

[*Leads SAMARKOON when unbound towards RASINGA, speaking to him as they go.*]
Come, noble Samarkoon ! nay, look more gracious :
If thou disdainst to thank him for thy life,
That falls to me, and I will do it gladly.

[*Presenting SAMARKOON to RASINGA.*]
This is the boon which thou hast granted me,
The life of Samarkoon : a boon more precious
To him who grants than who receives it. Yet
Take my most ardent thanks ; take many thanks
From other grateful bosoms, beating near thee.

Art. (*knelling to embrace the knees of RASINGA.*)
And mine ; O mine ! wilt thou not look
upon me ?

I do not now repine that thou art changed :
Be happy with another fairer dame,
It shall not grieve me now.

Ras. (*raising her.*) Away, Artina, do not thank
me thus.

Remove her, Samarkoon, a little space.

[*Waving them off.*]
Juan de Creda, art thou satisfied ?
Have I done well ?

Juan. Yes, I am satisfied.

Ras. (*drawing himself up with dignity.*) But I am
not ; and that which I have done
Would not have satisfied the generous Saviour
Who died upon the cross. Thy friend is pardon'd,
And more than pardon'd ; — he is now my brother,
And I to him resign the mountain bride.

[*A shout of joy bursts from all around : ARTINA folds SAMAR to her breast, and SAMARKOON falls at the feet of RASINGA.*]

Sam. My noble generous foe, whom I have
wrong'd ;

Urged by strong passions, wrong'd most grievously !
Now may I kneel to thee without disgrace,
For thou hast bound me with those bands of
strength

That do enoble, not disgrace the bravest.

Ras. Rise, Samarkoon ; I do accept thy thanks
Since that which I resign is worth — But cease !
Speak not of this — if it be possible,

We'll think of this no more.

(*Turning to ARTINA.*) And now, my only and my noble wife,

And thou, my dauntless boy, stand by my side,
And I, so flank'd, will feel myself in honour,—
Honour that lifts and warms and cheers the heart.

And we shall have a feast within our walls;
Our good De Creda, he will tarry with us;
He will not go to-morrow as he threaten'd.

Juan. I'll stay with you a day beyond the time,
And then I must depart; a pressing duty
Compels me so to do.

Ras. But thou'lt return again, and bring with thee

The sacred Book which thou hast told me of?

Juan. I will return again and bring that book,
If Heaven permit. But man's uncertain life
Is like a rain-drop hanging on the bough,

Among ten thousand of its sparkling kindred,
The remnants of some passing thunder shower,
Which have their moments, dropping one by one,
And which shall soonest lose its perilous hold
We cannot guess.—

I, on the continent, must for a time

A wand'rer be; if I return no more,

You may conclude death has prevented me.

Enter MONTEBESA.

Ras. Ha, mother! welcome, welcome, Montebesa!
There; take again your daughter and her boy.

We've striven stoutly with a fearful storm,

But, thanks to good De Creda, it is past;

And all the brighter shall our sky appear,

For that the clouds which have obscured its face

Were of a denseness dark and terrible.

[*The scene closes.*]

THE MATCH:

A COMEDY, IN THREE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

SIR CAMERON KUNLIFFE.

FRANKLIN, *relation to SIR CAMERON.*

BRIGHTLY, } *friends to SIR CAMERON.*
THORNHILL, }

MASTER LAWRY, *an idle urchin, brother to EMMA.*

HUMPHRY.

Locksmith, servants.

WOMEN.

LATITIA VANE.

EMMA, *her niece.*

FLOUNCE, *waiting-maid to LATITIA.*

The housekeeper of SIR CAMERON.

Ladies, servants, &c.

Scene, a watering-place, and SIR CAMERON'S seat in the neighbourhood.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A low parlour in a lodging-house, with a glass door in the bottom of the stage, opening into a garden.

Enter BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL.

Brightly (after surveying the room). Yes, these apartments will do very well; and you shall

have your study,—if a place with one shelf for books and a commodious chair to sleep in deserve the name,—overhead.

Thorn. But you forget the writing-table, the most important thing of all.

Brightly. Most important, indeed, for a poet who never writes any thing longer than a sonnet, making progress at the astonishing rate of one couplet per day. The window-sill might do well enough for that.

Thorn. But you think of former times, my friend; rhyming becomes easier by practice.

Brightly. So it does, like all other things; and I dare say you can now write two couplets per day with no great difficulty.

Thorn. Don't trouble thy head about my progress; let us set out on our visit to Sir Cameron. His mansion is scarcely a mile off, I am told. He is a kind-hearted fellow; he will be glad to see us.

Brightly. Yes, if he do not take it into his head that we have some covert design in our visit.

Thorn. Some covert design!

Brightly. Ay; sounding his intentions as to standing for the county: propitiating his patronage for some itinerant artist or lecturer; introducing to his acquaintance some forward chaperon, with a troop of female cousins at her back, to invade the daily peace of his home. O dear! what will he not imagine, rather than that we are scampering about

the country for holiday recreation, and have come ten miles out of our way to see him.

Thorn. You are somewhat hard upon him, methinks. Some events of his youth unhappily gave him a bad opinion of mankind; for myself, I never found him suspicious.

Brightly. If he thought you had wit enough to deceive him, it might be otherwise. You may thank your poetry, my dear Thornhill, for his confidence.

Thorn. Nay, spare me, dear Brightly; else I shall suppose thou art a poet thyself, under the rose, and canst not brook a rival.

[MASTER LAWRY, who appears in the garden with a bow and arrow in his hand, discharges his arrow through the glass door, and breaks one of the panes.

See that urchin in the garden; he has broken a pane of the window, and is running away.

Brightly. He sha'n't escape, however. (*Opens the window, runs after him, and returns dragging in LAWRY by the collar.*) You need not struggle with me, little master; I'll keep you fast. Why did you hit the window with your arrow?

Lawry. Because I meant to hit the door.

Brightly. I wish thou hadst been a better marksman. What will the landlady say to thee?

Lawry. Ay, more words no doubt than I shall care to hear.—Ah, Miss Aimy, Miss Aimy! how many scrapes I get into by you!

Brightly. And who is Miss Aimy, I pray?

Lawry. My arrow, sir: that is the name I give her.

Thorn. And a very appropriate one, methinks.

Brightly. But what is thine own name?

Lawry. Which of them, sir?

Brightly. How many hast thou?

Lawry. Two godfathers, two grandfathers, and a brace of uncles, have furnished me with names enow.—How many do they come to?

Thorn. Names enough, no doubt, for any one but a German Prince. What school dost thou attend?

Lawry. None, sir.

Thorn. Who teaches thee to read and write?

Lawry. Any body,—who has most time and most patience.

Thorn. But art thou not to be put to school?

Lawry. Yes, sir, when aunt Letty can make up her mind, whether the old floggam way, or the Pestilozzi way, or the Hamiltonian fashion, is best for my learning; and whether a high situation, or a warm situation, or an eastern exposure, or a western exposure, is best for my health; and whether three hundred schoolfellows, or fifty schoolfellows, or twenty schoolfellows, fagging or no fagging, be best for my morals.

Brightly. Ha! ha! ha! I will not ask whose nephew thou art. And thou hast a pretty sister too.

Lawry. Yes, sir; people do call her pretty, and she is civil enough to believe them.

Brightly. Out upon thee for a saucy knave!—Thine aunt is here then? And where does she live?

Lawry. I can't tell you, sir! When she has found out which of the twenty houses she has been looking at is the cheerfullest, and the cleanest, and the most convenient, I suppose she will settle in it.

Brightly. Go to her, my little master, and give my best respects, and say that an old friend will do himself the honour of waiting upon her presently.—Nay, you need not look at the broken pane so ruefully; I will satisfy the landlady on that point.

[Leads LAWRY into the garden, where he disappears amongst the bushes, then returning to the front.

Ha! ha! ha! Well, I can't help laughing for the soul of me.

Thorn. What tickles you so much?

Brightly. Those two originals come in one another's way again. There was a report of a love affair between them several months ago, that went off upon some foolish difficulty or other; and now she comes here to place herself in his neighbourhood.

Thorn. (*aside.*) I hope it is only to throw herself in his way. (*Aloud.*) Pooh! it will all end, as it did before, in scruples, and fancies, and misapprehensions! Don't you think it will?

Brightly. I hope not; what a match they would make if it could be effected!

Thorn. How! Specified and indecision put together as yoke-fellows!

Brightly. Why not? If they are together, two people may lead an uneasy life, to be sure; but it will, in all probability, save four from being in the like condition.

Thorn. It will never be effected.

Brightly. I'll bet my Rembrandt against your paddock, which I have long coveted for orchard ground, that it will be effected.

Thorn. Well then, I take your bet that it will not.

Brightly. Hush, hush! Here comes one of the parties concerned.

Enter SIR CAMERON KUNLIFFE.

Sir Cam. Welcome, Brightly; and Thornhill, also, welcome, both to this little by-nook of dissipation! and when you took your route this way, I flatter myself you remembered that you have an old friend in the neighbourhood.

Brightly. We did so, Kunliffe, and were now proposing to walk to your house. It is, I believe, within two miles of the village.

Sir Cam. A short distance, which I hope you will often traverse, on foot or on horseback, as suits your convenience. I saw your groom at the stable

door, Thornhill, rubbing down that beautiful brown nag of yours, and he told me you were here.

Thorn. It is lucky you did; we might have gone to your house else and missed you.

Sir Cam. So you might—Did I not hear you talking of a bet as I entered? You will not be silly enough to bet away that beautiful animal?

Thorn. O no! it did not concern the nag.

Brightly. It neither concerns the nag nor the nag's master; yet it is a bet of some moment too.

Sir Cam. No doubt, no doubt; it was foolish in me to think of the paces of a horse, when all the manège of our borough canvassers is approaching, and doubtful enough, I wot, to tempt any better.

Thorn. It did not concern the borough neither.

Sir Cam. O! you are close and mysterious, gentlemen.

Brightly. To give you the pleasure of guessing.

Sir Cam. P'faith, you are mistaken in that. What pleasure should I have in guessing? No man on earth has less curiosity than myself.

Brightly. I think I have known some men with less: had you said *women*, I should have assented more readily.

Sir Cam. Fy upon thee! both men and women are nine-pins for thy bowl to roll at.

Thorn. And he may have good bowling here, I trow; there be men of many conditions in this by-nook of dissipation, as you call it, and I am sure there is one lady, at least, of so many minds and moods, that she may very well stand for twenty.

Sir Cam. Your bet concerns a lady, then?

Brightly. It would be great unthrift to tell you that, who have no curiosity.

Sir Cam. Well, well, and you have told it me, though you are not aware of it.

Enter MRS. FLOUNCE, coming forward very briskly, and then pretending to draw back in confusion.

Flounce. O dear!—I beg pardon, gentlemen.—I knew not you were here—I came in search of Master Lawry. My lady is frightened to death about him,—but she does not know that I am come after him to this hotel.—O! she is in such a quandary; she did not know where to send me after him: for you know, gentlemen, a child may break his bones or come to mischief anywhere.

Sir Cam. Nobody will deny that, Mrs. Flounce.

Flounce. O dear, Sir Cameron! are you in this hotel? But you have a fine house in the neighbourhood, as the waiter tells me,—not that I inquired—I enters into no matters as don't belong to me.

Sir Cam. If you had inquired, Mrs. Flounce, I should have taken it as a compliment.

Brightly. And if your lady had desired you to inquire, it would have been taken as a compliment of double value.

Flounce. She bid me inquire! how could you

think of such a thing, Mr. Brightly, when she expressly forbade me to inquire any thing about it?

Brightly. And you are a woman of discretion, Mrs. Flounce, of very deep discretion. Still keep your lady's counsel as you do now, and you will deserve the best silk gown in her wardrobe.

Thorn. And her best garnet brooch into the bargain.

Flounce. Oh, what are silk gowns and brooches to me! Master Lawry! Master Lawry! That child is the plague of our lives. Is he in that there garden? where shall I find him?

Brightly. You had better go to the fortune-teller, if there be such a person in the place; he may know about him as well as other stray goods.

Flounce. No, no! I hates fortune-tellers; they have told me so many lies already.—Good morning, gentlemen, I ax your pardon—I have been very rude; shockingly rude indeed.

[Exit, curtsying herself away to the door.]

Sir Cam. But you will both walk to my house as you proposed, and I shall have the pleasure of attending you.

Thorn. Have the goodness to wait till we have given some orders about our luggage, and we are at your command.

[Exeunt BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL.]

Sir Cam. (alone). Did not know that my house is in this neighbourhood.—Pretty innocence!—Has she changed plans again?—Does the wind set fair for a second venture?—I might have known she was here by Franklin being so ready to come to me. That girl, Emma, stands between him and his wits. And these two fellows casting up in this corner so unexpectedly, what may this mean? A bet, forsooth! are they after her, too? But be canvassing or courtship the object, they shall not encompass me in their snares.

Re-enter BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL.

Brightly. Now we are ready to follow you.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

An apartment in MISS VANE'S house.

Enter EMMA, with a small embroidering-frame in her hand, which she puts upon the table, followed by LAWRY carrying a work-bag. She then sits down to her work.

Lawry. No, no, sister! no work now! you promised I should have some skeins to hold.

Emma. And you shall hold them all, Lawry, when they are wanted. Am I to wind them before, only to amuse you, as one throws out a ball for the kitten? I must begin this ranunculus with one or other of these bright colours immediately.

Lawry. And I know why you are in such a hurry.

Emma. Dost thou, master conjurer ?

Lawry. Ay, marry do I; for if you don't, aunt Letty will come to choose the colour for you, and then it won't be begun for a week. O! here she is; I must get out of the way of her errands, and directions, and re-directions, as fast as I can. I'm sure, if I could keep them all in my head, the learning of Greek would be a joke to me.

Enter LATITIA (catching hold of LAWRY as he tries to pass).

Lat. Where art thou going, urchin? hast thou given my message to the coachman?

Lawry. No, ma'am, but I'll do it immediately, in the very words you spoke. He must be at the back entry ten minutes before two.

Lat. No, not quite so soon. (*To EMMA.*) Shall I say half-past two, my dear, or a quarter before three? — Perhaps that may be too late. — Tell him half-past two, unless he should —

Lawry. I'll just give him the first message, auntie, and no more. [*Breaks from her and exit.*]

Lat. Impudent little runagate! that child must be put to school forthwith.

Enter a Servant with letters.

But here are my letters, and they will relieve me, I trust, from many perplexities.

Emma. Yes, my dear aunt, if they do not leave as many behind as they carry away.

Lat. Peace, child; thou art so thoughtless that nothing is a perplexity to thee. (*Looks at the letters lying on the table.*) Ha! here is an answer to my application for the house. (*Opens a letter and reads.*)

Emma. And does the landlord agree to your terms?

Lat. (in a hesitating slow drawl). Ye-s.

Emma. Then there is one difficulty surmounted.

Lat. (as before). Ye-s, so far surmounted; but I have been thinking further of it. The drawing-rooms are too large, and my dressing-room is too small, and there is no convenient closet for my curiosities and china.

Emma. And will you give it up, after all, just when he agrees to your terms?

Lat. Nay, I don't know that. If my own apartment were better, and room for my curiosities, and if the back staircase were not so miserably narrow, I should not hesitate for a moment.

Emma. But things are as they are, and cannot be altered; so you must either take the house, with its imperfections, or give it up.

Lat. Ay, there it is: he is so unreasonable as to desire an immediate answer. I wish that word *immediate* were expunged from the vocabulary. If I had time, I could write to Lady Trinkum about it, and likewise Mr. Changet, the best judge of houses in the world: but to commit myself at once — Oh!

what is to be done! — What seal is that you are examining so minutely?

Emma. Two chevrons reversed on a field azure.

Lat. (eagerly). Ha! from that quarter! the same again.

Emma. Did you not expect a second proposal when your former treaty of marriage broke off because his fortune was deemed insufficient for your fashionable plans of expense? — for, by the unexpected death of his elder brother, some three months ago, that obstacle is removed.

Lat. (snatching the letter from her hand, and reading it eagerly). Thou art quite right, it is a second proposal; and, oh! what shall I do? (*Traversing the room in a disturbed manner.*) I shall appear sordid — I shall appear mean — I shall appear mercenary in his eyes.

Emma. Not more so than when you declined his first proposal on that ground. You will now appear to him, not very sentimental, indeed, but consistent.

Lat. Oh! but I did not ostensibly decline his offer on that ground, though that was the true one. — What shall I do! Suffer him to think meanly of my motives; and give up all my plans too of living a distinguished single woman, in a house of my own, — the patroness of arts, the encourager of genius, the loadstar in society! — You know all this, my dear child, — you know what the wishes of my heart have been.

Emma. Indeed I knew that you spoke about it, but I did not know that you wished for it.

Lat. Ah! but I did — I thought I did. (*Pacing backward and forward in an irresolute way; then stopping short.*) And now, when this house, this most desirable house, may be had upon my own terms!

Emma. But you forget, my dear aunt, that it wants a closet for your curiosities, and that the back staircase is so miserably narrow.

Lat. Don't distract me, Emma: tell me what to do. How does it strike you? Would it not be better — O, no! that won't do, neither. — O that Lady Tottendon or Mrs. Siffall were here, that I might ask their advice! — What would you advise me to do?

Emma. The writer of that letter is not unreasonable enough to require an immediate answer: lay it aside for the present, and open the next. (*Pointing to another letter.*)

Lat. (opening it). I am glad she has found time to answer me at last. You must listen to this, Emma; it regards the education of Lawry. Mrs. Overall is a woman of a deeply philosophical mind; and on such an important subject, I was anxious that she should give me her opinion.

Emma. The thing of all others she is most ready to give. And what is it?

Lat. (reading). "I have been prevented by many

avocations from writing"—I shall not read the apology, but pass on to the matter in question:—"Education of every kind has, till lately, proceeded upon a wrong principle. Every body taught the same things, without regard to talent or capacity. Should not a boy's instruction be adapted to his genius?"—She is very right there, Emma; you need not smile. There is good reason in what she says.—"If he has a turn for mathematics, would you make him a lawyer? If for forensic eloquence, would you cram him with grammar and Greek? If for poetry, would you confine him to a counting-house? If for painting, would you entangle him in diplomacy? Apply all the force of tuition to his principal,—his leading talent, and you will make a distinguished man of him with little trouble."

Emma (laughing heartily). And how shall we discover poor Lawry's talent, if playfulness and mischief be not ranked as natural endowments? Pray forgive me, aunt: I am too flippant.

Lat. Indeed, I think you are, child: listen to what follows:—"And how fortunate it is for your purpose that Dr. Crany, one of our most celebrated phrenologists, is in— at present. Let him examine your nephew's head, and he will tell you at once what course to pursue."

Enter BRIGHTLY.

Mr. Brightly, I refer to you.

Brightly. And what is the matter in question?

Lat. To educate my nephew according to the bent of his genius. Is not that right?

Brightly. Assuredly, when you can find it out.

Lat. Dr. Crany, the phrenologist, will do that for us.

Brightly. Very willingly, I doubt not. I forgot what new lights philosophy throws on such mysteries now-a-days. Yes, by all means let the boy's head be examined. Does this little girl make a jest of it?—Yes, yes, let him be examined, and then you will be no longer undecided on the treatment of your little will o' the wisp?

Emma. To be sure that would be something gained.

Brightly. Let us try for it, at least; I'll go to the doctor forthwith.

Lat. (running after him as he is going out). O no, no! not yet: you are too sudden, too hasty, Mr. Brightly. I must have more time to consider of it.

Brightly. And let the doctor proceed on his tour, and repent when the opportunity is past.

Lat. Does he leave the place so soon?

Brightly. I have heard so: this will be your only opportunity.

Lat. Go, then, go!—O how hasty and teasing these opportunities are!

Emma. Indeed, my dear aunt, you generally make them so. [*Exit BRIGHTLY.*]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The carriage is waiting, ma'am.

Lat. Let it wait. It comes before the time.

Emma. Indeed, ma'am, your coachman seldom makes that mistake. By my watch he is half an hour after it. (*Looking at her watch.*)

Lat. Come, come then!—Flounce! Flounce! (*calling off the stage*), bring my shawl and bonnet! [*Exeunt in a hurry.*]

SCENE III.

Court before LATTITIA'S house.

Enter SIR CAMERON KUNLIFF and MRS. FLOUNCE, speaking as they enter.

Sir Cam. And Miss Vane is only gone out for a short airing?

Flounce. Yes, Sir Cameron; that is to say, if she keeps in the mind as when she set out. I never answers for more than that of any lady.

Sir Cam. To be sure, Mrs. Flounce, your prudence is commendable. And since she may probably return so soon, I shall take the liberty of waiting in the parlour.

Flounce. O! not there, sir, if you please: you had better wait in the harbour yonder; the smell of all them roses and honeysuckles will delight you.

Sir Cam. I thank you, ma'am. I will, by your leave, go into the parlour, and smell the roses another time. [*Exit into the house.*]

Flounce. Plague take him for a very moral of perversity! for he'll find Mr. Franklin in the parlour; and how many odd notions may come into his head the cunning one himself would not guess. For, dear me! he has a marvellous gift for making much out of nothing, as his valet at the hall tells me.—He's perversity personified; for if one wants him to turn to the right hand, for that very reason he turns to the left. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

The parlour.

Enter SIR CAMERON, starting back as he enters.

Sir Cam. Did I not see a man go hastily in at that opposite door?—I am not the only person, I apprehend, who is waiting the return of the ladies. And my lady's maid too; she is no novice in her calling.—"O, sir! had you not better wait in the harbour yonder, and smell to the roses?" Well, well, what is all this to me? I prefer her, I fear, with all her follies, to any other woman; but, thank heaven! I am still free: I have not committed myself. She is coming: I hear voices in the hall—her own voice.—Why should a voice sound so sweet which so often repeats silly things?

Enter LATITIA.

Lat. Good morning, Sir Cameron. It is very good in you to come so early to see us. How unexpected the pleasure of meeting you here!

Sir Cam. To show my bodily presence two miles from my own house is not surely very wonderful, though it may be unexpected. However, I will not mortify my vanity so far as to suppose it both unexpected and unwelcome.

Lat. How ridiculously grave you look! How should one know how far your house is from this town?

Sir Cam. I'll answer you that question, if you will tell me in return, how long this place is to have the honour of harbouring so charming a visitor.

Lat. How all the world seem leagued to embarrass one with direct queries! My plans are not yet settled, and I don't know how long I may stay. The lease of a house requires some consideration.

Sir Cam. And you will not stint it on that point, I know. But the lease of a house puts deeds, and bonds, and contracts of another kind into one's thoughts; I hope you will not dash any presumptuous hope that a poor bachelor like myself may have entertained, by owning a matrimonial plan in connection with the other.

Lat. A matrimonial plan! What has a single woman, who has entered into her thirty-second year, to do with matrimonial plans?

Sir Cam. When the spirit and bloom of five-and-twenty brighten a lady's countenance, I never think of her age.—Well then, matrimony has nothing to do with it?

Lat. No, nothing at all: my house, that is to say, if I do take the lease, will be a cheerful spinster's house, where literati will assemble, amateurs sit in council, curiosities be examined, poems read, and all the bon-mots of the town be repeated! if I can induce the learned and refined to honour with their society such a humble individual as myself.

Sir Cam. What delightful intercourse!—with not one word of scandal required to give it zest.

Lat. Not one word.

Sir Cam. And this charming arrangement is determined upon?

Lat. Absolutely.

Sir Cam. And woe worth the selfish man who should seek to turn aside your mind from such a refined speculation! He would surely deserve indign punishment.

Lat. Nay, that were judging too uncharitably. He might give one an opportunity of proving the strength of one's resolution, without incurring severe censure.

Sir Cam. But what if he should prove the weakness of it: would he not then deserve to be called a very selfish fellow?

Lat. I will give hard names to nobody: and I

must ask your opinion of another affair, if you will have the goodness to favour me with it.—What had I better do in regard to my little idle nephew? I should like to give him a good education; for, idle as he is, he is clever enough: and I should like to avoid all fallacious and useless modes of tuition. I have been advised to have his head examined by the famous phrenologist who is now in the place; will you do me the favour to be present?

Sir Cam. I shall have the honour to obey your summons whenever you please.

Lat. Your friends, Brightly and Thornhill, have also promised to be present, and here they come, opportunely.

Enter BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL.

Brightly. Away with you, Kunliffe, if you would not be beset by half-a-dozen ladies of ton, who have laid their heads together to oblige you to give them a fête-champêtre in your park. They know that you are here; and I have got the start of them only a few paces.

Sir Cam. Thank you! thank you! I hear their voices without; and I would not encounter the clamour of that beldame and her train for the best buck in my park.

Enter three ladies, as he is about to escape.

1st lady. Ho, Sir Cameron! stop the fugitive. (*Catching hold of his sleeve.*) You shall not escape till you have heard my speech, as the delegate of all the fair ladies in——. Your park, they bid me say, is fairy ground; and they request to be its happy fairies for one day, to dance in its glades, and——and, I forget the rest. O yes! I am enjoined to say——

Sir Cam. Nay, my good madam; sweet as the sound of your voice may be in my ears, I will trouble you to say no more; your request is granted.

2d lady. O how delightfully ready!

1st lady. The day and the hour, Sir Cameron?

Sir Cam. The day and the hour which this lady (*pointing to LATITIA*) will do me the favour to name.

1st lady. No, no! this is but a subterfuge; you must name it yourself.

Sir Cam. Pardon me, ladies, pardon me! Miss Vane will fix the time. I am obliged to attend an appointment.—Good morning,—excuse me; good morning. [*Hurries away and exit.*]

3d lady. He is laughing at us; I told you it would be so.

1st lady. But we'll follow him: he must not escape so. [*Exeunt ladies.*]

Manent BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL.

Brightly. It would require more courage than our friend possesses to keep his ground as a bachelor

lord of the manor, near a w. tering-place like this. But what think ye of our bet? There is a life and hilarity in h countenance which assures me your paddock will soon become the orchard-ground of a certain worthy neighbour of yours; I see it very clearly, with all its fruit trees in blossom.

Thorn. We are all sanguine enough where our own advantage is concerned: I see your beautiful Rembrandt as clearly on the walls of my library; and all the connoisseurs of the county peeping at it through their fingers. But let us follow the game.

[*Exeunt.*

[*As the last characters disappear, FRANKLIN is seen peeping out from the inner room, and then comes forward.*

Frank. The coast is clear at last. O, if I could catch a glimpse of her now! And here she comes, most fortunately, as if she knew I was waiting for her.

Enter EMMA.

Dear Emma! I have been secreted in that closet while Sir Cameron, and your aunt, and a crowd of other visitors have been here in succession, which appeared to me endless. Now the hurly burly is over, and I am rewarded for my patience.

Emma. Ah, George! Why must I chide you for coming?

Frank. And do you chide me?

Emma. I ought to do it; you know very well that I ought.

Frank. Yes, to come here is foolish: to listen to the sound of your voice; to catch a glimpse of your figure through the shrubs as you play with your brother in the garden; to follow your carriage with mine eyes, and feel its very track on the sand like a talisman or charm to the fancy, is all very foolish, but a folly that is incorrigible.

Emma. We must try, however: consider well that my fortune is very small.

Frank. I cannot consider this; but I ought to consider that my own is still smaller.

Emma. And whatever I have, I shall divide with my brother; for he is a posthumous child, and has not one farthing of his own.

Frank. I should deserve to be a slave in the galleys, could I wish thee to be one jot less generous.

Emma. With prospects so precarious and so distant, ought we to be often together, or to enter into any engagement?

Frank. As far as incessant application to my profession can make them less precarious, I will toil;—no, no, I may not call it *toil*;—the patriarch's servitude for her-whom he loved was sweet to him, and seemed but a few days.

Emma. I dare not enter into engagements.

Frank. Thou shalt not; I will be engaged and thou shalt be free.

Emma. That is impossible: we may both change; I cannot injure thee so far.

Frank. How injure me? I should be the happier all my life for having loved thee, if I could only once know that I had ever been dear to thee: I would not change such happiness to—to——

Emma. To be made Chancellor of England.

Enter SIR CAMERON behind, and observing them in earnest discourse, coughs loud several times to give them notice of his presence, without effect, and then comes forward.

Sir Cam. How very easy it would be to play the eavesdropper at this interesting moment, when things might be spoken not unwelcome to a curious ear.—Thou art a happy fellow to engage such unbroken attention from such an auditor.—You are both too grave to answer me. Yet I would have you to know, that I have been made a confidant in affairs of the heart, ere now.

Emma (aside to FRANKLIN). Conceal nothing from Sir Cameron, but permit me to retire. [*Exit.*

Sir Cam. She whispered in your ear as she went.

Frank. "Conceal nothing from Sir Cameron" were the words.

Sir Cam. Gentle, confiding creature! and wilt thou obey her? thou wilt not. Thou wilt just tell me what is perfectly convenient, and no more.

Frank. Nay, nay, cousin; you wrong me. I will obey her thoroughly, and I shall not tire you with a long story neither.

Sir Cam. Well, then, you shall walk home with me, and tell it by the way.

Frank. I have left my hat in the little room. I'll join you immediately. [*Exit.*

Sir Cam. (alone). Kind, simple, confiding creatures! He, too, so frank and open! I love them both: ay, and I will behave nobly to them.

Re-enter FRANKLIN with his hat.

Frank. I must first run to the post-office for a letter I expect to receive; but don't stop for me; I'll join you at the end of the street.

Sir Cam. You have no love correspondence in any other quarter, I hope.

Frank. How can your mind harbour such a thought?

Sir Cam. The mind of one who has lived long in the world is often forced to give harbour to many an unwelcome thought.

Frank. The letter I expect is from no fair lady, but from worthy Mr. Harding.

Sir Cam. Ha! what have you to do with Mr. Harding?

Frank. I have had to do with him lately as a solicitor.

Sir Cam. And on some serious business, no doubt.

Frank. Serious enough for me;—the piecing up

of all the rags and remnants of that poor garment, my patrimony, that my shoulders may not be entirely bare, till my own industry shall earn for me another covering. [Exit.]

Sir Cam. (alone). Hardening his solicitor! Ha, ha! I like not this. Can it be only concerning his own little remnants of property!—It may be so; I will not doubt his word.—I hate all unreasonable suspicion.—I shall hear his story, and I shall touch upon the subject of Hardening afterwards. I shall watch his looks; and if he really know any thing of the flaw in that bungled deed, I shall find it out. [Exit.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The library in SIR CAMERON KUNLIFFE'S house.

Enter MASTER LAWRY and the Housekeeper, speaking as they enter.

House. And you are come so far from home, master, to look at a picture-book—the book of ships, eh?

Lawry. And is that very surprising?

House. To be sure one need not be much surprised, for boys will wander for the very love of wandering; it is all one as though it made a part of their day's work.

Lawry. Ay, so they will; and now give me the book, and turning over the leaves of it will make another part of my day's work.

House. But are you sure, young sir, that Sir Cameron gave you leave to look over them books?

Lawry. Why should I tell a lie about it?

House. To be sure, it would be letting the devil have too good a bargain.

Lawry. Yes; lying for a small matter is great unthrift; yet I have heard of a woman, who called herself ten years younger than she was, to make her age a proper match to her rose-coloured top-knot. (*Looking archly at her head-dress.*)

House. Say what you please, young master; but if Sir Cameron gave you leave to look at his books when he is absent, it is what he never allowed to any one before.

Lawry. I did not say he gave me leave to look at them in his absence.

House. And what if he should return suddenly and find you turning over his books? that would make a fine rumpus, I trow.

Lawry. Would he punish me?

House. No, sir, it is me that would be punished; I should lose my place and be ruined.

Lawry. Nay, nay! don't be distressed, good madam: I will take all the blame on myself, and say that I entered in spite of you.

House. That excuse would not pass with him; he would discharge me all the same. Heaven knows what trouble I have to keep my situation here.

Lawry. Then I'll go directly, and see the pictures another time: don't be so distressed, my good ma'am.

House. Well, thou art a sweet creature after all, and I will run some risk to please thee. (*Taking a book from the shelves, and laying it on the table.*)

Lawry. O thank you, thank you; how good you are. (*Begins to turn over the leaves.*) What a gallant ship, with her sails set and her colours flying! I wish I were aboard of her.

House. Stop, stop; as I'm a Christian woman, your fingers are all smeared with lollypops.

Lawry. Then you are no Christian woman, for that is the stain of black cherries, and my hands have been washed since I ate them.

House. Let us make sure of it, however. (*Takes a handkerchief from her pocket and rubs one of his hands, while with the other he attempts to pull the smart bow from her cap.*) Mischief to the very core of thee! Yet thou art a sweet creature too; and much pleasure may you have with your book.

[Exit by an opposite door.]

[While LAWRY is busy with his book, SIR CAMERON'S voice is heard without, and he starts from the table, puts the book in its place, and looks round in dismay.]

Lawry. Where can I hide myself?—Ay, that will do. (*Climbs upon the back of a library chair which stands close to a bookcase, and pulls down a map from its roller to conceal himself.*)

Enter SIR CAMERON.

Sir Cam. The air of this day is oppressive; I feel drowsy and tired. (*Sits down in the chair.*) This seat is uneasy, the upholsterer has stuffed it very badly. Let me see. (*Pulls it out from the book-case, and LAWRY drops down on the floor.*)—What have we here!—Hiding in my library!—It is Lawry, by my faith.—Get up, child: I hope thou art not hurt. He does not move! torpid as a dormouse!—Ho, there! is nobody at hand? Ho there! (*Rings a bell violently.*) No limbs are broken, I hope.

Enter Servants, and re-enter Housekeeper, all gathering about LAWRY.

House. A boy in this room, preserve me! how got he here?—Ay, them urchins will scramble and climb, and make their way any where like very polecats. He got no entrance here, I'm sure, by the door in a natural way. Dear me, dear me!

Sir Cam. Don't make such a clamour about it: who cares how he entered? Examine whether he be hurt, and I'll despatch a man directly for a surgeon. He must be blooded. [Exit hastily.]

Lawry (starting up from the floor). He will be a clever surgeon that finds me here. [*Exit running.*]
Omnes. Let him go, he's a clever imp,—don't hinder him.

Re-enter SIR CAMERON.

Sir Cam. Where is he? have you carried him to bed?

1st serv. His own legs have carried him off very nimbly.

Sir Cam. Pursue him, and fetch him back.

House. It will be to no purpose, Sir Cameron; and the sooner he gets to his own home the better, for the ladies will be alarmed at his absence.

1st serv. (looking out). He has cleared the lawn already; catch him who can.

Sir Cam. Leave me.

[*Exeunt servants, all but the housekeeper.*]

House. I fear you will be thinking, sir, that I let him in,

Sir Cam. Leave me, Mrs. Marmalade.

House. I just want for to say, Sir Cameron—

Sir Cam. I just want for to be alone.

[*Exit housekeeper, tossing her head.*]

That boy has come to the house in my absence for some purpose or other.—Their purpose cannot be good who employ such means to effect it. (*Looking up to the bookcase.*) Concealed behind that map, which he must have unrolled to cover him. Ha! to scramble up to that very shelf where the key of my iron box is concealed behind the pamphlets. By my faith, and they have been disturbed too. Let me see. (*Standing on the seat of the chair, to examine the upper shelf.*) The key is gone; devil take the cunning little varlet! he has stolen the key. (*Pacing about in a disturbed manner.*) I was surprised to hear that he had transactions with Harding. I see the whole business now. He knows of the cursed mistake in that testamentary deed. A base device to get it into his hands for inspection. (*Advances to the front, and stands thoughtfully with his arms across.*) Suspicious! had I not been less suspicious than most people, I should have been aware of it before. O that there were less cause for suspicion in this vile world! Must we pass through it like infants or simpletons to be happy? what is reason given to us for but to be a defence and a guard? It may, indeed, occasionally deceive us. It may,—it may! that, alas, I know too well.—Oh! my remembrance of that cruel hour is intolerable. Had I then been as a simple infant instead of a reasoning man, how happy I might have been! (*Beating his forehead.*) Well, well, well! there is no use in thinking of it now. She is happy with another, and prosperous and happy may she be!

Enter HUMPHRIES,

What dost thou want? Did I ring the bell?

Humph. No, your honour; but a servant from Miss Vane is here, and his lady requests you will remember your promise to be present at the examination of Master Lawry's head, and the cranium doctor is to be at her house at four o'clock precisely.

Sir Cam. My best respects to the lady, and I shall have the honour of obeying her summons.

[*Exit HUMPHRIES.*]

If the organs of mischief and knavery be not discovered under the curly locks of that little imp, the science, as they deem it, of phrenology is a spider's web to catch flies withal. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

An ante-room.

Enter HUMPHRIES and a Locksmith, carrying a basket with his tools.

Humphries. You may set down your things here a bit, Mr. Cramp, till Sir Cameron rings his bell.—Plague upon it! to make all this ado about nothing. Plague take the whole tribe of suspects and inspectors, with all their cautions, and securities, and contrivances!

Lock. No, no, Mr. Grumbler! you must not say so to a locksmith. My benison upon the whole tribe.

Humphries. Yes, truly, thou hast made a pretty penny of it here.

Lock. Not much neither: I have not changed a lock in this house these three months.

Humphries. Hast thou forgotten the two inner presses in his study, and escritoir in his dressing-room?

Lock. No, but I hope I shall soon; for one job beats another from my mind.

Humphries. Ay, thou thinkest but of one thing at a time. I wish my master would do the same: for he is not one jot wiser for mixing up so many notions together, like cloaks hung upon a hall-pin, black, blue, and dirty, every one huddled over another: that he is not, I'm sure.

Lock. I wonder such a plain, surly fellow as thou art, should keep thy place in his service so long.

Humphries. He takes my surliness for honesty.

Lock. And he is not one jot wiser for that, I should reckon.

Humphries. No, Cramp; he is not deceived. But as I am honest, I must be treated like an honest man.

Lock. Certainly; that is but reasonable. And how does Mrs. Marmalade contrive to stay here so long? She is neither plain nor surly, I'm sure.

Humphries. Oh! but she has one great advantage over me.

Lock. What is that?

Humphries. He sees she is a fool: and certes, she

is the greatest fool that ever had wit enough to keep account of household linen, and overlook the making of pickles and preserves.

Lock. Yes, for certain, she has a great power of words on every occasion, and few of them to the purpose. How has he patience to hear her?

Humphries. I'll tell you how: whenever he questions her about any mischance in the family, he knows very well that all she tells him, in the first place, is false, but that it will soon be contradicted as she goes on; and that what she tells him last will be within a trifle of the truth. Besides, he is amused with her, and she is related to his old nurse. For he is really a kind-hearted man, for all his odd notions and vagaries.

Lock. He is too wise, belike, to think there be any honest folk in the world.

Humphries. No, no! he thinks there may be a tittle of honest folk in it, but how to find them out,—that is his perplexity. (*Bell rings.*) Now, he is ready for you: follow me with your tools, and do what you can for this cursed chest, else there will be no peace in the house for a week. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

An apartment in the house of LATITIA.

Enter EMMA and DR. CRANY, by opposite sides.

Dr. Crany. Is it your summons, madam, I have the honour of obeying?

Emma. It is my aunt, sir, who requested this favour of you, and she will be here immediately. Have the goodness to be seated.

Dr. Crany. I prefer the position which allows me most perfectly to contemplate the riches of that beautiful forehead. (*Advancing towards her, while she retreats.*) Music—the music of the soul. Colours—design—comprehensiveness! O! what a rich mine of charming capacity! Pray, permit—(*putting out his hand to raise the hair from her forehead, as she has reached the wall, and can retreat no further.*)

Emma (*preventing him*). Have the goodness, sir, to stand farther off: it is not my head that my aunt wishes you to examine.

Enter LATITIA, followed by BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL.

Lat. I am infinitely obliged to you, doctor; but pray take no trouble with the head of this young lady, for her education is finished.

Dr. Crany. Is education ever finished, my good madam, while one capacity remains unexplored and uncultivated? Our science is still in its infancy, and therefore the world is still in its infancy; talents wasted—time wasted—tuition wasted—reason wasted.

Brightly (*aside*). Ay, there will be a great saving of reason when it comes into use.

Thorn. It is a supposed science, sir, in which yourself and some other distinguished philosophers place much confidence.

Dr. Crany. A supposed science, sir! it is a proved one. Proved by a successive inspection of the skulls of distinguished men, from remote antiquity down to the present day.

Thorn. And how have you procured them?

Dr. Crany. We have procured them, sir, with much labour and very great expense.

Brightly. You are very liberal, I dare say, to any person who puts you in possession of a skull that confirms the rules of your science.

Dr. Crany. Certainly, sir; his reward is great, and deservedly so.

Thorn. Yes, doctor, permission to open the coffins of the celebrated dead could not be easily obtained; the reward must be in proportion.

Brightly. And to him who should put you in possession of a skull apparently adverse to your science, what would be his remuneration?

Dr. Crany. The same, sir; when we are assured of the skull being genuine, we make no difference. But—which proves the truth of the science—we have very, very seldom indeed, such a skull offered to us.

Brightly. An indubitable proof, indeed, Dr. Crany; I beg your pardon for having insinuated the slightest doubt. And, as you say, what a saving of time and of reason there will be, when, instead of inquiring the past actions and propensities of a man, you have only to run over his head with your fingers, and become acquainted with his character at once.

Dr. Crany. Exactly so; and with the ladies' permission I will tell an anecdote to illustrate the fact.

Lat. Pray do, doctor; we are all fond of anecdotes.

Dr. Crany. A man was tried for murder at the Bury assizes; the evidence was deficient, and the jury retired to deliberate. But a clever phrenologist, having crept to the bar and peeped at the prisoner's head, whose hair happened to be cut very close, descried the organs of destruction of such an appalling size as left no hesitation on the subject, and he could scarcely repress an exclamation, when the door of the jury-box opened, and the foreman pronounced the prisoner not guilty.

Thorn. They decided according to the evidence.

Dr. Crany. Yes, sir; and till the laws of evidence are reformed, they cannot do otherwise. (*LATITIA whispers to EMMA, who retires.*) But my story is not yet finished. Six months afterwards the prisoner committed another murder, for which he was convicted and hanged. Now, had he been hanged for the first offence, he could not have committed the second.

Brightly. He must be very contentious, indeed, doctor, who does not admit that.

[*Re-enter EMMA, luging in LAWRY, and followed by SIR CAMERON.*

Emma. Come, come, Lawry, make no more wry faces, but kneel down here, and let that gentleman examine your head.

Lawry. My head! he will not flog that end of me. [*The doctor sits down, and LAWRY kneels.*

Dr. Crany (feeling his head). The organs of excursiveness: this young gentleman plays truant pretty often.

Lat. O, what a true discovery! he's always running about. Proceed, proceed, if you please.

Dr. Crany. There is great paucity here in the organs of attention, and those of application seem to be wanting entirely.

Lat. O dear! how true it is! Your art discovers his nature at once. Pray proceed; something else may be discovered that will teach us how to manage him.

Sir Cam. Keep him at home without his dinner till he has learnt his lesson, and he will do well enough.

Lat. Nay, you are rather too harsh, Sir Cameron.

Emma. But see, the doctor has discovered something better now, for his whole countenance is enlightened.

Dr. Crany. Rejoice, rejoice with me, ladies! the greatest philosopher in England is at my feet.

Ommes. What is it? What is it?

Dr. Crany. The organs of mathematics, superb, surprising, superlative. (*Starting from his seat and skipping about in ecstasy.*) Such an organ never yet rose proudly under the pressure of this thumb. Have you not frequently seen him tracing figures on a slate—circles, triangles, and such like?

Emma. Often enough, doctor; but the figure he commonly traces is more like a rickety boat with a flag to it than a triangle.

Lat. Kneel again, Lawry; the doctor may discover something more.

Dr. Crany. No, I have done; I know him perfectly now. Keep him at home, and get a mathematical tutor for him immediately.

Sir Cam. Yes, doctor, excellent advice: keep the runagate at home, and keep him close to his figures and his books.

Lawry (crying). Keep me to my books! I'll run off with the first band of gipsies that lights a fire on the common. What is all that examining for? You might have known very well that if I would stick to my books I should read, without all this pother.

Dr. Crany. But you shall have books so suited to your nature, my boy, that you will delight to stay at home and read them.

Lawry. Wait till you find such books then; and I'll stay at home when I like it.

[*Exit, whimpering and muttering.*

Dr. Crany. Shall I have the honour to examine the other heads in this good company? (*To LATITIA, in a very ingratiating tone.*) Madam, I know that all I shall discover here (*pointing to her head*) must be amiable.

Lat. Excuse me, doctor, I have not courage.

Dr. Crany (turning to SIR CAMERON). There is no lack of courage here, I presume. Allow me, sir, to have the honour. What a promising forehead! those brows, and that fine spreading of the bone!

Lat. Do, Sir Cameron; pray be examined; you will oblige me so much.

Dr. Crany (aside). O! it is Sir Cameron Kunliffe, I find.

Brightly and Thorn. (*speaking at the same time.*) Do, Kunliffe; you cannot refuse a lady's request.

Lat. (*placing a chair.*) Sit down here, and the doctor will bend over you.

Sir Cam. (*sitting down.*) If it must be so, I must even submit.

Dr. Crany (as he examines his head). Contemplative—very contemplative; likes books better than hunting.

Lat. How true!

Brightly. Bravo, doctor!

Thorn. No wizard could have guessed better.

Dr. Crany. And here are organs that have been well developed; the—the—

Sir Cam. Don't hesitate, doctor; name it, I beg.

Dr. Crany. The organ of inspection.

Brightly. Bravo again, doctor; you have a very good name for it; and if there be such a thing as the organ of suspicion, whereabouts does it lie? for I should think the two are pretty near neighbours.

Dr. Crany. They are; but except when much developed, we do not call the last by that name; we call it susceptiveness.

Brightly. Ha, ha, ha! what nice distinctions! And, I suppose, the organ of deceptiveness does not lie far off from either.

Dr. Crany. Excuse me, sir, as an active quality it stands far apart; if you mean by it a passive one, we have nothing to do with it.

Thorn. Doctor, you have answered him well.

Sir Cam. But, my good friends, I must have the organ of patience, also, if I am to sit here till you have asked all your fanciful questions. Don't mind them, Dr. Crany, but go on your own way.

[*DR. CRANY, after looking at the back of his head, shrinks from it, and covers his eyes with his hand.*

Lat. What is the matter, doctor? Good heavens! what is the matter?

Dr. Crany. Don't inquire, madam; in the pro-

secution of our science, we are subject to painful revulsions. May I beg a glass of water?

Thorn. (having brought him a glass of water, which he drinks in a languid, affected manner). I hope you are better now, and will proceed with what is so very interesting.

Dr. Crany. Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, I examine no more to-day.

Sir Cam. (rising quickly). We had better take our leave, and your heads (to BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL) may wait for some future occasion. (Bows to the ladies, and speaks aside to BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL, as he goes off.) It is only a feint to get rid of your questions.

[Exit, followed by BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL.

Lat. Good heavens! Dr. Crany, do not keep me in this agony: what have you discovered on the head of Sir Cameron?

Dr. Crany. Do not inquire, madam, unless you have some very particular reason for it.—He is not a man to be exasperated.—He is not a man to be trifled with.—He is not a man to be conciliated.

Lat. Is he so dangerous?

Dr. Crany (looking about). Is there no one near us to listen?

Lat. No one; tell us, for heaven's sake: is he mad? is he dangerous?

Dr. Crany. It is fearful to think what he is. He has the organ of destruction on his head so strong.—Oh! half-a-dozen bloody murders would not exhaust that fearful capacity of mischief. I fear I distress you, ladies, but my duty compels me to it. Be secret, be secret. I dare not remain here; I will go to my lodgings and try to recover from this very sudden shock. [Exit.

Lat. Dear Emma, what do you think of this? it is terrible.

Emma. If it be true.

Lat. Do you doubt it? You saw how unwilling she was to speak, and the distress he was in.

Emma. If the distress was real, he will fly from the vicinity of a man so dangerous.

Lat. Yes, we may judge by that; let us be secret, and see the result. I must retire to my chamber; give me your arm. [Exit.

SCENE IV.

A garden.

Enter SIR CAMERON KUNLIFFE, and walks backward and forward for some time, muttering, before he speaks audibly.

Sir Cam. It will not do; they must try some other device before they get this into their custody. To make me their confidant with such seeming simple honesty, and attempt such a trick after all! I shall be less easily deceived another time.

Enter FRANKLIN.

Frank. Walking quarter-deck in this gloomy nook! I have been seeking you every where, all over the grounds.

Sir Cam. And having found me, sir, what is your pleasure with me?

Frank. How is this, Sir Cameron? You seem offended with me.

Sir Cam. Why do you suppose that I am offended?

Frank. Your looks tell me so; I would gladly interpret them otherwise.

Sir Cam. And you have learned to watch and interpret looks, it seems: you are too young a man for this.

Frank. Why, a dog or an infant will do as much.

Sir Cam. Fidelity and affection may do any thing.

Frank. If I am destitute of those qualities, I have harboured too long under your roof. (A sudden pause on the part of SIR CAMERON.) Farewell, cousin: I shall visit Miss Vane and her niece once more, and then return to town.

Sir Cam. (calling after him as he is going off). Hark ye, cousin! you will see Mr. Harding, no doubt, when you are in town; pray give my respects to him—my very profound respects. (Exit FRANKLIN.) O, that he had remained as I once knew him! I should have loved him, I should have taken him to my heart.—Vain wish! the world is a school of perversion. (Walks to and fro again, and then stops.) Money, thou art truly styled the root of all evil. I should soon, of my own accord, have declared the blunder of that stupid attorney, and should have behaved liberally and nobly. But now, what can I do? It were silliness—it were cowardice to concede. No; I will carry the suit through every court in England first, and live on a crust after all, if lawyers will leave me as much.

Enter THORNHILL.

Thorn. You intended to ride this morning, but I am sorry I cannot accompany you. I have made an engagement with Miss Vane to try the newly discovered organ of her nephew, and will give him his first lesson of mathematics forthwith.

Sir Cam. Ha! put by his aunt under your tuition?

Thorn. Why should this surprise you? it is only an experiment.

Sir Cam. True, true; we are all, now-a-days, busy with experiments: we shall find out, by-and-bye, some new way of giving brains to a dunce, dexterity to awkwardness, boldness to timidity, ay, and stability to the wavering of a fair lady's will. Faith and truth! governing and law-making will only be matters of experiment. Make verses on

the subject, man, and publish them; that will be another experiment.

Thorn. Nay, how far rhyme without reason will succeed, is no new experiment.

Sir Cam. But there *will* be reason in it, if thou dost not mar it with thy rhyme.

Enter BRIGHTLY.

Thorn. Welcome, Brightly; you will help me to deal with this moody man here. Have you any news to tell that may amuse us?

Brightly. To be sure I have. The learned phrenologist has suddenly disappeared from his lodgings; and Miss Vane and her niece are preparing to set off for town.

Sir Cam. Who told you this? It cannot be true: the last part of the story cannot be true.

Brightly. Yet that is just the part of it that I am most assured of; for they are preparing the imperial of her carriage, and horses have been ordered from the inn. If you would have her remain, Kunliffe, you had better go speedily to wish her good-bye.

Sir Cam. Wish her to the devil!

Brightly. Wishes are free to every one; but even that wish may be expressed in a civil manner.—Come away with me, Thornhill: the moody man will deal best with himself; and I have some curiosity to see that urchin get his lesson of lines and triangles before they go; for many half hours and half minds may pass away ere his fair aunt is actually in her carriage.

[*Exeunt BRIGHTLY and THORNHILL.*

Sir Cam. (alone). Preparing to depart!—No notice given!—The phrenologist too disappeared! Yes, yes; there is some compact in all this.—His sudden illness too, and all those affected grimaces.—Can he have persuaded her, that some terrible propensities are revealed on the surface of my pericranium; and can she be such a fool as to believe him?—Ay, ay; a rich heiress has fallen into the hands of a cunning knave by a weaker device ere now.—I must not linger here: I'll get to the bottom of this villany before I rest.—O, this world of knaves and fools! why was my lot cast in it?—But, being so cast, shall I become quietly the prey of cunning and deceit? May I not use similar weapons in self-defence?—No, no! let her go: fortune was not my object; and if she is fool enough to believe him, she is worthy of such a mate.—Yet it makes me distracted. Oh, this perversity of mind! She is fickle, she is foolish, she is fanciful, she is capricious, and her very faults endear her to my unaccountable feelings.—He shall not have her.—His filthy fingers sprawling over my head for such a villainous purpose: it is abominable.—If deceit will not serve me, force shall.

Enter Housekeeper, with a bundle in her hand.

What brings you here, Marmalade?

House. La, sir! nothing bad, I'm sure. If she waits at the back garden gate, it is for no bad purpose, I'm sure.

Sir Cam. Who waits there? Tell me plainly, and in few words.

House. Lord a' mercy! why should I make many words about it? She has done it very badly, and I don't care who knows what a miserable mantua-maker she is.

Sir Cam. Mantua-maker! What does all this nonsense mean?

House. It is nonsense, for sartain; and I says to her, says I, "What does it signify making the gown too long, only for to save the cutting of the stuff, when I cannot take one step before me, without trampling it in the dirt?"

Sir Cam. Is the gown here?

House. Yes, Sir Cameron; and she is waiting at the back gate to take it to be altered.

Sir Cam. Ha! let me see it.

House. (taking a gown from the bundle). I hope you like the colour, sir: it is gay, but genteel. I never buys nothing that is vulgar.

Sir Cam. Why should you, Marmalade? People only buy what they want.—And it is too long for you?

House. (shaking it out). A mort too long. The giantess that beats the drum at Middleton fair might wear it and be fitted.

Sir Cam. Give it to me.

House. To you, Sir Cameron!

Sir Cam. Ask no questions. The gown is mine: carry it back to your own room, and I'll follow you immediately. (*Exit housekeeper.*) Yes, this will do; she will provide me with shawl and bonnet besides, and I'll be a match for this cursed philosopher. [*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

A parlour in the house of LATITIA, and the glass door of a small conservatory seen at one side, with a curtain drawn behind it.

Enter FLOUNCE, who goes to the door, which she opens in silence, giving a key to somebody in the inside.

Flounce (alone). It was well I found the coast clear, and have given him the key: he may now keep concealed, or come out as he pleases.

Enter LATITIA.

Lat. What wast thou doing in the conservatory? Hast thou left any odd matters there?—But I have changed my mind again, and shall not set off till the evening; so you need not be in a hurry.

Flounce. I never am, ma'am; for the more I hurry myself to obey your directions, the surer it always proves to be of no use.

Lat. Thou art rather sharp, methinks: something

has ruffled thee. What strange awkward rantipole was that I saw thee speaking to a few minutes since in the lane ?

Flounce. She did not tell me her name, ma'am ; and I had too little curiosity to ask it. I never speaks when there is no reason for it.

Lat. A good rule, *Flounce*, which thou observest, with some exceptions. (*Looking off the stage.*) But look yonder, — a man coming in a strange stealing manner along the passage : what brings him here ?

Flounce (turning round and looking). No good, I'm sure ; for it is *Doctor Crany* : I know him by his legs.

Enter DR. CRANY, with his shoulders wrapt in a cloak, and holding his hat before his face.

Lat. Is it possible, my good sir ? I thought you were ere now many miles hence, — that you considered your life as in danger.

Dr. Crany. I will account for my being here ; but to your ears alone can I explain it.

Lat. (after motioning to FLOUNCE, who goes off). And now, sir, if you please.

Dr. Crany. That I considered my life in danger is true. Ay, too truly in danger from the offence I must have given to a man with such destructive propensities.

Lat. And why did you venture nevertheless to remain ?

Dr. Crany. Ah, dearest *Miss Vane* ! can you ask that question ? do not my eyes — my fond languishing eyes answer it plainly, and tell you that I could not think of saving my own life when the safety of one whom I love far better than myself is concerned.

Lat. You astonish me.

Dr. Crany. Let me entreat you to remain no longer in the neighbourhood of such a dangerous person. I tremble to think of it.

Lat. What can I do ?

Dr. Crany. Fly with me this very night. Fly with a man who loves, who adores you, whose whole life shall be devoted to your happiness.

[*Kneels at her feet.*

Lat. (recoiling from him indignantly). Off, base deceiver ! you have betrayed yourself ; and thank heaven you have ! I see your purpose now : you have slandered a worthy gentleman for your own selfish ends.

Dr. Crany. Slandered, madam ! do you believe that the organs of murder are not really on his head ?

Lat. No, sir ; neither that nor any bad thing do I believe of him.

Dr. Crany. Have patience for a moment : I cannot suffer you to run upon your own destruction. I implore — I beseech you for your own safety ! my chaise is at the gate : if the present opportunity is neglected — (*catching hold of her gown.*)

Lat. Unhand me ; let me go, or I will alarm the house, and bring some one to my assistance.

[*SIR CAMERON KUNLIFFE, bursting from the conservatory in woman's dress, shows himself, but hesitates to advance.*

Lat. O come, come, good madam, come nearer.

Dr. Crany (turning round and perceiving SIR CAMERON). Good madam ! and what is your pleasure here, good madam ?

Sir Cam. (in a feigned voice). My pleasure is that you release that lady's hand from your unworthy hold : touch but the tip of her finger or the hem of her garment, if you dare ; I will not permit the smallest breach of decorum in my presence.

Dr. Crany. You are a lady of an extreme delicacy, undoubtedly.

Sir Cam. Yes, sir, of a delicacy which must not be offended.

Dr. Crany. I plainly perceive, madam, that yours is entirely of that description. I have the honour to obey your commands. (*Stepping backward and bowing low.*)

Sir Cam. (advancing on him with a deep, awkward curtsey). You are extremely polite, sir ; I have the honour to thank you for your ready obedience.

Dr. Crany (stepping farther back and bowing as before). My obedience to you, madam, expresses my deference to the sex of which you are the worthy representative.

Sir Cam. (advancing as the other retreats, and curtseying again). Say rather, that part of the sex to which gallants like yourself pay their readiest obedience.

Dr. Crany (still retreating). As you please, madam, and I wish you good day.

Sir Cam. No, no, sir, your company is too agreeable ; I will not part with it so soon. (*Taking hold of his collar, and dragging him back to the front of the stage.*)

Dr. Crany. Devil take her ! she has the grasp and the power of a moss-trooper.

Enter BRIGHTLY.

Brightly. What uncouth sight is here ; is there masquerading in the house ?

Lat. Indeed, there is some appearance of it. This lady has come unexpectedly, and has done me unspeakable service ; for which I know not how to thank her enough.

Brightly. But she steals away and avoids your acknowledgments.

Lat. My good madam, you will not leave me so soon.

Sir Cam. Permit me to go out to the open air ; I am faint and languid.

Brightly. You had better put off your head-gear ; that large bonnet, with so much hooding and muffling under it, would exclude the free air from your face, though you were on the top of Mount

Ararat. Permit me to assist in removing it. (SIR CAMERON puts out his hand to prevent BRIGHTLY, and says something indistinctly.) You speak with such a soft, pretty voice, lady, that I don't know one word you say.

Lat. (aside to BRIGHTLY). She is observant of forms, and will not have a gentleman's assistance. (Aloud to SIR CAMERON.) Let me take off your bonnet, if I can reach it. (SIR CAMERON stoops, and she removes the bonnet.) And this handkerchief, too (takes off a handkerchief), and a great cap besides. What's under all this!

Sir Cam. (calling out in his own voice after DR. CRANY, who is about to steal away). Look to Dr. Crany there, don't let him steal off.

Omnes. Sir Cameron,—Sir Cameron disguised! Brightly (to SIR CAMERON). How had you patience to endure all these trammels?

Sir Cam. I have been too fortunate under them to feel impatient, but help me, an thou wilt, to get rid of them now. (Putting off his female attire, assisted by BRIGHTLY.) But where is the doctor? don't let him steal off.

Dr. Crany (advancing). No, sir; you need have no apprehension that I shall steal off, as you are pleased to term it. I am too bold in my conscious innocence, and in the principles of an incomparable science, to shrink from defending both. Have I not already given proofs of its truth and usefulness in the discovery I have made of the talents of that unmanageable boy?—who may now be cultivated, from a mere vacant idler, into one of the deepest philosophers of the age.

Enter THORNHILL.

Brightly. Here comes his tutor, very opportunely, to corroborate your assertions, Dr. Crany. (To THORNHILL.) And pray what report have you to make of the wonderful capacity of your pupil?

Thorn. I have little to say on that subject.

[A book is thrown after him from without.

Brightly. And even that little need not be said. (Picking up the book.) This dishonoured Euclid tells the tale plainly enough.

Enter LAWRY (chased by FLOUNCE).

Flounce. Come away to your room, Master Lawry: O fy, fy! I beg pardon, madam, for coming after him, but he gets worse and worse than ever, since that heathenish book there was put into his hands.

Dr. Crany. I cannot suffer this defamation. Come here, young sir, and I will show the organs of mathematics on your head of a most prominent and promising size. (To FLOUNCE.) Pray make him stand still one moment, if you please. (FLOUNCE takes hold of LAWRY, while the doctor parts his hair with his fingers, and shows a lump.) There, gentle-

men, you see it with your own eyes; a more superb organ never met the sight or the touch of a phrenologist.

Flounce. Lord help you, doctor! that is the lump that came but the other day, after a blow from the bat-ball: two pennyworth of the oil of rosemary would send it away in no time at all.

Dr. Crany. Well, well; there is no contending with prejudice, and the sooner I take my leave the better;—if I am not to be considered as under constraint. (Bowing affectedly to SIR CAMERON.)

Sir Cam. You have my good leave now, learned sir, to go where you please.

Brightly (to DR. CRANY as he retires). But won't you wait for a guard of protection, good doctor, being in the neighbourhood of so tremendous an enemy?

[Exit DR. CRANY, bowing on either hand as he retires.

Lat. Nay, Mr. Brightly, let him off peaceably with no more taunts: I believe he has great faith in his art, though he abuses it for his own base purposes. I thank you all: to you, Mr. Thornhill, I am greatly obliged. And what shall I do now with this unruly boy? Why was I left guardian to such a creature?

Lawry. Never trouble your head about me, aunt; I can handle a rope and climb to the mast-head, and look over a hundred leagues of ocean, and visit far-off shores, as well as any boy.

Lat. (kissing him). My dear creature, my dear boy! that were a hard life for thee; thou art too good for this.

Lawry. Not a whit, not a whit! Am I too good for what Lord Nelson has done before me?

[Exit skipping and bounding lightly.

Lat. And now, credulous dupe as I have been, will you pardon me, Sir Cameron?

Brightly (preventing SIR CAMERON from speaking). Allow me to answer for you, Kunliffe, or you will mar your present advantage. (To MISS VANE.) You cannot surely expect, my dear lady, to be let off with impunity. Say your own self what amends he ought to have: pronounce your own punishment, and it shall be immediately inflicted.

Lat. How provoking you are, Mr. Brightly! how can I pronounce or think of any thing immediately? Do you determine it.

Brightly. You give me leave to do so, on the spot, then?

Lat. O no, no! not immediately.

Brightly. I beg pardon, madam, immediately is a position you dislike: I shall take time to consider; and, at your tea-table, in the evening, it shall be pronounced.

Sir Cam. Round which, I presume, we are all invited to assemble.

Lat. Most assuredly; I request all present to do me that honour. Excuse me now; I must retire:

the thoughts of my own folly make me quite bewildered and unwell.

[*Exit.*]

Brightly. She must have a bad time of it, I think, if she sicken on every new proof of her folly. (*Half aside to THORNHILL.*)

Sir Cam. (overhearing and turning to him sharply). The caustic of thy tongue is intolerable: her worst fault is indecision; and if she were wiser than she is, who would like her the better for it?

Brightly. Not you, I can plainly perceive. (*Aside to THORNHILL, as SIR CAMERON hurries off.*) Those words augur well, methinks, for my paddock.

Thorn. Don't bespeak your fruit trees, however, till you have won it. But let us follow him and learn all that happened while he was under that absurd metamorphosis.

Brightly. Ay, let us do so; I have a great curiosity to know every thing about it. Who would have thought of his dignity compromised under a mantua and petticoat?

[*Exeunt after SIR CAMERON.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I

A small parlour in the house of LATITIA. Enter EMMA, who walks about thoughtfully; presently enter FRANKLIN by another door.

Frank. How fortunate I am to find you here!

Emma. How so? you seem agitated.

Frank. I have been skulking about the premises for a chance of your coming into the garden, that I might see you before I set off.

Emma. Set off! where are you going?

Frank. Any where, for I cannot stay longer here.

Emma. What is the matter? Cannot stay?

Frank. I cannot stay a moment longer in Sir Cameron's house, and I don't like to go to another, which might give him pain. He has got a strange crotchet into his head about some key or other, and I don't know what besides, and he has spoken to me very unkindly.

Emma. I am sorry for it. But it will soon pass away. Those who are naturally suspicious are often unkind, and repent it afterwards.

Frank. And why should I linger here, only to strengthen what is but too strong already—an adversary, which for your sake, dearest Emma, as well as my own, ought to be kept in check. Blessings on you, my sweet and generous friend! Only say that I may again visit you when you come to town with your aunt, and I will take my leave as cheerily as I may.

Emma. Surely you won't go now, when we are all assembling round my aunt's tea-table, on matters of great importance, and you are one of the invited,

you know. Be as testy with Sir Cameron as you please, but surely she deserves more courtesy at your hands.

Frank. And shall have it too, if it be a courtesy which she will be pleased with, and her little niece does not forbid. I think I hear them assembling; they are merry without. Poh, poh! I care not a fig for Sir Cameron.

Emma. You will join us by-and-bye; I must go now to be useful.

Frank. And I'll be useful too. I'll pour out the tea for you, Emma. That little delicate hand has not strength enough to lift a heavy teapot over all the circle of cups and saucers that wait for the fragrant stream from its bountiful spout. Care for Sir Cameron! No; I care for nobody now.

Emma. You will join us by-and-bye, then?

Frank. Nay, I will go with you now, and lead you in boldly before them all. [*Offering his arm.*]

Emma. You are bold, of a sudden.

Frank. I am bold or timid at any time, as the influence of my little governess inspires.

[*Exeunt, and as they go off, FLOUNCE enters by the opposite side with a great nosegay of flowers in her hand, and stands gazing after them, before she speaks.*]

Flounce. Ay, poor young things! you must have patience: matrimony is a very pretty thing, but it will not knock at your door at this bout.

Enter Butler, stealing behind her.

Butler. And at whose door will it knock at this bout?

Flounce. What is that to you, Mr. Long-ears; you may guess.

Butler. One, mayhap, at whose door it will not have to wait: ready entrance to the long expected may be depended upon.

Flounce. Long expected?

Butler. Yes; and how long, Mrs. Flounce? Some ten or fifteen years, or thereabouts?

Flounce. Say fifteen, an you will; what is that to my mistress?

Butler. O, it is your mistress you are thinking of.

Flounce. And who was it you were thinking of, I should be glad to know?

Butler. Not so very glad, neither, were I to answer "of the mistress's maid." Well, well; don't look so grave. It is your mistress's door, then, that matrimony is now knocking at; but why should you be so pert upon it?

Flounce. I am forgetting my flowers.

Butler. I'll arrange them for you, and carry them to the drawing-room presently. In the mean time, tell me why you are so pert upon this marriage: it won't mend the profits of your place. (*Taking the nosegay from her, and arranging them in a pot on a side-table while she speaks.*)

Flounce. No; but it may prevent my profits from being reduced. If she would remain as she is, with her lovers, and her confidants, and her flatterers, and her concerts, and her parties, and all proper suitable things that a rich lady ought to have, I should ask no better; but if she takes it into her head that a lady of thirty should give up gay dressing, and apply to her learning, and become a book-fancier, and a blue-stocking virtuoso, what's to become of my perquisites? It would make your hair stand on end, to hear all the nonsense I have heard about them these books.

Butler. My hair makes no stirring at all when nonsense is spoken. It would have a restless time of it else in this family; so pray tell me.

Flounce. And, will you believe it—whole shelves filled with great vollums; and some of them—fiend take them!—with as much silk, gold, and vellum on their backs as would buy a gentlewoman a good gown.

Butler. That will take nothing away from you, will it?

Flounce. The man's an ass altogether! If my lady gives twelve guineas for the binding of an album, as they call it, and hundreds for prints, and old stones and rubbish, and rattle-traps beside, what good will that do to me? when, I dare say, she'll scrub off her wardrobe, and go about at last, as my Lady Blackletter does, in a gown that our curate's wife would scarcely put on when she goes visiting amongst all the poor sickly bodies of the parish. I knows very well how it would be; so I hope marriage is now really at hand, to save us from worse.

Butler. I hope so, too, Mrs. Flounce; for I fear the fine books might injure the cellar as well as the wardrobe.

Flounce. O never fear that; she would have poets and ancient philosophers coming about her in plenty, and they like a good dinner and good wine as well as any body; much better than lovers do, I trow. But we must gossip no longer here; you have set out the flowers beautifully; so take them to the drawing-room directly.

[*Exeunt severally, butler carrying the flowers.*]

SCENE III.

A narrow passage running along the front of the stage.

Enter footman and a boy, crossing and jostling one another.

Footman. Stupid oaf! what makes you run so?

Boy. The gentles folks want more bread and butter.

Footman. Deuce choke them! is all that was provided for them done already? and Master

Lawry gone to bed too. I hope they want nothing else?

Boy. Oh, but they do! they wants more cream and more cups and saucers.

Footman. The devil they do! they will never have done wanting. (*Bell rings.*) And they are as impatient as the Grand Turk; make haste, you oaf!

[*Giving boy a kick as they hurry off and exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The scene opens, and discovers SIR CAMERON KUNLIFFE, BRIGHTLY, THORNHILL, LATITIA, EMMA, and FRANKLIN beside her, occasionally employed in pouring out tea, &c., seated round a table, while laughing and talking is heard as the scene opens.

Sir Cam. Ha, ha, ha! and all that passes upon you, my good Thornhill, for disinterested generosity.

Thorn. And what should it pass for?

Sir Cam. Some expectation of a legacy, perhaps, from that old Lady Bountiful of the neighbourhood, who would like to enrich such an amiable philanthropist.

Thorn. But that old lady was dead, Kunliffe.

Sir Cam. O what a loss to the toppers at the Cat and Bagpipes! for they will now be obliged to support their own families and drink less.

Emma. Don't be so hard-hearted, Sir Cameron.

Brightly. You must make some allowance for one who holds a justice-court every Friday, and has all the misdoings of the parish brought before him.

Thorn. Where, thanks to his natural gift of suspectiveness, he detects as much knavery, and dispenses as prompt justice, as the sage governor of Barataria.

Emma. And there is a droll look on his face at this moment, as if some curious case had been lately before him.

Lat. Is it so, Sir Cameron? Do tell us about it.

Sir Cam. As it proves the ingenuity of your sex and the simplicity of ours, you shall have it. A country girl appeared in court the other day, who would oblige the booby son of a small farmer to marry her, because, on his account, she had refused the addresses of a very advantageous match.

Emma. And how did she prove that?

Sir Cam. By calling upon the booby to declare that he had listened at the window of an old malt-house, and heard the shrill voice of his mistress in earnest discourse within with a gruff-voiced man, whose offers of marriage she refused very saucily, on account of her attachment to himself, poor simpleton.

Brightly. And whether do you call him simpleton,

for believing his own ears, or for giving evidence against himself?

Sir Cam. For the first assuredly. What one believes as a fool, one is bound to declare as an honest man. And he would have smarted for his honesty, too, had it not been for the accidental intrusion of a plough-boy, who at the moment slipt softly into the said malt-house, and discovered, that though two voices had issued from the house, there was but one person within.

Brightly. Clever hussy! she deserved a husband for the trick.

Sir Cam. And she should have had one suited to her merits could I have transferred to her a smart-looking fellow, who had eloped with the prettiest girl in the parish, on the evening of her wedding-day, just to take her out of his friend the bridegroom's hands, as he gallantly stated it.

Lat. I think he was mated very suitably with the woman he eloped with. The bridegroom was well quit of her; she was not worth contending for.

Sir Cam. Yes; but it was not for her they contended. No, truly; the matter to be decided was, whether the man who had lost the bride, or the man who had gained her, should pay the expenses of the wedding dinner.

Lat. Oh, the worldly creatures!

Emma. But to return to the old subject of fashions, Mr. Brightly, which was interrupted by Mr. Thornhill's admiration of his friend's liberality.

Brightly. Well, then, I ventured to say something, didn't I, against the short bunchy skirts and wide bladder-sleeves of the present belles, who seem to make a mock of their grandmothers for aiming to appear tall and slender.

Emma. But their heads are dressed more simply, and their characters are altogether more unaffected and natural and unpretending.

Brightly. Not a jot; such a woman as four score years ago would have been seen at a public sale with a wide flounced farthingale and a lapdog under her arm, bidding for a China mandarin, is now to be met with at a morning lecture, with pencil and note-book in hand, losing two words of the learned professor's discourse for every one she writes down.

Lat. Nay, fie upon you for a discourteous knight! Do you come here on the summons of a lady to attend her tea-table, for the express purpose of casting ridicule on the whole sex?

Brightly. I thank you, Miss Vane, for reminding me of the purpose which brought me here; and the more so, that it is to hold judgment on yourself. But it cannot be done in this informal lazy manner; let everybody stand round me, that I may open the proceedings with official decorum.

[*They all rise from the tea-table and arrange themselves on the front of the stage.*]

"LATITIA VANE, Spinster, is called for."

Lat. Present in the court.

Brightly. You comere before me, charged with high crimes and misdemeanours committed against the king's liege subject, Sir Cameron Kunitiffe, Baronet, tending to the great injury of his character, to the impeding his usefulness in the country, and to the destroying of his influence in social society.

Lat. (*holding up her hands*). What a wicked creature I must be! But how do you make it to appear against me, my lord justice?

Brightly. It is proved against the defendant, that on the 10th day of September of the present year, she sent for a certain phrenologist to her house, pretending to know the dispositions of men by certain marks on the surfaces of their pericraniums, and did wittingly and with malice prepense persuade the said Sir Cameron to submit his head to be examined by the said phrenologist.

Lat. Wittingly, but not maliciously: had not foolishly been a better word?

Emma. Surely you will change the word so far in favour of the defendant.

Brightly. Not a bit: she wittingly entreated him to run the risk, knowing that there was risk, of losing that which, we are told by high authority, is better than gold. Who will live in amity and confidence with one who is scientifically proved to be predisposed to deeds of cruelty and destruction? Who will be connected with such a one? who will give his daughter in marriage to such a one? who will accept of such a predisposed ruffian for her husband?

Lat. But it is all set right now, and has no evil consequences.

Brightly. I beg your pardon, lady: an evil report and its refutation are no fair match for one another. The first runs far a-field with the pace of a race-horse, the second follows after like a poor cudgelled donkey, and never clears a fourth part of the ground.

Emma. You must own, my dear aunt, that this makes against you. I fear you will be obliged to stand in the church porch, with a sheet about you, for defamation.

Sir Cam. That would spread evil report the further.

Brightly. The prosecutor speaks reason; that would be no compensation at all for the injury, and he will not receive it as such.

Lat. What can be done, then, Mr. Justice?

Brightly. When the character of a bachelor is so injured by any woman, that he is, or may be, prevented from finding a suitable mate to solace his days, she is bound—in honour bound—to marry him herself.

Thorn. A reparation, I believe, which they are generally willing to make: I beg pardon; I mean, in most cases.

Lat. O dear, dear! how wide you stray from the purpose!

Brightly. That is as it may afterwards appear, lady.

Thorn. He has a sinister intention, Miss Vane.

Brightly. Keep silence in court, I say.—The sinister intention is on his side, who, for his own interest, would prevent you from being just. But I would not press the matter upon you too severely; the reparation shall be left to your own discretion; but you must decide upon what it is to be, before the court break up.

Lat. Decide so soon! Will not to-morrow do, or the day after to-morrow, or the day after that?

Brightly. No, neither to-morrow nor any following morrow will do; you must pronounce your own sentence before the court break up.

Lat. (*going about in a bewildered manner.*) O dear! what can I do? what can I say? how shall I decide?

Brightly. Shall I decide for you, madam?

Lat. Do, do! good *Brightly*, and don't tease me any more.

Brightly. And do you promise to abide by my judgment?

Lat. I do promise: and you will be merciful.

Brightly. Well, then, be it known to all present, that inasmuch as you have nefariously injured the worthy baronet aforesaid, and it is your own indecision that prevents you from making him just reparation for the same, I adjudge that you, from this very time (*looking at his watch*), shall remain under his command for five minutes and a half, bound afterwards faithfully to fulfil what in this given time he shall decree.

Lat. Let it be so; five minutes will soon be over, and he will be merciful.

Sir Cam. I fear you will not think so, madam; for I command you to marry me to-morrow morning, before eleven of the clock.

Lat. O, shocking haste and precipitation! Not even a few months allowed to prepare my wedding-clothes!

Sir Cam. Not one hour beyond what I have said.

Lat. How peremptory you are!

Emma. The best quality, my dear aunt, that your husband can have to match with your indecision.

Lat. What! are you against me, child? It is not for your interest.

Emma. It is for my interest if it be for yours; and let me put this hand, which has always been kind to me, into a stronger hand, that will bear the rule over it in kindness. (*Putting the hand of LATITIA into that of SIR CAMERON, who receives it with gallant respect.*)

Sir Cam. Thanks, gentle *Emma*; to find a friend in thee is more than I expected.

Emma. Ah, *Sir Cameron*! but you should have expected it.

Thorn. If he could, without proof, have supposed

any one to be good, it should have been this young lady.

Brightly. But he is too wise for that.

Sir Cam. Spare me, spare me; do not mar my present happiness by making me feel how little I deserve it.

Frank. (*advancing from the rear of SIR CAMERON.*) And may I be permitted to offer, perhaps, unexpected congratulations?

Sir Cam. Yes, thou mayest, and also advise and devise with my solicitor as much as thou wilt. That matter shall be no longer an annoyance to me.

Frank. What matter can you possibly allude to?

Sir Cam. O! you are quite ignorant of a certain misworded testament, the defects of which, by the management of a clever attorney, might be turned to thine own advantage: thou pleadest ignorant, very ignorant of all this.

Brightly. Ha, ha, ha! he will be an impudent fellow indeed if he, before *my* face, plead ignorant of that which he told me without reserve some three or four years ago.

Sir Cam. Is it possible? did *Hardy* betray me then? (*To FRANKLIN.*)

Frank. No; but his clerk employed to copy the deed repeated to me soon after the very passage, word for word.

Sir Cam. And thou hast known it all this while, and never sought to take advantage of it till lately?

Frank. And you have known me all this while, nay, from my childhood, *Sir Cameron*, and can yet suppose that I should wish to wrest from you by law what natural justice and the intentions of the testator fairly bestow upon you.

Sir Cam. (*covering his face with his hands.*) Say whatever you please to me: I am humbled to the dust; my infirmity is crime.

Brightly. Since you invite us to say whatever we please, I say that your crime has been punished already; for you have been oftener cheated and duped by your own supposed knowledge and your distrust of mankind, than the veriest flaxen-headed simpleton in the parish.

Sir Cam. Hold, hold, *Brightly*; I will not succumb to thee so meekly. If you have any candour, you must acknowledge I had cause for suspicion. Any man would have been startled at the disappearance of that key after the mischievous urchin had been so strangely secreted in my library.

Brightly. Yes, a very strong circumstance, indeed, to justify all this disturbance. Did not you give me a key to let myself out by the small gate of your shrubbery?

Sir Cam. And what has that to do with it?

Brightly. It would not open the shrubbery-gate, and I went round another way. (*Giving him a key.*) But, perhaps, it might have opened your strong box. I should have returned it to you sooner, had I not

learned from your locksmith, that he had already changed the lock of that most secret repository.

Sir Cam. The very key, I must, with confusion, acknowledge. Is it possible that I should have taken the wrong key from that corner, and that having given a key to you should have entirely escaped my memory?

Brightly. Every thing is possible, when the imagination of a suspicious man is concerned.

Sir Cam. I am beaten to the ground! I am lower in my own opinion than my worst enemy would have placed me, or even (*pointing to BRIGHTLY*) this good-natured friend. — Dear Latitia, I am sensible of my infirmity; I am incapable of being a good husband to any woman: and though it has long been my ambition to be yours, I remit your engagement and restore you to your liberty.

Brightly (eagerly). No, no, no! she is too generous to desert you in your hour of humiliation.

Thorn. Brightly, you are acting unfairly. You have no right to suggest to the lady what she ought to do.

Brightly. I don't act unfairly: we were each left at liberty to influence.

Lat. What is the meaning of this altercation?

Brightly. I care not for your paddock.

Thorn. Nor I for your picture; but let each of them be lost or won fairly.

Lat. What, in the name of wonder, are they disputing about? (*To SIR CAMERON.*)

Sir Cam. There is a bet in the case, I dare say.

Brightly (to SIR CAMERON). And if there be, your searching fancy will find it out.

Sir Cam. It concerns my marriage with Miss Vane; tricky fellows! I wish we could contrive to make you both lose.

Thorn. That is impossible; but at least let us wait till it be absolutely decided. The lady may accept her proffered liberty, or may change her mind, before eleven o'clock to-morrow morning.

Lat. Ay, now is my turn to have my infirmity exposed. But it only convinces me that I am a more suitable match for Sir Cameron, who in his state of humiliation, as he calls it, will learn to have patience with me; and I restore to him the hand he has released.

Brightly. Bravo! they are an equal match, and a happy union may it prove!

Sir Cam. (to FRANKLIN). Come hither, cousin. You look less happy than I could wish; and happy as I now am, I wish to make myself a little happier. I have said that the thoughts of that bungled deed shall annoy me no more. I cannot part with that small estate upon which my mansion is placed, with its park and ancient oaks around it. — But the full value of the whole you shall receive from me, as soon as proper deeds of conveyance, in which there shall be no mistakes, can be made out.

Frank. It is too much, cousin; I cannot—I cannot receive it.

Sir Cam. Fie upon thee, man! hast thou an infirmity, too,—the infirmity of pride? It will promote my happiness: and it may enable thee, as soon as thou art in the receipt of ninety pounds a-year from thy profession, to promote thine own, if thou canst prevail upon some good girl to unite her fate to thine. Dost thou wot of such a one? perhaps thou dost.

Thorn. (aside, eyeing FRANKLIN and EMMA anxiously). Now is the critical moment to strengthen my hopes or my fear.

[*FRANKLIN approaches EMMA timidly, who motions him away, and he obeys, while THORNHILL, with his face brightening up, goes close to her on the other side.*

Thorn. (aside). I see how it is, charming Emma; and may it not encourage me to hope that the engaging child from whose innocent head I cut off this fair curl (*taking from his breast a paper*) some ten years ago, will now, in her womanhood, show me some favour?

Brightly (overhearing him). You have a very soft voice, Thornhill, but my ears are quick. What is the meaning of these gentle approaches?

Emma (to THORNHILL). Can my memory be so treacherous? Have we ever met before last spring, when I saw you in Brook Street?

Thorn. Yes, gentle creature, I saw you at your uncle's in Cheshire, where you were my harmless playfellow, and I became, by your own consent, possessed of this cherished token (*turning to FRANKLIN, who goes up to him sternly*), which shall be taken from me only with my life.

Brightly. Thornhill, thou art making a fool of thyself. The pretty child who was thy playfellow, and on whose head that curl once grew, bears indeed the same name with this lady, is her cousin, and has a strong resemblance to her, but is, I believe, at this moment in Rutlandshire, collecting pretty poesies for her album. Send her one of thy sonnets, and thou wilt stand in as great favour with her as ever.

Thorn. Why did you not tell me this before?

Brightly. How should I divine all the romantic fancies of thy brain?

Sir Cam. I think his patience in giving that restless urchin lessons from Euclid, might have led you pretty near the truth.

Brightly. To be sure it might have done so, had Nature endowed me with the organ of suspectiveness.

Sir Cam. Say no more upon that subject, I beseech you. Any blackguard may henceforth pull my watch from its pocket, and I will only suppose that he wants, as the crowd presses round, to see what it is o'clock, poor youth!

Lat. And I will be so constant to my purpose, that the most methodical lady of a parish district may make an appointment with me, and be sure of my being at her door, as her household clock gives

warning for the hour. I will not even change the colour of a scarf or a top-knot, having once said to my milliner, "It shall be this."

Brightly. But how long will it be ere you have said so, when all the other colours of the rainbow are laid in array before you?

Lat. No more sarcastic insinuations! Sir Cameron and I will endeavour to reform; and a good beginning is equal to half the task, when there are kind friends to give encouragement.

[*The curtain drops.*]

END OF THE MISCELLANEOUS PLAYS.

MISCELLANEOUS POETRY.

METRICAL LEGENDS.

PREFACE.

IN calling the following pieces Metrical Legends, I do not use the term as denoting fictitious stories, but as chronicles or memorials. The acts of great men, as related in history, are so blended with the events of the times in which they lived, and with the acts of their contemporaries, that it is difficult for a great proportion of readers to form, at the conclusion of the history, a distinct idea of all they have really performed: and even of those who might do so without difficulty, how few bestow their leisure in fairly considering those claims of the great and the good to their respect and admiration. Biography, where sources of information regarding the private character and habits of the individual remain, has made amends for this unavoidable defect in history, and is a most instructive and interesting study. Yet the minute detail of the character too often does the same injury to the departed great, which a familiar acquaintance still oftener does to the living; for a lengthened, unrelieved account is very unfavourable to that rousing and generous admiration which the more simple and distant view of heroic worth is fitted to inspire;—an impulse most healthful and invigorating to the soul.

Romance, in verse and in prose, has, and often successfully, attempted to supply those deficiencies, by adding abundance of fictitious circumstances to the traces of history and biography—a task pleasing to the writer and the reader. But in her zeal to display the abstract perfections of a hero, she has not rested satisfied with additions; she has boldly and unwarrantably made use of absolute contradictions to those traces, even when generally known and well authenticated. This is the greatest injury to the mighty dead. It is throwing over the venerated form of a majestic man, a gauzy veil, on which is delineated the fanciful figure of an angel. If time has removed that form to such a distance, that a faint outline only can be perceived, let us still behold the outline unshaded and unchanged. “Disturb not the ashes of the dead,” is a sentiment

acknowledged and obeyed by every feeling mind; but to disturb those memorials of worth—those shadowings of the soul—what may be called their intellectual remains, is by far the greater sacrifice.

My reader must not, however, suppose that I would debar romance from the use of every real name, and oblige her to people her stories entirely with beings fictitious both in name and character. This would be too rigid. Where history is so obscure or remote, and we know little of a hero but his name, the romance writer may seize it as lawful spoil; for he cannot thereby confuse our ideas of truth and falsehood, or change and deform what has no form. It is only when a character known, though imperfectly, is wrested from the events with which it was really connected, and overlaid at the same time with fanciful attributes, that this can be justly complained of.

Having this view of the subject in my mind, and a great desire, notwithstanding, to pay some tribute to the memory of a few characters, for whom I felt a peculiar admiration and respect, I have ventured upon what may be considered, in some degree, as a new attempt,—to give a short descriptive chronicle of those noble beings, whose existence has honoured human nature and benefited mankind.

In relating a true story, though we do not add any events or material circumstances to it, and abstain from attributing any motives for action, which have not been credibly reported, or may not be fairly inferred, yet, how often do we spontaneously, almost unwittingly, add description similar to what we know must have belonged to the actors and scenery of our story! Our story, for instance, says, “that a man, travelling at night through a wild forest, was attacked by a band of robbers.” Our story-teller adds, “that the night was dark as pitch, scarcely a star to be seen twinkling between the drifted clouds; that the blast shook the trees, and howled dismally around him.” Our story says, “that hearing the sound of approaching steps, he went behind a tree to wait till the robbers should pass, but, unfortunately stumbling, the noise of his

fall betrayed him, and he was seized upon, wounded, and stripped of every thing he possessed." Our story-teller adds (particularly if the subject of the story is known to be of a timid spirit), "that their footsteps sounded along the hollow ground like the trampling of a host; that he stopped and listened with fearful anxiety; that, on their nearer approach, voices were mingled with the sound, like the hoarse deep accents of a murderer; that he trembled with fear; that, in quitting the path, every black stump or bush seemed to him a man in armour; that his limbs shook so violently, he could not raise his feet sufficiently to disentangle them from the fern and long grass which impeded him," &c. Or our story may say, "that the daughter of a proud chief stole from his castle on a summer morning, and joined her expecting lover in a neighbouring wood." The story-teller says, "she opened the door of her chamber with a beating heart, listened anxiously lest any one should be a-stir in the family; that the sun shone softly through the ruddy air, on the fresh green boughs and dewy-webbed plants as she passed, and that she sighed to think she might never return to the haunts of her childhood any more." The story says, "she fled with him on horseback;" and the story-teller cannot well say less than, "that he set her on a beautiful steed, which stood ready caparisoned under the trees; that the voice of her lover gave her courage; that they passed over the silent country, in which not even a peasant was to be seen at his early labour, with the swiftness of an arrow, and every stream they crossed gave them confidence of escaping pursuit," &c. And thus our story-teller goes on, being present in imagination to every thing he relates, and describing the feelings, sounds, and appearances which he conceives must naturally have accompanied the different events of his story; almost, as I said before, without being aware that he is taking so much of what he relates entirely for granted.

In imitation then of this human propensity, from which we derive so much pleasure, though mischievous, when not indulged with charity and moderation, I have written the following Metrical Legends, describing such scenes as truly belong to my story, with occasionally the feelings, figures, and gestures of those whose actions they relate, and also assigning their motives of action, as they may naturally be supposed to have existed.

The events they record are taken from sources sufficiently authentic; and where any thing has been reasonably questioned, I give some notice of the doubt. I have endeavoured to give them with the brief simplicity of a chronicle, though frequently stopping in my course, where occasion for reflection or remark naturally offered itself, or proceeding more slowly, when objects, capable of interesting or pleasing description, tempted me to linger. Though my great desire has been to display such portraiture

of real worth and noble heroism, as might awaken high and generous feelings in a youthful mind; yet I have not, as far as I know, imputed to my heroes motives or sentiments beyond what their noble deeds do fairly warrant. I have made each Legend short enough to be read in one moderate sitting, that the impression might be undivided, and that the weariness of a story, not varied or enriched by minuter circumstances, might be, if possible, avoided.—It has, in short, been my aim to produce sentimental and descriptive memorials of exalted worth.

The manner of the rhyme and versification I have in some degree borrowed from my great contemporary Sir Walter Scott; following, in this respect, the example of many of the most popular poets of the present day. Let it not, however, be supposed, that I presume to believe myself a successful borrower. We often stretch out our hand for one thing, and catch another; and if, instead of the easy, light, rich, and fanciful variety of his rhyme and measure, the reader should perceive that I have, unfortunately, found others of a far different character, I ought not to be greatly surprised or offended. But, indeed, I have been almost forced to be thus presumptuous; for blank verse, and heroic rhyme, being grave and uniform in themselves, require a story varied with many circumstances, and would only have added to the dryness of a chronicle, even though executed with a skill which I pretend not to possess. Yet when I say that I have borrowed, let it not be supposed I have attempted to imitate his particular expressions; I have only attempted to write in a certain free irregular measure, which, but for him, I should probably never have known or admired.

These days are rich in Poets, whose fertile imaginations have been chiefly employed in national or Eastern romance; the one abounding in variety of character, event, and description of familiar or grand objects, and enlivened with natural feelings and passions; the other, decorated with more artificial and luxurious description, and animated with exaggerated and morbid emotions, each in its own way continually exciting the interest and curiosity of the reader, and leading him on through a paradise of fairy land. In these days, therefore, legends of real events, and characters already known to the world, even though animated with a warmth of sentiment and vividness of description far exceeding my ability to give, have not the same chance for popularity which they might formerly have had. I own this, and am willing unrepiningly to submit to disadvantages which arise from such a delightful cause. For who would wish, were it possible, to remove such an impediment for his own convenience! It is better to take a humble place with such contemporaries, than to stand distinguished in a desert place. I only mention this circumstance to bespeak

some consideration and indulgence from readers accustomed to such intoxicating entertainment.

The hero of my first legend is one, at the sound of whose name some sensation of pride and of gratitude passes over every Scottish heart. He belongs indeed to the "land of the mountain and the flood," which, till of later years, was considered by her more fertile neighbour as a land of poverty and barrenness; but the generous devotedness of a true patriot connects him with the noblest feelings of all mankind; or if the contemplation of that excellence be more circumscribed, the feeling in his countrymen which arises from it, is for that very reason the deeper and the dearer. The circumstances of the times which followed him, — the continuance of Edward's power in Scotland, destroyed, many years after, by the wisdom and perseverance of a most gallant and popular king, has made the name of Wallace occur but seldom in the regular histories of Scotland, while his great actions are mentioned so carelessly and briefly, that we read them with disappointment and regret. But when we remember, that, from being the younger son of a private gentleman of small consideration, he became the military leader and governor of the whole nation, whose hereditary chieftains, accustomed to lead their clans to battle, were both proud and numerous, we may well suppose that all related of him by his friend and contemporary, Blair, which makes the substance of the blind Minstrel's poem, is true; or, at least, if not entirely correct, does not exceed the truth.

The mixture of fiction which is found in it, forms no reasonable objection to receiving those details that are probable and coincide with general history and the character and circumstances of the times. To raise his country from the oppression which her nobles so long and so basely endured; to make head against such a powerful, warlike, and artful enemy; to be raised by so many hereditary chiefs to be warden or protector of the realm, on whose behalf he, as a rival power, entered into compacts and treaties with the Monarch, who had England and some fair provinces of France under his dominion, presupposes a fortune and ability in war, joined with talents for governing, equal to all that his private historian or even tradition has ascribed to him. We may smile at the wonderful feats of strength related of him by Blind Harry, and traditionally received over the whole country; but when we consider that his *personal acts*, when still very young, are the only reason that can be given for attracting so many followers to his command, we must believe that his lofty soul and powerful intellect were united to a body of extraordinary

strength and activity. Wallace Wight, or the Strong, is the appellation by which he is distinguished in his own country; and the romantic adventures of a Robin Hood are by tradition fondly joined to the mighty acts of Scotland's triumphant deliverer.

His character and story are in every point of view particularly fitted either for poetry or romance; yet, till very lately, he has not been the subject, as far as I know, of any modern pen. Wallace, or the Field of Falkirk, written in nervous and harmonious verse, by a genius particularly successful in describing the warlike manners and deeds of ancient times, and in mixing the rougher qualities of the veteran leader with the supposed tenderness of a lover, is a poem that does honour to its author and to the subject she has chosen. Wallace, or the Scottish Chief, which through a rich variety of interesting, imaginary adventures, conducts a character of most perfect virtue and heroism to an affecting and tragical end — is a romance deservedly popular. This tribute to the name of Wallace from two distinguished English women, I mention with pleasure, notwithstanding all I have said against mixing true with fictitious history.*

Wallace, it must be owned, though several times the deliverer of his country from the immediate oppression of her formidable enemy, was cut off in the midst of his noble exertions, and left her in the power of Edward; therefore he was not, in the full sense, the deliverer of Scotland, which was ultimately rescued from the yoke by Robert Bruce. But had there been no Wallace to precede him, in all human likelihood, there would have been no Bruce. Had it not been for the successful struggles of the first hero, the country, with her submissive nobles, would have been so completely subdued and permanently settled under the iron yoke of Edward, that the second would never have conceived the possibility of recovering its independence. The example set by Wallace, and the noble spirit he had breathed into his countrymen, were a preparation — one may almost say the moral implements by which the valiant and persevering Bruce accomplished his glorious task.

The reader, perhaps, will smile at the earnestness with which I estimate the advantage of having been rescued from the domination of Edward, now, when England and Scotland are happily united; making one powerful and generous nation, which hath nobly maintained, for so many generations, a degree of rational liberty, under the form of a limited monarchy, hitherto enjoyed by no other people. But when we recollect the treatment which Ireland received as a conquered country, and of which she in some degree

* Since the above observations were written, Mrs. Heman's prize-poem, on the given subject of the meeting between Wallace and Bruce on the banks of Carron, has appeared, with its fair-won honours on its brow; and there is a Play

on the life of our hero, from the pen of a very young and promising dramatist, which is at present represented with success on the stage of Covent Garden.

still feels the baleful effects, we shall acknowledge, with gratitude, the blessing of having been united to England under far different circumstances. Nay, it may not, perhaps, be estimating the noble acts of William Wallace at an extravagant rate to believe, that England as well as Scotland, under Divine Providence, may owe its liberty to him: for, had the English crown, at so early a period, acquired such an accession of power, it would probably, like the other great crowns of Europe, have established for itself a despotism which could not have been shaken.

In comparing the two great heroes of that period, it should always be remembered, that Bruce fought for Scotland and her crown conjoined; Wallace, for Scotland alone; no chronicler or historian, either English or Scotch, having ever imputed to him any but the purest and most disinterested motives for his unwearied and glorious exertions.

The hero of my second legend is Columbus; who, to the unfettered reach of thought belonging to a philosopher, the sagacious intrepidity of a chieftain or leader, and the adventurous boldness of a discoverer, added the gentleness and humanity of a Christian. For the first and last of these qualities he stands distinguished from all those enterprising chiefs who followed his steps. The greatest event in the history of Columbus takes place at the beginning, occasioning so strong an excitement, that what follows after, as immediately connected with him (his persecution and sufferings excepted), is comparatively flat and uninteresting; and then it is our curiosity regarding the inhabitants and productions of the New World that chiefly occupy our attention. Landing on some new coast; receiving visits from the Indians and their Caziques; bartering beads and trinkets for gold or provisions, under circumstances similar to those attending his intercourse with so many other places; nautical observations, and continued mutinies and vexations arising from the avarice and ambition of his officers, are the changes continually recurring. His history, therefore, circumstantially, rather obscures than displays his greatness; the outline being so grand and simple, the detail so unvaried and minute. The bloody, nefarious, and successful adventures of Cortes and Pizarro, keep their heroes (great men of a more vulgar cast) constantly in possession of the reader's attention, and have rendered them favourable subjects of history, tragedy, and romance. But the great consequences and change in human affairs which flowed from the astonishing enterprise of Columbus, have made his existence as one of the loftiest landmarks in the route of time. And he is a hero who may be said to have belonged to no particular country; for every nation has felt the effects of his powerful mind; and every nation, in the days at least in which he lived, was unworthy of him. This, notwithstanding these poetical defects

in his story, has prevented him from being neglected by poets. The first epic poem produced in the continent which he discovered, has, with great propriety, Columbus for its hero; and fragments of a poem on the same noble subject, published some years ago in this country, have given us cause to regret, that the too great fastidiousness of the author should have induced him to publish fragments only: a fastidiousness which, on this occasion, had been better employed, as such a disposition most commonly is, against others and not himself.

The subject of my third legend is a woman, and one whose name is unknown in history. It was indeed unknown to myself till the publication of Mr. Rose's answer to Fox's History of James II., in the notes to which work a very interesting account of her will be found, given in extracts from Lady Murray's narrative, a MS. hitherto unpublished. My ignorance regarding her is the more extraordinary, as she married into a family of my own name, from which it is supposed my forefathers took their descent; one of my ancestors also being the friend of that Baillie of Jerviswood, who suffered for the religion and independence of his country, and engaged in the same noble cause which obliged him, about the time of Jerviswood's death, to fly from Scotland and spend several years in a foreign land. Had her character, claiming even this very distant and slight connection with it, been known to me in my youthful days, I might have suspected that early association had something to do in the great admiration with which it has inspired me; but becoming first acquainted with it when the season of ardour and enthusiasm is past, I believe I may be acquitted from all charge of partiality. It appears to me that a more perfect female character could scarcely be imagined; for while she is daily exercised in all that is useful, enlivening, and endearing, her wisdom and courage, on every extraordinary and difficult occasion, give a full assurance to the mind, that the devoted daughter of Sir Patrick Hume, and the tender helpmate of Baillie, would have made a most able and magnanimous queen.

The account we have of her is given by her own children; but there is an harmonious consistency, and an internal evidence of truth through the whole of it, which forbids us to doubt. At any rate, the leading and most singular events of her life, mentioned in the inscription on her tomb from the pen of Judge Burnet, must be true. But after having written the Legend from Mr. Rose's notes alone, I have been fortunate enough to see the original work from which they were taken; and, availing myself of this advantage, have added some passages to it which I thought would increase the interest of the whole, and set the character of the heroine in a still more favourable light. For this I am indebted to the kindness and liberality of Thomas Thomson,

Esq., keeper of the Registers, Edinburgh, who will, I hope, be induced, ere long, to give such a curious and interesting manuscript to the public.

I might have selected for my heroine women who in high situations of trust, as sovereigns, regents, and temporary governors of towns, castles, or provinces, and even at the head of armies, have behaved with a wisdom and courage that would have been honourable for the noblest of the other sex. But to vindicate female courage and abilities has not been my aim. I wished to exhibit a perfection of character which is peculiar to woman, and makes her, in the family that is blessed with such an inmate, through every vicissitude of prosperity and distress, something which man can never be. He may indeed be, and often is, as tender and full of gentle offices as a woman; and she may be, and has often been found, on great occasions, as courageous, firm, and enterprising, as a man: but the character of both will be most admired when these qualities cross them but transiently, like passing gleams of sunshine in a stormy day, and do not make the prevailing attribute of either. A man seldom becomes a careful and gentle nurse, but when actuated by strong affection; a woman is seldom roused to great and courageous exertion but when something most dear to her is in immediate danger: reverse the matter, and you deform the fair seemliness of both. It is from this general impression of their respective natures that tenderness in man is so pathetic, and valour in woman so sublime. A wise and benevolent Providence hath made them partake of each other's more peculiar qualities, that they may be meet and rational companions to one another—that man may be beloved, and woman regarded with respect.

What has been considered as the jealousy of man lest woman should become his rival, is founded, I believe, on a very different principle. In regard to mental acquirements of an abstruse or difficult kind, though a pretty general disapprobation of them, when found in the possession of women, is felt and too often expressed in illiberal and unworthy phrase, yet, I apprehend, that had these been supposed to be cultivated without interfering with domestic duties, no prejudice would ever have been entertained against them. To neglect useful and appropriate occupations, for those which may be supposed to be connected with vanity, rather than with any other gratification, is always offensive. But if a woman possess that strong natural bent for learning which enables her to acquire it quickly, without prejudice to what is more necessary; or if her fortune be so ample that the greater part of her time reasonably remains at her own disposal, there are few men, I believe, who will be disposed to find fault with her for all that she may know, provided she make no vain display of her acquirements; and amongst those few, I will venture to say, there will

not be one truly learned man to be found. Were learning chiefly confined to gownsmen, a country gentleman, who neglected his affairs and his husbandry to study the dead languages, would meet with as little quarter as she who is tauntingly called a learned lady. But as every one in the rank of a gentleman is obliged to spend so many years of his youth in learning Latin and Greek, whatever may be his natural bias or destined profession, he is never ridiculed, under any circumstances, for pursuing that which has already cost him so much labour. Women have this desirable privilege over the other sex, that they may be unlearned without any implied inferiority; and I hope our modern zeal for education will never proceed far enough to deprive them of this great advantage. At the same time they may avowedly and creditably possess as much learning, either in science or languages, as they can fairly and honestly attain, the neglect of more necessary occupations being here considered as approaching to a real breach of rectitude.

"My helpful child!" was the fond and grateful appellation bestowed upon our heroine, with her mother's dying blessing; and could the daughters of every family conceive the self-approbation and happiness of cheerful and useful occupation, the love of God and favour of man which is earned by this blessed character of helpfulness, how much vanity and weariness, and disappointment, and discontent, would be banished from many a prosperous home! "It is more blessed to minister than be ministered unto," said the most perfect character that ever appeared in human form. Could any young person of ever such a listless or idle disposition, not entirely debased by selfishness, read, in the narrative alluded to, of the different occupations of Lady Griseld Baillie and her sister, nearly of her own age, whose time was mostly spent in reading or playing on a musical instrument, and wish for one moment to have been the last-mentioned lady rather than the other?

But in preferring a heroine of this class for my Legend, I encountered a difficulty which, I fear, I have not been able to overcome; the want of events, and the most striking circumstance of the story belonging to the earlier part of it, while the familiar domestic details of her life, which so faithfully reveal the sweetest traits of her character, are associated in our imaginations with what is considered as vulgar and mean. I have endeavoured by the selection I have made of things to be noticed, and in the expressions which convey them to the fancy, to offend, as little as might be, the fastidious reader; and I beg that he will on his part receive it with indulgence.

Of the few shorter pieces, contained in this volume, I have little to say. The two first were originally written very rapidly for the amusement of a young friend, who was fond of frightful stories;

but I have since endeavoured to correct some of the defects arising from hasty composition. The third is taken from a true, or at least traditional story. It was told to me by Sir George Beaumont, as one which he had heard from his mother, the late Lady Beaumont, who said it was a tradition belonging to the castle of some baron in the north of England, where it was believed to have happened. It was recommended by him as a good subject for a ballad, and, with such a recommendation, I was easily tempted to endeavour, at least, to preserve its simple and striking circumstances, in that popular form. I have altered nothing of the story, nor have I added any thing but the founding of the abbey and the baron's becoming a monk, in imitation of the ending of that exquisite ballad, *The Eve of St. John*, where so much is implied in so few words: the force and simplicity of which I have always particularly admired, though I readily own (and the reader will have too much reason to agree with me) that it is more easily admired than imitated.

“ There is a nun in Dryburgh bower
Ne'er looks upon the sun ;
There is a monk in Melrose tower,
He speaketh word to none.

That nun who ne'er beholds the day,
That monk who speaks to none,
That nun was Smaylho'mes lady gay,
That monk the bold baron.”

The fourth is taken from the popular story of *Fadon*, in the *Blind Minstrel's Life of Wallace*. That the hero, in those days of superstition, and under the influence of compunction for a hasty deed, might not have had some strong vision or dream which, related to his followers, might give rise to such a story, I will not pretend to say. However, it could not with propriety find a place in a legend which rejects fiction. Yet, thinking it peculiarly fitted for the subject of a mysterious ballad, and being loath to lose it entirely, I have ventured to introduce it to the reader in its present form. Ballads of this character generally arrest the attention and excite some degree of interest. They must be very ill-written indeed if this fail to be the case; and if some modern ballads of extraordinary power, from a very witching pen, have not rendered the public less easy to please than they formerly were, I may hope that these productions, slight as they are, will at least be received with forbearance.

Having now said all which, I believe, I may reasonably say in explanation and behalf of the contents of my book, I leave my reader to peruse it, perhaps, in nearly the same disposition regarding it, as if I had said nothing at all on the subject. But I have the satisfaction, at least, of having endeavoured to do justice to myself, and shall not be condemned unheard.

A METRICAL LEGEND OF WILLIAM WALLACE.

I.

INSENSIBLE to high heroic deeds,
Is there a spirit clothed in mortal weeds,
Who at the Patriot's moving story,
Devoted to his country's good,
Devoted to his country's glory,
Shedding for freemen's rights his generous blood;—
List'neth not with breath heaved high,
Quiv'ring nerve, and glistening eye,
Feeling within a spark of heavenly flame, [claim ?
That with the hero's worth may humble kindred
If such there be, still let him plod
On the dull foggy paths of care,
Nor raise his eyes from the dank sod
To view creation fair :
What boots to him the wondrous works of God ?
His soul with brutal things hath ta'en its earthy lair.

II.

Come, youths, whose eyes are forward cast,
And in the future see the past,—
The past, as winnow'd in the early mind,
With husk and prickle left behind !
Come; whether under lowland vest,
Or, by the mountain-tartan prest,
Your gen'rous bosoms heave ;
Pausing a while in thoughtful rest,
My legend lay receive.
Come, aged sires, who love to tell
What fields were fought, what deeds were done ;
What things in olden times befell,—
Those good old times, whose term is run !
Come ye, whose manly strength with pride
Is breasting now the present tide
Of worldly strife, and cast aside

A hasty glance at what hath been !
 Come, courtly dames, in silken sheen,
 And ye, who under thatched roofs abide ;
 Yea, e'en the barefoot child by cottage fire,
 Who doth some shreds of northern lore acquire,
 By the stirr'd embers' scanty light, —
 List to my legend lay of Wallace wight.

III.

Scotland, with breast unmail'd, had sheath'd her sword,

Stifling each rising curse and hopeless prayer,
 And sunk beneath the Southron's faithless lord,

In sullen, deep despair.*

The holds and castles of the land
 Were by her hateful foemen mann'd.
 To revels in each stately hall,
 Did tongues of foreign accent call,
 Where her quell'd chiefs must tamely bear
 From braggart pride the taunting jeer.
 Her harvest-fields, by strangers reap'd.
 Were in the stranger's garner heap'd.

The tenant of the poorest cot,
 Seeing the spoiler from his door
 Bear unreprieved his hard-earn'd store,
 Blush'd thus to be, and be a Scot.
 The very infant at his mother's beck,
 Though with writh'd lip and scowling eye,
 Was taught to keep his hisping tongue in
 check,

Nor curse the Southron passing by.

* The oppression under which Scotland groaned is thus detailed by Blind Harry (page 7.) :

“ When Saxon blood into the realm coming,
 Working the will of Edward, that false King,
 Many great wrongs they wrought in this region,
 Destroyed our lords and brake their biggins down,
 Both wives and widows they took at their own will,
 Nuns and maidens whom they lik'd to spill.
 King Herod's part they played here in Scotland,
 On young children that they before them fand.
 The bishopricks that were of greatest vall
 They took in hand of their archbishop's hail ;
 Not for the Pope they would no kirk forbear,
 But gripp'd all thro' violence of weir,
 Glasgow they gave, as it o'er well was ken'd,
 To Dioce of Durham to a commend.
 Small benefices then they would pursue,
 And for the right full worthy clerks they slew.”

The grievous thralldom which Scotland endured after the rights of Baliol had been set aside by Edward, is thus recorded by Barbour :

“ To Scotland went he (Edward) then in hy
 And all the land gan occupy :
 Sa hale that both castell and tounne
 Was into his possessiounne
 Fra Weik auneit Orkenay
 To Muller Suwk in Galloway ;
 And stuffet all with Inghlismen.
 Schyreffys then and bailiyns made he then,
 And alkyn other officeris,
 That for to govern land afferis,
 He maid of Inglis nation ;
 That worthy than sa ryche fellone,

IV.

Baron brave and girded knight,
 The tyrant's hireling slaves could be :
 Nor graced their state, nor held their right.
 Alone upon his rocky height,
 The eagle rear'd his unstain'd crest,
 And soaring from his cloudy nest,
 Turn'd to the sun his daring eye,
 And wing'd at will the azure sky,
 For he alone was free.

V.

Oh ! who so base as not to feel
 The pride of freedom once enjoy'd,
 Though hostile gold or hostile steel
 Have long that bliss destroy'd !
 The meaneest drudge will sometimes vaunt
 Of independent sires, who bore
 Names known to fame in days of yore,
 'Spite of the smiling stranger's taunt ;
 But recent freedom lost — what heart
 Can bear the humbling thought — the quick'ning,
 madd'ning smart !

VI.

Yes, Caledonian hearts did burn,
 And their base chain in secret spurn ;
 And, bold upon some future day,
 Swore to assert Old Scotland's native sway ;
 But 'twas in fitful thoughts that pass'd in thought
 away.
 Though musing in lone cave or forest deep,

And sa wyckkyt and cowatouss,
 And sa hawtene and dispitouss
 That Scottis men mycht do na thing
 That enir mycht pleyss to their liking.
 * * * * *
 And gyff that ony man thaim by
 Had ony thing that was worthy,
 As horse or hund, or other thing,
 That was pleasand to thair liking,
 With rycht or wrang it have wald thai,
 And gyff ony man wald them withsay,
 Thai suld swa do that thai suld tnye
 Other land or lyff or leyff in pyne.”

After expatiating further on the miserable condition of the Scotch, he breaks forth in a more impassioned strain than is often to be met with in the sober bards of those olden times.

“ A ! freedom is a noble thing !
 Freedom mays man to haiff liking ;
 Freedom all solace to man gittis ;
 He levys at ess that frely levys !
 A noble heart may haiff nane ess,
 Na ellys nocht that may him pless,
 Gyff freedome faily he : for fre liking
 Is yharnyt our all other thing.
 Na he that ay has levyt fre,
 May nocht knaw weil the propyrtie
 The anger, na the wrechyt dome
 That is cowplyt to foule thyrdlome.
 Bot gyff he had assayet it,
 Than all perquer he suld it wyte ;
 And suld think freedome mar to pless
 Than all the gold in world that is.”

Some generous youths might all indignant
weep;

Or in the vision'd hours of sleep,
Gird on their swords for Scotland's right,
And from her soil the spoiler sweep,
Yet all this bold emprise pass'd with the passing
night.

VII.

But in the woods of Allerslie,
Within the walls of good Dundee,
Or by the pleasant banks of Ayr,
Wand'ring o'er heath or upland fair,
Existed worth without alloy *,
In form a man, in years a boy,
Whose nightly thoughts for Scotland's weal,
Which clothed his form in mimic steel,
Which helm'd his brow, and glaved his hand
To drive the tyrant from the land,
Pass'd not away with passing sleep ;
But did, as danger nearer drew,
Their purposed bent the firmer keep,
And still the bolder grew.

VIII.

'Tis pleasant in his early frolic feats †,
Which fond tradition long and oft repeats,

* Blind Harry, page 7.

"William Wallace, ere he was man of arms,
Great pity thought that Scotland took sik harms.
Meikle dolour it did him in his mind,
For he was wise, right worth, wight and kind.
* * * * *
Into his heart he had full meikle care.
He saw the Southerons multiply mare and mare,
And to himself would often make his mone.
Of his good kin they had slain many one.
Yet he was then seemly, stark, and bold,
And he of age was but eighteen years old."

† Many of the early feats of Wallace are told by the Blind Bard very minutely, and sometimes with a degree of humour ; as, for instance, his slaying the constable's son of Dundee, told thus:—

"Upon a day to Dundee he was send,
Of cruelty full little they him kend.
The constable, a fellow man of weir,
That to the Scots oft did full meikle deir,
Selbie, he heght, spiteful and outrage,
A son he had near twenty years of age:
Into the town he used every day,
Three men or four there went with him to play.
An hely shrew, wanton in his intent,
Wallace he saw, and towards him he went ;
Likely he was right big and well besen
Into a weed of goodly ganand green ;
He call'd on him and said, thou Scot, abide,
What devil thee graiths in so gay a weed ?
An Irish mantle is thy kind to wear,
A Scots whittle under thy belt to bear,
Hough ruzions upon thy harlot feet,
Give me thy knife ; what doth thy gear so meet ?
To him he went, his knife to take him fra
Fast by the collar Wallace can him ta,
Under his hand the knife he braideth out,
For all his men that 'sembled him about.
But help himself he knew of no remead,
Without rescue, he stuck him to dead.

The op'ning of some dauntless soul to trace,
Whose bright career of fame, a country's annals
grace ;

Yet this brief legend must forbear to tell
The bold adventures that befell
The stripling Wallace, light and strong,
The shady woods of Clyde among,
Where, roaring o'er its rocky walls,
The water's headlong torrent falls,
Full, rapid, powerful, flashing to the light,
Till sunk the boiling gulf beneath,
It mounts again like snowy wreath,
Which, scatter'd by contending blasts,
Back to the clouds their treasure casts, [sight !
A ceaseless wild turmoil, a grand and wondrous
Or, climbing Cartland's Craigs, that high
O'er their pent river strike the eye,
Wall above wall, half veil'd, half seen,
The pendant folds of wood between,
With jagged breach, and rift, and scar,
Like the scorch'd wreck of ancient war,
And seem, to musing fancy's gaze,
The ruin'd holds of other days.
His native scenes, sublime and wild,
Where oft the youth his hours beguiled,
As forester with bugle horn ;
As angler in the pooly wave ‡ ;
As fugitive in lonely cave,
Forsaken and forlorn !

The squire fell, of him there was no more,
His men followed on Wallace wonder sore.
The press was thick, and cumber'd them full fast,
Wallace was speedy, and greatly als agast ;
The bloody knife bare drawn in his hand,
He spared none that he before him fand.
The house he knew his ome lodged in.
Thither he fled, for out he might not win.
The good-wife there, within the cove saw he,
And help, he cried, for him that died on tree.
The young captain has fallen with me at strife.
In at the door he went with this good-wife.
A russet gown of her own she him gave
Upon his weed that cover'd all the lave ;
A sudden croun o'er neck and head let fall,
A woven white hat she braced on withal ;
For they should not tarry long at that inn,
Gave him a rock, syne set him down to spin.
The Southron sought where Wallace was in dread,
They knew not well at what gate in he yeed.
In that same house they sought him busily,
But he sat still and span right cunningly,
As of his time he had not learned lang.
They left him so, and forth their gates can gang
With heavy cheer and sorrowful of thought,
Mair wit of him as then get could they nought."

‡ Reduced, as he frequently was, to live in hiding, this would often be his means of providing food, though the following passage relates apparently to times of less necessity, when Wallace, attended only by a child, having gone to fish in the river of Irvine, met the attendants of Lord Percy, who then commanded at Ayr. They rudely asking him to give them some of his fish, and not content with a part, which he had desired the child who carried the basket to give them, but insolently demanding the whole, and, on his refusal, attacking him with the sword, it is said, —

"Wallace was woe he had no weapons there,
But the pont-staff, the which in hand he bare.
Wallace with it fast on the cheek him took
With so good-will that while off his feet he shook.

When still, as fœmen cross'd his way,
Alone, defenceless, or at bay,
He raised his arm for freeman's right,
And on proud robbers fell the power of Wallace
wight.

IX.

There is a melancholy pleasure
In tales of hapless love; — a treasure
From which the sadden'd bosom borrows
A respite short from present sorrows,
And e'en the gay delight to feel,
As down young cheeks the soft tears steal;
Yet will I not that woeful tale renew,
And in light hasty words relate

The sword flew from him a fur-broad on the land.
Wallace was glad, and hint it soon in hand,
And with the sword an awkward stroke him gave
Under his head, the craig in sunder rave.
By that the rest lighted about Wallace,
He had no help, but only God his grace.
On either side full fast on him they dang,
Great peril was if that had lasted lang.
Upon the head in great ire struck he one,
The shearing-blade glad to the collar-bone.
Another on the arm he hit so hardly,
While hand and sword both on the field can lie.
The other two fled to their house again;
He sticketh him that last was on the plain.
Three slew he there, two fled with all their might
After their lord, but he was out of sight."

* From the same authority we have the following account of his life, which is somewhat curious. (Page 96.)

"In Lanerk dwelt a gentlewoman there,
A maiden mild, as my book will declare,
Eighteen years old or little more of age,
Als born she was to part of heritage.
Her father was of worship and renown,
And Hew Braidfoot he heght, of Laming toun,
As fell others in the country were call'd,
Before time they gentlemen were of all'd.
But this good man and als his wife was dead,
The maiden then wist of no other rede,
But still she dwelt in tribute in the toun
And purchased had King Edward's protection;
Servants with her, and friends at her own will,
Thus lived she without desire of ill;
A quiet house as she might had in wear,
For Heselrig had done her meikle dear
Slain her brother, which eldest was and heir.
All suffered she and right lowly her bare,
Amiable, so benign, ware and wise,
Courteous and sweet, fulfilled of gentrice.
Well ruled of tongue, hail of countenance,
Of virtues she was worthy to advance,
Humbly she held and purchast a good name,
Of ilka wight she keeped her from blame,
True right wise folk a great favour she lent.
Upon a day to kirk as she went,
Wallace her saw as he his eyes can cast,
The print of love him punced at the last,
So asperly thro' beauty of that bright,
With great unese in presence bide he might."

I hope I may be permitted to give a specimen of the ornamented passages of the Blind Bard's poem, which contains but very few of that character.

"Into April when clothed is but ween
The able ground by working of nature,
And woods have won their worthy weeds of green,
When Nymphs in building of his bour

How the base Southron's arm a woman slew,
And robb'd him of his wedded mate.*
The name of her who shared his noble breast,
Shall be remember'd and be blest.
A sweeter lay, a gentler song,
To those sad woes belong !

X.

As lightning from some twilight cloud,
At first but like a streaky line
In the hush'd sky, with fitful shine
Its unregard'd brightness pours,
Till from its spreading, darkly volumed shroud
The bursting tempest roars;
His countrymen with faithless gaze
Beheld his valour's early blaze. †

With oyl and balm, fulfilled of sweet odour,
Fumous matters as they are wont to gang,
Walking their course in every casual hour,
To glad the hunter with his merry sang."

I am tempted also to give a specimen of the more impassioned or declamatory parts, which are likewise very thinly scattered through the work. Speaking of Wallace, who was obliged to leave his new-married love, he exclaims, —

"Now leave thy mirth, now leave thy hail plesance,
Now leave thy bliss, now leave thy childish age,
Now leave thy youth, now follow thy hard chance,
Now leave thy ease, now leave thy marriage,
Now leave thy love, or thou shalt lose a gage
Which never on earth shall be redeemed again;
Follow fortune and her fierce outrage,
Go live in war, go live in cruel pain."

The death of Wallace's wife is thus related in a plainer and less studied manner. After having told how the English, who were in possession of Lanerk, quarrelled with Wallace and his friend, Sir John Grame, on their way from church, scoffed at them for being so well dressed; and how, after coming to blows, and the two friends slaying several of them, they were overpowered by numbers, and gained with difficulty the house of Wallace's wife, — he proceeds,

"The woman then which was full will of wane,
The peril saw with fellow noise and din,
Set up the gate and let them enter in.
Thro' to a strength they passed off that stead.
Fifty Southron upon the gate were dead.
This fair woman did business in her might,
The Englishmen to tary with a slight,
While that Wallace into the woods was past,
Then Cartlan Crag they pursued fast.
When Southron saw that scaped was Wallace,
Again they turn'd, the woman took on case,
Put her to death, I cannot tell you how,
Of sic matter I may not tarry now."

† Wintoun, in his Chronicle, after telling how Wallace surrounded the sheriff of Lanerk in the town at his inn, and slew him; the conclusion of which story runs thus,

Page 95.

"The schyrrave by the throt he gat,
And that hey stayre he hurlyd him down
And slew him there wythin the toun,"

proceeds to say,

"Fray he thus the scherrave slwe,
Scottis men fast to him drew,
That with the Inglis oft tyme ware,
Aggrevyd and supprised sare."

Holinshed, in his Chronicles, mentions him thus, —
"In that season also the fame of William Wallace began to spring, a yong gentleman of huge stature and notable

XI.

But rose at length with swelling fame
The honours of his deathless name ;
Till to the country's farthest bound,
All gen'rous hearts stirr'd at the sound ;
Then Scotland's youth with new-waked pride,
Flock'd gladly to the hero's side,
In harness braced, with burnish'd brand,
A brave and noble band !

XII.

Lenox, Douglas, Campbell, Hay,
Boyd, Scrimgeour, Ruthven, Haliday,
Gordon, Crawford, Keith were there ;
Lauder, Lundy, Cleland, Kerr,
Steven, Ireland's vagrant lord ;
Newbiggen, Fraser, Rutherford,
Dundas and Tinto, Currie, Scott ;
Nor be in this brave list forgot
A Wallace of the hero's blood,
With many patriots staunch and good ;
And first, though latest named, there came,
Within his gen'rous breast to hold
A brother's place, true war-mate bold !
The good, the gallant Grame.

XIII.

Thus grown to strength, on Bigger's well-fought
field
He made on marshal'd host his first essay ;
Where Edward's gather'd powers, in strong array,
Did to superior skill and valour yield,
And gain'd the glorious day.

strength of bodie, with such skill and knowledge of warlike enterprises, and hereto of such hardnesse of stomach, in attempting all manner of dangerous exploits, that his match was not any where lightlie to be found. He was son to one Sir Andrew Wallace of Craigie, and from his youth bore ever an inward hatred against the English nation. Sundrie notable feats he wrought also against the Englishmen in defence of the Scots, and was of such incredible force at his coming to perfect age, that of himselfe alone, without all helpe, he would not feare to set on thre or four Englishmen, and vanquish them. When the fame, therefore, of his worthie acts was notified through the realme, manie were put in good hope that by his means the realme should be delivered from the servitude of the Englishmen within short time after. And hereupon a great number of the Scotch nation, as well of the nobilitie as others, were readie to assist him in all his enterprises. By reason whereof he might not easilie be entrapp'd, or taken of the Englishmen, that went about to have gotten him into their hands."

Buchanan, in his history of Scotland, after mentioning the imprisonment of Balliol, and Edward's sailing to France, where he was then carrying on war, and Cumin, Earl of Buchan, taking advantage of his absence to ravage Northumberland, and lay siege to Carlisle, continues, " Though this expedition did somewhat to encourage the before crest-fallen Scotch, and hinder the English from doing them further mischief, yet it contributed little or nothing to the main chance, in regard that all the places of strength were possessed by the enemy's garrisons ; but when the nobility had neither strength nor courage to undertake great matters, there presently started up one William Wallace, a man of an ancient noble family, but one that had lived poorly and meanly, as having little or no estate ; yet this man performed in this war, not only beyond the expectation, but even the belief of all the common people ; for he was bold of spirit,

XIV.

Then at the Forest kirk, that spot of ground
Long to be honour'd, flush'd with victory,
Crowded the Scottish worthies, bold and free,
Their noble chieftain round ;
Where many a generous heart beat high
With glowing cheek and flashing eye,
And many a portly figure trode
With stately steps the trampled sod.
Banners in the wind were streaming ;
In the morning light were gleaming
Sword, and spear, and burnish'd mail,
And crested helm, and avantail,
And tartan plaids, of many a hue,
In flickering sunbeams brighter grew,
While youthful warriors' weapons ring
With hopeful, wanton brandishing.

XV.

There, midmost in the warlike throng,
Stood William Wallace, tall and strong ;
Towering far above the rest,
With portly mien and ample breast,
Brow and eye of high command ;
Visage fair, and figure grand :
E'en to the dullest peasant standing by,
Who fasten'd still on him a wondering eye,
He seem'd the master-spirit of the land.

XVI.

O for some magic power to give
In vision'd form what then did live !

and strong of body ; and when he was but a youth, had slain a young English nobleman, who proudly domineered over him. For this fact he was forced to run away, and to skulk up and down in several places for some years to save his life, and by this course of living, his body was hardened against wind and weather, and his mind was likewise fortified to undergo greater hazards when time should serve. At length, growing weary of such a wandering unsettled way of living, he resolved to attempt something, though never so hazardous, and therefore gather'd a band of men together of like fortune with himself, and did not only assault single persons, but even greater companies, though with an inferior number, and accordingly slew several persons in divers places. He played his pranks with as much dispatch as boldness, and never gave his enemy any advantage to fight him ; so that, in short time, his fame was spread over both nations, by which means many came in to him, moved by the likeness of their cause, or with like love of their country ; thus he made up a considerable army. And seeing the nobles were sluggish in their management of affairs, either out of fear or dullness, this Wallace was proclaimed Regent by the tumultuous band that followed him, and so he managed things as a lawful magistrate, and the substitute of Balliol. He accepted of this name, not out of any ambition or desire to rule, but because it was a title given him by his countrymen out of pure love and good-will. The first remarkable exploit he performed with his army was near Lanerick, where he slew the major general of that precinct, being an Englishman of good descent. Afterwards he took and demolished many castles, which were either slenderly fortified or meanly garrisoned, or else guarded negligently ; which petty attempts so encouraged his soldiers, that they shunned no service, no, not the most hazardous, under his conduct, as having experienced that his boldness was guided by counsel, and that his counsel was seconded by success."

That group of heroes to portray,
Who from their trammell'd country broke
The hateful tyrant's galling yoke
On that eventful day!

XVII.

Behold! like changeful streamers of the North,
Which tinge at times the wintry night,
With many hues of glowing light,
Their momentary forms break forth
To Fancy's gifted sight.
Each in his warlike panoply
With sable plumage waving high,
And burnish'd sword in sinewy hand,
Appears a chieftain of command,
Whose will, by look or sign to catch,
A thousand eager vassals watch.
What though those warriors, gleaming round,
On peaceful death-bed never lay,
But each, upon his fated day,
His end on field or scaffold found*;
Oh! start not at the vision bright,
As if it were a ghastly sight!
For, 'midst their earthly coil, they knew
Feelings of joy so keen, so true,
As he who feels, with up-raised eye,
Thanks heaven for life, and cannot rue
The gift, be what it may the death that he shall die.

XVIII.

Warden of Scotland (not ashamed
A native right of rule to own
In worth and valour matchless shown)
They William Wallace there proclaim'd;

* That the greater part of those brave men died in the field I need scarcely mention; and Barbour, in his Bruce, says, "that after the battle of Methven, the Scotch prisoners of distinction were kept till Edward's pleasure respecting them should be known, who ordered those who would not swear fealty to him, and abandon the cause of Bruce, to be executed. Of the five names which he particularly mentions, two, viz. Frazer and Hay, are found amongst Wallace's first associates; to which he adds, 'and other ma.'"

"Sir Thomas Randall there was taen,
That was a young bachelor."

Then, further on,

"Thomas Randall was one of tha,
That for his lyff become their man.
Off othyr that were takyn than,
Sum they ratowet, sum thay slew.
And sum thay hangyt, and sum thay drew."

Randall, who is the only person amongst them, noticed as proving unfaithful to Bruce, and as a young man, we may infer that the others were more advanced in years, and might, therefore, many of them, be the early companions of Wallace, who was himself only five and forty when he died.

† In Blind Harry, book 7th, the account of this wicked massacre is thus given:—

"A baulk [beam] was knit all full of ropes so keen
Sick a Tolbooth sensyn was never seen,
Stern men were set the entry for to hold,
None might pass in but ay as they were call'd.
Sir Ranald [the uncle of Wallace] first to make fewty for
his land,
The knight went in and would no longer stand;
A running cord they slippt over his head
Hard to the baulk and hanged him to dead.

And there, exultingly, each gallant soul,
E'en proudly yielded to such high controul.
Greater than aught a tyrant ere achieved,
Was power so given, and so received.

XIX.

This truth full well King Edward knew,
And back his scatter'd host he drew,
Suing for peace with prudent guile;
And Wallace in his mind, the while,
Scanning with wary, wise debate
The various dangers of the state,
Desire of further high revenge foregoes
To give the land repose.
But smother'd hatred, in the garb of peace,
Did not, mean time, from hostile cunning cease;
But still more cruel deeds devised,
In that deceitful seeming guised.

XX.

The Southron rulers, phrasing fair
Their notice, summon'd lord, and laird, and knight,
To hold with them an ancient court of right,
At the good town, so named, their court of Ayr.
And at this general summons came
The pride and hope of many a name,
The love and anxious care of many a gentle dame.

XXI.

Ent'ring the fatal Barns, fair sight! †
Went one by one the manly train,
But neither baron, laird, nor knight,
Did e'er return again.

Sir Bruce the Blair then with his one in past
Unto the dead they hasted him full fast,
By [by the time] he enter'd, his head was in the snare,
Tied to the baulk, hanged to the dead right there.
The third enter'd that pity was for thy,
A worthy knight, Sir Neal Montgomery,
And other feil [many] of landed men about,
Many yeed in, but no Scotsman came out."

Proceeding with the story, he says,—

"Thus eighteen score to that derf death they dight,
Of barons bold, and many a worthy knight."

Dr. Jamieson, in his ingenious and learned Notes to the Life of Wallace, by Harry the Minstrel, so satisfactorily confutes the doubts of Lord Hailes, respecting the authenticity of this event, that there is no occasion for me to say any thing on the subject. A transaction so atrocious as the hanging so many men of distinction, and getting them into the snare on pretence of a public meeting on national business, might be fictitious in a poem written many ages after the date of the supposed event; but when found in a metrical history by a simple bard, so near that period, and supported by the universal tradition of the country, one must be sceptical to a degree which would make the relation of old events absolutely spiritless and unprofitable, to reject it. It might be called the imbecility of scepticism. This would be sufficient to establish it, even independent of the proof drawn from Barbour, and other old writers, which Dr. Jamieson has produced. I recommend it to the reader to see the above mentioned notes, page 401., for the answer given by Dr. Jamieson to another objection of Sir D. Dalrymple, respecting the authenticity of Monteth's treachery to Wallace.

A heaven-commission'd friend that day
 Stopp'd Wallace, hast'ning on his way,
 (Who, by some seeming chance detain'd,
 Had later at his home remain'd,)
 The horse's bridle sternly grasp'd,
 And then for rueful utterance gasp'd.
 "Oh! go not to the Barns of Ayr!
 "Kindred and friends are murder'd there.
 "The faithless Southrons, one by one,
 "On them the hangman's task have done.
 "Oh! turn thy steed, and fearful ruin shun!"
 He, shudd'ring, heard, with visage pale,
 Which quickly changed to wrath's terrific hue;
 And then apace came sorrow's bursting wail;
 The noble heart could weep that could not quail,
 "My friends, my kinsmen, war-mates, bold and true!
 "Met ye a villain's end! Oh is it so with you!"

XXII.

The hero turn'd his chafing steed,
 And to the wild woods bent his speed.
 But not to keep in hiding there,
 Or give his sorrow to despair,
 For the fierce tumult in his breast
 To speedy, dreadful action press'd.
 And there within a tangled glade,
 List'ning the courser's coming tread,
 With hearts that shared his ire and grief,
 A faithful band received their chief.

XXIII.

In Ayr the guilty Southrons held a feast,
 When that dire day its direful course had run,
 And laid them down, their weary limbs to rest
 Where the foul deed was done.
 But ere beneath the cottage thatch
 Cocks had crow'd the second watch;
 When sleepers breathe in heavy plight,
 Press'd with the visions of the night,
 And spirits, from unhallow'd ground,
 Ascend, to walk their silent round;
 When trembles dell, or desert heath,
 The witches' orgies-dance beneath,—
 To the roused Warder's fearful gaze,
 The Barns of Ayr were in a blaze.

XXIV.

The dense, dun smoke was mounting slow
 And stately, from the flaming wreck below,

* Miss Porter, in her interesting novel of the Scottish Chiefs, gives the following powerful description of her hero, at the Barns of Ayr, from which it is probable I have borrowed somewhat, though at the time scarcely aware to whom I was obliged; for, as Harry the Minstrel has made the ghost of Fadon appear upon the battlements of the Castle, with a "prodigious rafter in his hand," that might also impress me with the idea. After telling what great piles of combustibles were, by the orders of Wallace, heaped up on the outside of the building, she adds,—

"When all was ready, Wallace, with the mighty spirit of

And mantling far aloft in many a volumed wreath;
 Whilst town and woods, and ocean wide did lie,
 Tinctured like glowing furnace-iron, beneath
 Its awful canopy.
 Red mazy sparks soon with the dense smoke blended,
 And far around like fiery sleet descended.
 From the scorch'd and crackling pile
 Fierce burst the growing flames the while;
 Through creviced wall and buttress strong,
 Sweeping the rafter'd roofs along;
 Which, as with sudden crash they fell,
 Their raging fierceness seem'd to quell,
 And for a passing instant spread
 O'er land and sea a lurid shade;
 Then with increasing brightness, high
 In spiral form, shot to the sky
 With momentary height so grand,
 That chill'd beholders breathless stand.

XXV.

Thus rose and fell the flaming surgy flood,
 'Till fencing round the gulphy light,
 Black, jagg'd, and bare, a fearful sight!
 Like ruin grim of former days,
 Seen 'thwart the broad sun's setting rays,
 The guilty fabric stood.

XXVI.

And dreadful are the deaths, I ween,
 Which midst that fearful wreck have been.
 The pike and sword, and smoke and fire,
 Have minister'd to vengeful ire.
 New-waked wretches stood aghast
 To see the fire-flood in their rear,
 Close to their breast the pointed spear,
 And in wild horror yell'd their last.

XXVII.

But what dark figures now emerge
 From the dread gulph and cross the light,
 Appearing on its fearful verge,
 Each like an armed sprite?
 Whilst one above the rest doth tower,—
 A form of stern gigantic power,
 Whirling from his lofty stand
 The smould'ring stone or burning brand?
 Those are the leagued for Scotland's native right,
 Whose clashing arms rang Southron's knell,
 When to their fearful work they fell,—
 That form is Wallace wight.*

retribution nerving every limb, mounted to the roof, and tearing off part of the tiling, with a flaming brand in his hand, showed himself glittering in arms to the affrighted revellers beneath, and as he threw it blazing amongst them, he cried aloud, 'The blood of the murdered calls for vengeance, and it comes.' At that instant the matches were put to the fagots which surrounded the building, and the whole party, springing from their seats, hastened towards the doors: all were fastened, and, retreating again in the midst of the room, they fearfully looked up to the tremendous figure above, which, like a supernatural being, seemed to avenge

XXVIII.

And he like heaven's impetuous blast
Which stops not on its mission'd way,
By early morn, in strong array,
Onward to Glasgow pass'd;
Where English Percy held the rule;
Too noble and too brave to be a tyrant's tool.
A summon'd court should there have been,
But there far other coil was seen.
With fellest rage, in lane and street,
Did harness'd Scot and Southron meet;
Well fought and bloody was the fierce affray:
But Percy was by Wallace slain,
Who put to rout his num'rous train,
And gain'd the town by noon of day.

XXIX.

Nor paused he there, for ev'ning tide
Saw him at Bothwell's hostile gate,
Which might not long assault abide,
But yielded to its fate.
And on from thence, with growing force,
He held his rapid, glorious course;
Whilst his roused clansmen, braced and bold,
As town and castle, tower and hold,
To the resistless victor fell,
His patriot numbers swell.

their crimes, and rain down fire on their guilty heads. * * *
The rising smoke from within and without the building,
now obscured his terrific form. The shouts of the Scots, as
the fire covered its walls, and the streaming flames licking
the windows, and pouring into every opening of the building,
raised such a terror in the breasts of the wretches within,
that with the most horrible cries they again and again flew
to the doors to escape. Not an avenue appeared; almost suf-
focated with smoke, and scorched with the blazing rafters
that fell from the roof, they at last made a desperate attempt
to break a passage through the great portal."

Though I have made a larger extract from this able and
popular writer, than is necessary for my purpose, the terrific
sublimity of the passage, which has tempted me to transgress,
will also procure my pardon.

* Holinshed, after telling how Wallace received the army
that John Cumin Earl of Buchan led before, and constrained
those Scots that favoured King Edward to renounce all faith
and promises made to him, says, "This done, he passed forth
with great puissance against the Englishmen that held sundrie
castles within Scotland, and with great hardinesse and man-
hood he wan the castels of Forfar, Dundee, Brechen, and
Montrose, sleaing all such soldiers as he found within them.
Wallace, now joyful of his prosperous successe, and hearing
that certeine of the chiefest officers of those Englishmen that
kept the castel of Dunster, were gone forth to consult of other
Englishmen of the forts next to them adjoining, came sudden-
lie to the said castell, and took it, not leaving a man alive
of all those whom he found as then within it: then, after he
had furnished the hold with his own soldiers in all defensible
wise, he went to Aberdeen," &c.—*Holinshed's Chronicles*.

Buchanan says, "When these things were spread abroad
(the fame of Wallace's exploits), and, perhaps, somewhat en-
larged beyond the truth, out of men's respect and favour to
him, all that wished well to their country, or were afraid of
their own particular conditions, flocked to him, as judging it
fit to take opportunity by the forelock; so that, in a short time,
he reduced all the castles which the English held on the other
side of the Forth, though well fortified, and more carefully
guarded for fear of his attacks. He took and demolished the
castles of Dundee and Forfar, Brechin and Montrose. He

Thus when with cURRENT full and strong,
The wintry river bears along
Through mountain pass, and frith, and
plain;—
Streams that from many sources pour,
Answer from far its kindred roar,
And deep'ning echoes roar again.
From its hill of heathy brown,
The muirland streamlet hastens down;
The mountain torrent from its rock,
Shoots to the glen with furious shock;
E'en brooklet low, and sluggish burn,
Speed to their chief with many a mazy turn,
And in his mingled strength, roll proudly to the
main.

XXX.

O'er Stirling's towers his standard plays*,
Lorn owns his rule, Argyle obeys.
In Angus, Merns, and Aberdeen,
Nor English lord, nor serf is seen;
Dundee alone averts King Edward's fate,
And Scotland's warden thunders at her gate.

XXXI.

But there his eager hopes are crost,
For news are brought of English host,
Which fast approaching through the land,
At Stirling mean to make their stand,†

seized on Dunster by surprise, and garrisoned it: he entered
Aberdeen (which the enemy, for fear of his coming, had
plundered and burnt) even whilst it was in flames; but a
rumour being scattered abroad, concerning the coming of the
English army, prevented his taking the castle: for he deter-
mined to meet them at the Forth, not being willing to hazard
a battle, but in a place which he himself should pitch upon."
—*Buch. Hist. of Scotland*.

† Holinshed's Chronicles:—"But now being advertised of
the coming of this armie against him, he (Wallace) raised his
siege, and went to Striveling to defend the bridge there, that
Hugh Cressingham with his army should not passe the same,
according, as the report went, his intent was to doe. Heere,
incountring with the enemies, the third ides of September,
he obtained a very worthie victorie; for he slew not onlie the
foresaid Cressingham, with a great part of his armie, being
passed the river, but also forced the residue to flee in such
sort, that a great number of them were drowned, and few
escaped awai with life. Thus having gotten the upper hand
of his enemies, here at Striveling, he returned again to the
siege of Cowper, which, shortly after, upon his return thither,
was rendered unto him by those that were within its garrison."

Buchanan's History of Scotland:—"But he (King Edward)
hearing of the exploits of Wallace, thought there was need
of a greater force to suppress him; yet, that the expedition
was not worthy of a King neither (as being only against a
roving thief, for so the English called Wallace,) and therefore,
he writes to Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and
William Latimer; that they should speedily levy what forces
they could out of neighbouring parts, and join themselves
with Cressingham, who as yet remained in Scotland, to sub-
due the rebellious Scots." Thomas Walsingham writes, 'that
the Earl of Warren was general in this expedition. But
Wallace, who was then besieging the castle of Cowper, in
Fife, lest his army, which he had increased against the ap-
proach of the English, should be idle; the English being near
at hand, marched directly to Stirling. The river Forth, no
where almost fordable, may there be passed over by a bridge
of wood, though it be increased by other rivers and the coming
in of the tide. There Cressingham passed over with the
greatest part of his army, but the bridge, either having its

Faint speaks the haggard breathless scout,
 Like one escaped from bloody rout,—
 “ On, Cressingham and Warren lead
 “ The marshall'd host with stalwart speed,
 “ It numbers thirty thousand men,
 “ And thine, bold chieftain, only ten.”

XXXII.

But higher tower'd the chieftain's head,
 Broad grew his breast with ampler spread ;
 O'er cheek and brow the deep flush pass'd,
 And to high heaven his eyes he cast :
 Right plainly spoke that silent prayer,
 “ My strength and aid are there !”
 Then look'd he round with kindly cheer
 On his brave war-mates standing near,
 Who scann'd his face with eager eye
 His secret feelings to descry.
 “ Come, Hearts ! who, on your native soil,
 “ For Scotland's cause have bravely stood,
 “ Come, brace ye for another broil,
 “ And prove your generous blood,
 “ Let us but front the tyrant's train,
 “ And he who lists may count their numbers
 then !”

XXXIII.

Nor dull of heart, nor slow were they
 Their noble leader to obey.
 Cheer'd with loud shouts he gave his prompt com-
 mand,
 Forthwith to bound them on their way.
 And straight their eager march they take
 O'er hill and heath, o'er burn and brake,
 Till marshall'd soon in dark array,
 Upon their destined field of war they stand.

XXXIV.

Behind them lay the hardy north ;
 Before, the slowly winding Forth
 Flow'd o'er the noiseless sand ;
 Its full broad tide with fussy sides,
 Which east and west the land divides,
 By wooden bridge was spann'd.
 Beyond it, on a craggy slope,
 Whose chimney'd roofs the steep ridge cope,
 There smoked an ancient town ;

beams loosened or disjointed on purpose, by the skill of the architect, (as our writers say,) that so it might not be able to bear any great weight, or else being over-laden with the burden of so many horse and foot, and carriages, as passed over, was broken, and so the march of the rest of the English was obstructed: the Scots set upon those who were passed over, before they could put themselves into a posture; and, having slain their captain, drove the rest back into the river; the slaughter was so great, that they were almost all either killed or drowned. Wallace returned from this fight to the besieging of castles; and, in a short time, he so changed the face of affairs, that he left none of the English in Scotland,

While higher on the firm-based rock,
 Which oft had braved war's thunder-shock,
 Embattled turrets frown.
 A frith with fields and woods, and hamlets gay,
 And mazy waters, silyly seen,
 Glancing through shades of Alder green,
 Wore eastward from the sight to distance
 grey ;
 While broomy knoll and rocky peak,
 And heathy mountains, bare and bleak,
 A lofty screen on either hand,
 Majestic rose, and grand.

XXXV.

Such was the field on which with dauntless pride
 They did their coming foe abide ;
 Nor waited long till from afar
 Were spy'd their moving ranks of war,
 Like rising storm, which, from the western
 main,
 Bears on in seried length its cloudy train ;—
 Slowly approaching on the burthen'd wind,
 Moves each dark mass, and still another lowers
 behind.
 And soon upon the bridge appears,
 Darkly rising on the light,
 Nodding plumes and pointed spears,
 And, crowding close, full many a warlike knight,
 Who from its narrow gorge successive pour
 To form their ranks upon the northern shore.

XXXVI.

Now, with notes of practised skill,
 English trumpets, sounding shrill,
 The battle's boastful prelude give,
 Which answer prompt and bold receive
 From Scottish drum's long rolling beat,
 And,— sound to valiant clansmen sweet !—
 The highland pipe, whose lengthen'd swell
 Of warlike pibroch, rose and fell,
 Like wailings of the midnight wind,
 With voice of distant streams combined,
 While mountain, rock, and dell, the martial din
 repeat.

XXXVII.

Then many a high-plumed gallant rear'd his head*,
 And proudly smote the ground with firmer tread,

but such as were made prisoners. This victory, wherein none of distinction amongst the Scots fell, (save Andrew Murray, whose son some years after was regent of Scotland,) was obtained on the 13th of September, in the year of Christ 1297. Some say that Wallace was called off to this fight, not from the siege of Cowper, but Dundee, whither he returned after the fight. So John Major, and some books found in monasteries, do relate.*

* How often has the contrast of the field before a battle, and at the conclusion of the bloody day, been noticed by poets ! And there is one passage from a most spirited and beautiful poem on my present subject, which I must beg

Who did ere close of ev'ning, lic
 With ghastly face turn'd to the sky,
 No more again the rouse of war to hear.
 And many for the combat burn'd,
 Who never from its broil return'd,
 Kindred or home to cheer.
 How short the term that shall divide
 The firm-nerv'd youth's exerted force,—
 The warrior, glowing in his pride,
 From the cold stiffen'd corse!
 A little term pass'd with such speed,
 As would in courtly revel scarce suffice,
 Mated with lady fair in silken guise,
 The measured dance to lead.

XXXVIII.

His soldiers firm as living rock,
 Now braced them for the battle's shock;
 And watch'd their chieftain's keen looks
 glancing
 From marshall'd clans to foes advancing;
 Smiled with the smile his eye that lighten'd,
 Glow'd with the glow his brow that brighten'd:
 But when his burnish'd brand he drew,
 His towering form terrific grew,
 And every Scotchman, at the sight,
 Felt through his nerves a giant's might,
 And drew his patriot sword with Wallace wight.

XXXIX.

For what of thrilling sympathy,
 Did e'er in human bosom vie
 With that which stirs the soldier's breast,
 When, high in god-like worth confest,
 Some noble leader gives command,
 To combat for his native land?
 No; friendship's freely-flowing tide,
 The soul expanding; filial pride,
 That hears with craving, fond desire
 The bearings of a gallant sire;
 The yearnings of domestic bliss,
 E'en love itself will yield to this.

XL.

Few words the lofty hero utter'd,
 But deep response was widely mutter'd,

leave to transcribe. Had not the plan of my legend been so totally different, I should never have presumed to enter upon ground which had already been so ably occupied. The poet, addressing the moon, as on the night before the fight of Falkirk, says,—

“Why, thou fair orb, dost thou shine so bright
 As thou rollest on thy way!
 Canst thou not hide thy silver light
 That the heavens, all dark with the clouds of night,
 Might frown on yon fierce array!
 But why should'st thou hide thy shining brow
 Thou who look'st through the midnight sky!
 Tho' the dæmon who gives the world for we
 Bids the tear descend and the life-blood flow,
 Thy place shall be still on high!
 Thou look'st on man,—thou see'st him blest
 In the light of his little day,—

Like echo'd echoes, circling round
 Some mountain lake's steep rocky bound.

XLI.

Then rush'd they fiercely on their foes,
 And loud o'er drum and war-pipe rose
 The battle's mingled roar.
 The eager shout, the weapon's clash;
 The adverse ranks' first closing crash,
 The sullen hum of striving life,
 The busy beat of trampling strife,
 From castle, rocks, and mountains round,
 Down the long firth, a grand and awful sound,
 A thousand echoes bore.

XLII.

Spears cross'd spears, a bending grove,
 As front to front the warriors strove.
 Through the dust-clouds, rising dun,
 Their burnish'd brands flash'd to the sun
 With quickly changing, shiv'ring light,
 Like streamers on the northern night,
 While arrow-showers came hurtling past,
 Like splinter'd wreck driven by the blast,
 What time fierce winter is contending
 With Norway's pines, their branches rending.

XLIII.

Long pennants, flags, and banners move
 The fearful strife of arms above,
 Not as display'd in colours fair,
 They floated on the morning air;
 But with a quick, ungentle motion,
 As sheeted sails, torn by the blast,
 Flap round some vessel's rocking mast
 Upon a stormy ocean.

XLIV.

Opposing ranks that onward bore,
 In tumult mix'd are ranks no more;
 Nor aught discern'd of skill or form;—
 All a wild, bick'ring, steely storm!

Thou look'st anon,—he is gone to rest!
 The cold worm creeps in his lordly breast,
 He sleeps in the grave's decay!
 Thou saw'st him rise,—thou shalt see him fall,
 Thou shalt stay till the tomb hath cover'd all;
 Till death has crush'd them one by one,
 Each frail but proud ephemeron!
 To-morrow thy cold and tranquil eye
 Shall gaze again from the midnight sky;
 With unquenched light, with ray serene,
 Thou shalt glance on the field where death hath been;
 Thou shalt gild his features pale and wan,
 Thou shalt gaze on the form of murder'd man,
 On his broken armour scatter'd round,
 On the sever'd limb and yawning wound;
 But thou, amidst the wreck of time,
 Unfrowning pass on, and keep'st thy path sublime.”
Miss Holford's Wallace, Cant. 11.

While oft around some fav'rite chieftain's crest,
 The turmoil thick'ning, darkly rose,
 As on rough seas the billow grows,
 O'er lesser waves high-heaved, but soon depress'd.
 So gallant Grame, thou noble Scot!
 Around thee rose the fearful fray,
 And other brave compeers of bold essay,
 Who did not spare their mothers' sons that day,
 And ne'er shall be forgot.*

XLV.

But where the mighty Wallace fought,
 Like spirit quick, like giant strong,
 Plunging the foe's thick ranks among,
 Wide room in little time was hew'd,
 And grisly sights around were strew'd;
 Recoil'd aghast the helmed throng,
 And every hostile thing to earth was brought.
 Full strong and hardy was the foe
 To whom he gave a second blow.
 Many a knight and lord
 Fell victims to his sword,
 And Cressingham's proud crest lay low.

XLVI.

And yet, all Southrons as they were,
 Their ranks dispersed, their leader slain,
 Passing the bridge with dauntless air,
 They still came pouring on the plain;
 But weaken'd of its rafter'd strength,
 'Tis said by warlike craft, and trod
 By such successive crowds, at length
 The fabric fell with all its living load.
 Loud was the shriek the sinking Southrons gave,
 Thus dash'd into the deep and booming wave.
 For there a fearful death had they,
 Clutching each floating thing in vain,
 And struggling rose and sank again,
 Who, 'midst the battle's loud affray,
 Had the fair meed of honour sought,
 And on the field like lions fought.

XLVII.

And there, upon that field — a bloody field,
 Where many a wounded youth was lying,
 And many dead and many dying,
 Did England's arms to Scotland's heroes yield.
 The close confusion opening round,
 The wild pursuit's receding sound,
 Is ringing in their ears, who low
 On clotted earth are laid, nor know,

* These words are nearly taken from an old song called
 "Auld lang syne:"—

"Sir John the Grame of lasting fame
 Shall never be forgot;
 He was an honour to the name,
 A brave and valiant Scot.

When those who chase, and those who fly,
 With hasty feet come clatt'ring by,
 Or who hath won or who hath lost;
 Save when some dying Scotchman lifts his head,
 And, asking faintly how the day hath sped,
 At the glad news, half from the ground
 Starts up, and gives a cheering sound,
 And waves his hand and yields the ghost.
 A smile is on the corse's cheek,
 Stretch'd by the heather bush, on death-bed bare
 and bleak.

XLVIII.

With rueful eyes the wreck of that dire hour,
 The Southron's yet unbroken power,
 As on the river's adverse shore they stood,
 Silent beheld, till, like a mountain flood,
 Rush'd Stirling's castled warriors to the plain;
 Attack'd their now desponding force,
 And fiercely press'd their hasty course
 Back to their boasted native soil again.

XLIX.

Of foes so long detested, — fear'd,
 Were towns and castles quickly clear'd;
 Through all the land at will might free men range:
 Nor slave nor tyrant there appear'd;
 It was a blessed change!

L.

The peasant's cot and homely farm,
 Hall-house and tower, secure from harm
 Or lawless spoil, again became
 The cheerful charge of wife or dame.
 'Neath humble roofs, from rafter slung
 The harmless spear, on which was hung
 The flaxen yarn in spindles coil'd,
 And leathern pouch and hosen soil'd,
 And rush or osier creel†, that held
 Both field and household gear; whilst swell'd
 With store of Scotland's fav'rite food,
 The seemly sack in corner stood;
 Remains of what the foe had left;
 Glad sight to folks so long bereft!
 And look'd at oft and wisely spared,
 Though still with poorer neighbours shar'd.
 The wooden quaigh‡ and trencher placed
 On the shelved wall, its rmdness graced.
 Beneath the pot red fagots glanced,
 And on the hearth the spindle danced,
 As housewife's slight, so finely true,
 The lengthen'd thread from distaff drew,
 While she, belike, sang ditty shrill
 Of Southron loons with lengthen'd trill.

The Douglas and the great Montrose
 Were heroes in their time;
 These men spared not their mother's sons
 For Auld lang syne."

† Creel, the common Scotch name for basket.
 ‡ Quaigh, a stained drinking cup.

LI.

In castle hall with open gate,
The noble lady kept her state,
With girdle clasp'd by gem of price,
Buckle or hasp of rare device,
Which held, constrain'd o'er bodice tight,
Her woollen robe of colours bright ;
And with bent head and tranquil eye,
And gesture of fair courtesy,
The stranger guest bade to her board
Though far a-field her warlike lord.
A board where smoked on dishes clear
Of massy pewter, sav'ry cheer,
And potent ale was foaming seen
O'er tankards bright of silver sheen,
Which erst, when foemen bore the sway,
Beneath the sod deep buried lay.
For household goods, from many a hoard,
Were now to household use restored.

LII.

Neighbours with neighbours join'd, begin
Their cheerful toil, whilst mingled din
Of saw or hammer cleave the air,
The roofless bigging* to repair,
The woodman fells the gnarled tree,
The ploughman whistles on the lea ;
The falc'ner keen his bird lets fly,
As lordlings gaze with upcast eye ;
The arrow'd sportsman strays at will,
And fearless roams o'er moor and hill ;
The traveller pricks along the plain ;
The herdboys shout and children play ;
Scotland is Scotland once again,
And all are boon and gay.

LIII.

Thus, freedom from a grievous yoke,
Like gleam of sunshine o'er them broke ;

And souls, when joy and peace were new,
Of every nature, kindlier grew.
It was a term of liberal dealing,
And active hope and friendly feeling,
Through all the land might freemen range,
It was a blessed change !

LIV.

So, when through forest wild hath pass'd
The mingled fray of shower and blast,
Tissue of threaded gems is worn
By flower and fern and briar and thorn,
While the scoured oak and shaken pine,
Aloft in brighten'd verdure shine.
Then Wallace to St. Johnston went,
And through the country quickly sent
Summons to burgher, knight, and lord,
Who, there convened, with one accord,
Took solemn oath with short debate,
Of fealty to the state,
Until a king's acknowledged, rightful sway,—
A native king, they should with loyal hearts obey.
And he with foresight wise, to spare
Poor Scotland, scourged, exhausted, bare †,
Whose fields unplough'd, and pastures scant,
Had brought her hardy sons to want,
His conquering army southward led,
Which was on England's plenty fed :
And there, I trow, for many months they took
Spoil of the land which ill that hateful change could
brook.

LV.

Edward, meantime, ashamed and wroth
At such unseemly foil, and loath
So to be bearded, sent defiance
To Scotland's chief ‡, in sure reliance
That he, with all which he may southward bring,
Of warlike force, dare not encounter England's king.

* Bigging, house or building of any kind, but generally rustic and mean.

† Buchanan's History:—"By means of these combustions, the fields lay untill'd, insomuch that, after that overthrow, a famine ensued, and a pestilence after the famine. From whence a greater destruction was apprehended than from the war: Wallace, to prevent this misfortune as much as he could, called together all those who were fit for service, to appear at a certain day, with whom he marched into England, thinking with himself, that their bodies being exercised with labour, would be more healthy, and that wintering in the enemy's country, provisions would be spared at home; and the soldiers, who were in much want, might reap some fruit of their labours in a rich country, and flourishing by reason of its continued peace. When he was entered into England, no man dared to attack him, so that he stayed there from the first of November to the first of February; and having refreshed and enriched his soldiers with the fruits and spoils of the enemy, he returned home with great renown. This expedition, as it increased the fame and authority of Wallace amongst the vulgar, so it heightened the envy of the nobles," &c. &c.

Holinshead also mentions Wallace's stay in England with his army.

‡ Buchanan's History:—"Moreover, the King of England, finding the business greater than could be managed by his

deputies, made some settlement of things in France, and returned home, and gathering together a great army, but hastily levied, for he brought not back his veteran soldiers from beyond sea), and for the most part raw and inexperienced men, he marches towards Scotland, supposing he had only to do with a disorderly band of robbers. But when he saw both armies in battle array, about five hundred paces from each other, in the plains of Stanmore, he admired the discipline, order, and confidence of his enemies. So that, though he himself had much greater force, yet he durst not put it to the hazard of a battle against such a veteran and so experienced a Captain, and against soldiers inured to all hardships, and marched slowly back. Wallace, on the other hand, durst not follow him, for fear of ambuscades," &c.

Holinshead, who so often shows himself very inimical to the Scotch, gives an account of the meeting of the Scotch and English, on Stanmore, more favourable to the former than Buchanan:—

"He (Wallace) entered into England at the time before appointed, where King Edward was ready with an army, upon Stanmore, double in number to the Scots, to give them battell; but when the time came that both were ready to have joined, the Englishmen withdrew, having no lust (as it should seem) to fight with the Scots at that time; who perceiving them to give backe, incontinentlie would have rushed forth of their ranks to have pursued in chase after

LVI.

But Wallace, on the day appointed,
 Before this scepter'd and anointed,
 Who, strengthen'd with a numerous host,
 There halted, to maintain his boast,
 On Stanmore's height, their battle ground,
 With all his valiant Scots was found.
 A narrow space of stony moor,
 With heath and lichens mottled o'er,
 And cross'd with dew-webs wry sheen,
 The adverse armies lay between.
 When upland mists had worn away,
 And blue sky over-head was clearing,
 And things of distant ken appearing,
 Fair on the vision burst that martial grand array.
 The force on haughty Edward's side,
 Spearmen and archers were desery'd,
 Line beyond line, spread far and wide,
 Receding from the eye ;
 While bristling pikes distinct and dark,
 As traced aloft with edgy mark,
 Seem'd graven on the sky ;
 And armed knights arm'd steeds bestriding,
 Their morions glancing bright,
 And to and fro their gay squires riding
 In warlike gear bedight.
 O'er all the royal standard flew,
 With crimson folds of gorgeous hue,
 And near it, ranged, in colours gay,
 Inferior flags and banners play,
 As broad-wing'd hawk keeps soaring high,
 Circled by lesser birds, that wheeling round him fly.
 Huge waggon, sledged car, and wain,
 With dark, piled loads, a heavy train,
 Store-piece of arms and yeoman's cheer,
 Frown'd in the further rear.

LVII.

And marshall'd on the northern side,
 The northern ranks the charge abide,
 In numbers few, but stout of heart,
 Their nation's honour to assert.

LVIII.

Thus on the field with clans and liegemen good,
 England's great King, and Scotland's Warden stood.
 That Monarch proud did rightly claim
 'Mongst Europe's lords the fairest fame,
 And had, in cause of Christentie,
 Fought with bold Saracens right gallantly.
 That Warden with the noblest man
 That e'er graced nation, race, or clan,

them, but Wallace, doubting least the Englishmen had ment some policie, and saying that it was enough for him that he had forced such a great Prince, in his own country, to forsake the field, caused the Scots to keep together in order of battell ; and so, preserving them from the malice of their enemies, brought them into Scotland with lives and honours saved, besides the infinite spoiles and booties which they got in their jorne." — *Holinshed's Chronicles.*

And grasp'd within his brave right hand
 A sword, which from the dust had raised his native
 land.

LIX.

Who had not cried, that look'd upon
 So brave and grand a sight,
 "What stalwart deeds shall here be done
 "Before the close of night !"
 But Edward mark'd with fal'r'ing will,
 The Scottish battle ranged with skill,
 Which spoke the Leader's powerful mind.
 On England's host that number'd twice their
 foes,
 But newly raised, nor yet enured to blows,
 He rueful look'd, his purpose fail'd,
 He look'd again, his spirit quail'd,
 And battle-gage declined.

LX.

And thus did he to Wallace yield,
 The bloodless honours of the field.
 But as the Southron ranks withdraw,
 Scarcely believing what he saw,
 The wary Chief might not expose
 His soldiers to returning foes,
 Or ambush'd snare, and gave the order,
 With beat of drum and trumpet sounding,
 The air with joyous shouts resounding,
 To cross with homeward steps the English
 border.

LXI.

Scotland thus, from foes secure,
 Her prudent Chieftain, to enure
 His nobles still to martial toil,
 Sought contest on a distant soil :
 And many a young and valiant knight,
 For foreign wars were with their leader dight.
 And soon upon the seas careering
 In gallant ship, whose pennants play,
 Waving and curling in the air,
 With changeful hues of colour fair,
 Themselves as gallant, boon, and gay,
 Their course with fav'ring breezes steering,
 To friendly France they held their way.

LXII.

And they upon the ocean met
 With warlike fleet, and sails full set,
 De Longueville, that bold outlaw*,
 Whose name kept mariners in awe.

* Though, I believe, there is little mention made in history of Wallace's actions in France, yet his being engaged in the wars against the English in that country is highly probable, because a contemporary writer of his life would not venture to advance it, if it were untrue; and those French wars are transmitted to posterity by French writers, who would not willingly give much credit to warriors of another nation; or by English, who would be as little inclined to mention the

This man, with all his desp'rate crew
Did Wallace on the waves subdue.
One Scottish ship the pirate thought
As on her boarded deck he fought,
Cheer'd by his sea-mates' warlike cries,
A sure and easy prize.

But Wallace' mighty arm he felt :
Yea, at his conqueror's feet he knelt ;
And there disdained not to crave
And takc the mercy of the brave ;
For still, as thing by nature fit,
The brave unto the brave are knit.
Thus natives of one parent land,
In crowded mart, on foreign strand,
With quick glance recognize each other ;
"That mien ! that step ! it is a brother !
"Though mingled with a meaner race,
"In foreign garb, I know that face,
"His features beam like those I love,
"His limbs with mountain-vigour move,
"And though so strange and alien grown,
"The kindred tie my soul will own."
De Longueville, e'en from that hour, a knight,
True to his native King, true to the right,
Fought with the Scottish hero to the end,
In many a bloody field, his tried and valiant friend.

LXIII.

And nobly in the lists of France,
Those noble Scots with brand and lance,
'Midst foreign knights and warriors blended,
In generous rivalry contended,
Whilst their brave Chieftain taught them still
The soldier's dext'rous art and leader's nobler skill.

LXIV.

But English Edward, tired the while
Of life inert and covert guile,
Most faithless to the peace so lately made,
Was northward bound again, poor Scotland to
invade.
Then Wallace, with his valiant band,
By Scotland's faithful sons recall'd,
Whom foreign yoke full sorely gall'd,
Must raise again his glaved hand
To smite the shackles from his native land.

LXV.

Brave hearts, who had in secret burn'd,
To see their country bear the yoke,
Hearing their Warden was return'd
Forth from their secret hidings broke,
Wood, cave, or mountain-cliff, and ran
To join the wondrous man.

proWess of the Scotch, when listed under the banners of another kingdom. But so romantic a story as that of De Longueville on the high seas, might, perhaps, though entirely fanciful, expect to pass with impunity. However, since De Longueville is afterwards frequently mentioned as a staunch

LXVI.

It was a sight to chase despair,
His standard floating on the air,
Which, curling oft with courteous wave,
Still seem'd to beckon to the brave.
And when approach'd within short space,
They saw his form and knew his face, —
That brow of hope, that step of power,
Which stateliest strode in danger's hour, —
"How glow'd each heart ! — "Himself we see !
"What, though but few and spent we be !
"The valiant heart despaireth never ;
"The rightful cause is strongest ever ;
"While Wallace lives, the land is free."

LXVII.

And he this flatt'ring hope pursued,
And war with England's King renew'd.
By martial stratagem he took
St. Johnston's stubborn town, a hold
So oft to faithless tyrants sold ;
And cautious patriots then forsook
Ignoble shelter, kept so long,
And join'd in arms the ardent throng,
Who with the Warden southward pass'd,
Like clouds increasing on the blast.

LXVIII.

Fife from the enemy he won,
And in his prosp'rous course held on,
Till Edward's strength, borne quickly down,
Held scarcely castle, tower, or town,
In all the southern shires ; and then
He turn'd him to the north again ;
Where from each wall'd defence, the foe expell'd,
Fled fast, Dundee alone still for King Edward held.

LXIX.

But the oppressor, blushing on his throne
To see the Scotch his warriors homeward chase,
And those, so lately crush'd, so powerful grown,
But ill could brook this sudden foul disgrace.
And he a base, unprincely compact made
With the Red Comyn, traitor, black of heart !
Who to their wicked plot, in secret laid,
Some other chieftains gain'd with wily art.
And he hath dared again to send
A noble army, all too brave
For such unmanly, hateful end,
A land of freedom to enslave.
At Falkirk soon was England's proudest boast
Marshall'd in grand array, a brave and powerful
host.

adherent of our hero, and also as fighting under Robert Bruce, and cannot therefore be supposed to be an imaginary personage, some credit is due to the account given of their first encounter, and the generous beginning of their friendship.

LXX.

But there with valiant foe to cope,
Soon on the field stood Scotland's hope,
E'en thirty thousand warriors, led

By noble Wallace ; each, that day,
Had cheerfully his heart's blood shed

The land to free from Southron's sway.

Alas ! had all her high-born chieftains been

But as their leader and their clansmen true,

She on that field a glorious day had seen,

And made, though match'd with them, in number
few,

King Edward's vaunted host that fatal day to rue.

LXXI.

But envy of a hero's fame,
Which so obscured each lofty name*,

Was meanly harbour'd in the breast

Of those who bore an honour'd crest.

But most of all Red Comyn nursed

In his dark breast this bane accursed,

That, with the lust of power combined,

O'er-master'd all his wretched mind.

Then to Lord Stewart, secretly,

Spoke with smooth words the traitor sly,

Advising that, to grace his name,
Being by right confess'd the man,

Who ought to lead the Scottish van,

He should the proud distinction claim.

And thus, as one of low estate,

With lip of scorn, and brow elate,

Did he, by traitors back'd, the godlike Wallace bate.

* Buchanan on this subject says:—"Having thus got a victory, though bloodless, (at Stanmore,) against so puissant a King, his enemies were so much the more enraged against him, and caused rumour to be scattered up and down, that Wallace did openly affect a supreme or tyrannical power, which the nobles, especially Bruce and the Comyn of the royal stock, took in mighty disdain. * * * And therefore they determined by all means to undermine the authority of Wallace. Edward was not ignorant of these disgusts, and therefore the next summer he levies a great army, consisting partly of English, partly of Scots, who had remained faithful to him, and came to Falkirk, which is a village, built in the very track of the wall of Severus, and is distant from Stirling little more than six miles. The Scots' army were not far from them, of sufficient strength, for they were thirty thousand, if the generals and leaders had agreed amongst themselves: their generals were, John Comyn, John Stuart, and William Wallace, the most flourishing persons amongst the Scots; the two former for their high descent and opulence; the latter for the glory of his former exploits.

"When the army, in three squadrons, was ready to fight, a new dispute arose, besides their former envy, who should lead the van of the army; and when all three stood upon their terms, the English decided the controversy, who, with banners displayed, marched with a swift pace towards them. Comyn and his forces retreated without striking a stroke. Stuart being best before and behind, was slain, with all that followed him: Wallace was sorely pressed upon in the front, and Bruce had fetched a compass about a hill, and fell on his rear; yet he was as little disturbed as, in such circumstances, he could possibly be, but retreated beyond the River Carron, where by the interposition of the river, he had got an opportunity to defend himself, and also to gather up the straggling fugitives; and Bruce, desirous to speak with him, he agreed to it. They two stood over against one to another where the river hath the narrowest channel and the highest

LXXII.

"Must noble chiefs of high degree,

"Scotland's best blood, be led by thee ?

"Thou, who art great but as the owl,

"Who plumed her wing from every fowl,

"And, hooting on her blasted tree,

"Would greater than the eagle be."

LXXIII.

"I stood," said Wallace, "for the right,

"When ye in holes shrank from the light ;

"My plumes spread to the blazing sun

"Which coveringly ye sought to shun.

"Ye are the owls, who from the gloom

"Of cleft and cranny boasting come ;

"Yet, hoot and chatter as ye may,

"I'll not to living man this day

"Resign the baton of command,

"Which Scotland's will gave to my hand,

"When spoil'd, divided, conquer'd, maim'd,

"None the dangerous honour claim'd ;

"Nor, till my head lie in the dust,

"Will it betray her sacred trust."

LXXIV.

With flashing eye, and dark red brow,

He utter'd then a hasty vow †,

Seeing the snare by treason laid,

So strongly wov'n, so widely spread,

banks. * * * * This battle was fought on the 22d of July, when there fell of the Scots above ten thousand, of whom, of the nobles, were, John Stuart, Macduff, Earl of Fife, and of Wallace his army, John Grene, the most valiant person of the Scots, next to Wallace himself. †

Holinshed likewise mentions the envy and jealous hatred which many of the nobles, particularly Comyn, conceived against Wallace, as a man of comparatively mean origin, and their entering into a league with Edward to betray him. He notices the dispute between Wallace and Stuart about leading the van, at the battle of Falkirk, and Comyn and his followers quitting the field as the armies were about to join battle, and the great slaughter made of the Scots by Bruce; but he adds: "Yet Wallace left nothing undone that might pertain to the duty of a valiant captain. But at length all his endeavours, notwithstanding the Scots (overcome with multitude of numbers, as the Scottish writers say,) were sleine in such huge numbers that he was constrained to draw out of the field with such small remnant as were left alive."

He then relates the meeting between him and Bruce, on the banks of the Carron.

† That Wallace withdrew from the field, in the bitterness of his resentment for the ingratitude of the nobles and the insults he received, binding himself by a rash vow from taking any part in the combat, is not mentioned, I believe, by any general historian or chronicler; but as it is stated so circumstantially by Harry the Minstrel, who professes to take the matter of his poem so scrupulously from the life of Wallace, written by his friend and contemporary Blair, and being the only shade cast upon the public virtue of our hero, which a friend would willingly (but for the love of truth) have omitted, I must consider it as authentic. The private visit received by him from Edward's queen while in England, and other matters tending to add to the glory of his friend and hero, are of a more doubtful character, and have not therefore been admitted into this legend.

And slowly from the field withdrew ;
While, slow and silent at his back,
March'd on his wayward, cheerless track,
Ten thousand Scotchmen staunch and true,
Who would, let good or ill betide,
By noble Wallace still abide.

LXXV.

To them it was a strange and irksome sight,
As on a gentle hill apart they stood,
To see arm'd squadrons closing in the fight,
And the fierce onset to their work of blood.
To see their well-known banners as they moved
When dark opposing ranks with ranks are blend-
ing,
To see the lofty plumes of those they loved
Wave to and fro, with the brave foe contending.

LXXVI.

It hath been said that gifted seer,
On the dark mountain's cloudy screen,
Forms of departed chiefs hath seen,
In seeming armour braced with sword and spear,
O'erlooking some dire field of death,
Where warriors, warm with vital breath,
Of kindred lineage, urge the glorious strife ;
They grasp their shadowy spears, and forward
bend
In eager sympathy, as if to lend
Their aid to those, with whom in mortal life,
They did such rousing, noble conflict share, —
As if their phantom-forms of empty air
Still own'd a kindred sense of what on earth they
were.

LXXVII.

So Wallace and his faithful band survey'd
The fatal fight, when Scotland was betray'd
By the false Comyn, who most basely fled,
And from the field a thousand warriors led.
O how his noble spirit burn'd,
When from his post the traitor turn'd,
Leaving the Stewart sorely prest !
Who with his hardy Scots the wave
Of hostile strength did stoutly breast,
Like clansmen true and brave.
His visage flush'd with angry glow,
He clench'd his hand, and struck his brow.
His heart within his bosom beat
As it would break from mortal seat.
And when at last they yielded space,
And ye beheld their piteous case,
Big scalding tears coursed down his manly face.

LXXVIII.

But, ah ! that fatal vow, that pride
Which doth in mortal breast reside,

Of noble minds the earthly bane,
His gen'rous impulse to restrain,
Had power in that dark moment ! still
It struggled with his better will.
And who, superior to this tempter's power,
Hath ever braved it in the trying hour ?
Oh ! only he, who, strong in heavenly grace,
Taking from wretched thralls, of woman born,
Their wicked mockery, their stripes, their
scorn,
Gave his devoted life for all the human race.
He viewed the dire disastrous fight,
Like a fall'n cherub of the light,
Whose tossing form now tow'rs, now bends,
And with its darken'd self contends,
Till many a brave and honour'd head
Lay still'd upon a bloody bed,
And Stewart, midst his clans, was number'd with
the dead.

LXXIX.

Then rose he, like a rushing wind,
Which strath or cavern hath confin'd,
And straight through England's dark array,
With his bold mates, hew'd out his bloody way :
A perilous daring way, and dear the cost !
For there the good, the gallant Grame he lost.
The gallant Grame, whose name shall long
Remember'd be in Scottish song,
And second still to Wallace wight
In lowland tale of winter's night,
Who loved him as he never loved another.
Low to the dust he bent his head,
Deep was his anguish o'er the dead. —
“ That daring hand, that gentle heart !
“ That lofty mind ! and must we part ?
“ My brother, oh, my brother !”

LXXX.

But how shall verse feign'd accents borrow,
To speak with words their speechless sorrow,
Who, on the trampled, blood-stain'd green
Of battle-field, must leave behind
What to their souls hath dearest been,
To stiffen in the wind ?
The soldier there, or kern or chief,
Short parley holds with shrewdest grief ;
Passing to noisy strife from what, alas !
Shall from his sadden'd fancy never pass, —
The look that e'en through writhing pain,
Says, “ Shall we never meet again ?”
The grasping hand or sign but known,
Of tenderness, to one alone :
The lip convulsed, the life's last shiver ;
The new-closed eye, yet closed for ever,
The brave must quit ; — but, from the ground,
They, like th' enchafed lion bound.

Rage is their sorrow, grimly fed,
And blood the tears they shed.*

LXXXI.

Too bold it were for me to tell,
How Wallace fought; how on the brave
The ruin of his anguish fell,
Ere from the field, his bands to save,
He broke away, and sternly bore
Along the stony Carron's shore.
The dark brown water, hurrying past,
O'er stone and rocky fragment cast
The white churn'd foam with angry bray,
And wheel'd and bubbled on its way,
And lash'd the margin's flinty guard,
By him unheeded and unheard!
Albeit, his mind, dark with despair,
And grief, and rage, was imaged there.

LXXXII.

And there, 'tis said, the Bruce descried
Him marching on the rival side.
The Bruce, whose right the country own'd,
(Had he possess'd a princely soul,
Disdaining Edward's base controul,
To be upon her chair of power enthron'd.

LXXXIII.

"Ho, chieftain!" said the princely slave,
"Thou who pretendst the land to save
"With rebel sword, opposed to me,
"Who should of right thy sovereign be;
"Thinkst thou the Scottish crown to wear,
"Opposed by foreign power so great,
"By those at home of high estate?
"Cast the vain thought to empty air,
"Thy fatal mad ambition to despair."

LXXXIV.

"No!" Wallace answer'd; "I have shown
"This sword to gain or power or throne
"Was never drawn; no act of mine
"Did e'er with selfish thought combine.

* Blind Harry, page 328.—

When Wallace saw this knight [Grame] to dead was brought

The piteous pain so sore thrill'd in his thought;
All out of kind it alter'd his courage,
His wit in war was then but a wood rage.
His horse him bore in field where so him list,
For of himself as then little he wist;
Like a wild beast that were from reason rent,
As wildly into the host he went;
Dinging on hard; what Southeron he right hit
Straight upon horse again might never sit.
Into that rage full fell folk he dang down,
All about him was red a full great room."

† As we find the English not pursuing this victory, but presently retiring to their own country, whilst Wallace is at liberty to summon a general convention of the states at St. Johnston, it is probable they received some severe check from the arm of that chieftain after the battle, though it is not stated in general history. It is indeed said, that the English retired for fear of an attack from the French in their

"Courage to dare, when others lay
"In brutish sloth, beneath the sway
"Of foreign tyranny; to save
"From thralldom, hateful to the brave,
"My friends, my countrymen; to stand
"For right and honour of the land,
"When nobler arms shrank from the task,
"In a vile tyrant's smiles to bask,
"Hath been my simple warrant of command.
"And Scotland hath confirm'd it.—No;
"Nor shall this hand her charge forego,
"While Southron in the land is found
"To lord it o'er one rood of Scottish ground,
"Or till my head be low."

LXXXV.

Deep blush'd the Bruce, shame's conscious glow!
And own'd the hero's words were true;
Then with his followers, sad and slow,
To Edward's camp withdrew.

LXXXVI.

But fleeting was the mighty tyrant's boast,
(So says the learned clerk of old,
Who first our hero's story told,
Fleeting the triumph of his numerous host.
For with the morning's early dawn
The Scottish soldiers, scatter'd wide,
Hath Wallace round his standard drawn,
Hath cheer'd their spirits, roused their pride,
And led them, where their foes they found,
All listless, scatter'd on the ground. †
On whom with furious charge they set;
And many a valiant Southron met
A bloody death, waked from the gleam
And inward vision of a morning's dream;
Where Fancy in his native home
Led him through well-known fields to roam,
Where orchard, cot, and copse appear,
And moving forms of kindred dear;—
For in the rugged soldier's brain
She oft will fairy court maintain

own country; but as no such attack followed or seemed really to have been intended, it is likely that this was only their excuse for retreating. This opinion is corroborated, too, by the manner in which Holinshed mentions Wallace's resignation of all public authority soon after, at Perth or St. Johnston:—

"But notwithstanding all these valiant speeches of Wallace, (alluding to his conference with Bruce on the banks of the Carron.) when he considered the unfortunate discomfiture by him so treacherously received, he came to Perth, and there uttering, by complaint, the injurious envie of the nobles against him, he renounced and discharged himself of all the authority which had been committed to his hands touching the governance of the realm, and went into France, as saith Lesleus; but Johanus Maior saith, he never came there, though he will not fathle deny it."

Had Edward, after gaining so great a victory at Falkirk, received no check, Wallace could not have been in condition to renounce his authority in so high a tone as is here imputed to him by an English author, who certainly cannot be accused of any partiality to the Scotch.

Full gently, as beneath the dusk
Of hard-ribb'd shell, the fair pearl lies,
Or silken bud in prickly husk ;—
He from her visions sweet unseals his eyes
To see the stern foe o'er him darkly bending,
To feel the deep-thrust blade his bosom rending.

LXXXVII.

So many Southrons there were slain,
So fatal was the vengeance ta'en,
That Edward, with enfeebled force,
Check'd mad ambition's unblest'd course,
And to his own fair land return'd again.

LXXXVIII.

Then Wallace thought from tower and town
And castled hold, as heretofore,
To pull each English banner down
And free the land once more.
But ah ! the generous hope he must forego !
Envy and pride have Scotland's cause be-
tray'd ;
All now are backward, listless, cold, and slow
His patriot arm to aid.

LXXXIX.

Then to St. Johnston, at his call,
Met burghers, knights, and nobles all,
Who on the pressing summons wait,
A full assembly of the state.
There he resign'd his ensigns of command,
Which erst had kept the proudest Thanes in awe ;
Retaining in that potent hand
Which thrice redeem'd its native land *,
His simple sword alone, with which he stood
'Midst all her haughty peers of princely blood,
The noblest man e'er Scotland saw.

XC.

And thus did Scottish lords requite
Him, who, in many a bloody fight,

* First after the battle of Biggar he freed the country generally from dependence on England, though Edward still held many places of strength in Scotland ; then, after the burning of the Barns of Ayr, he almost entirely drove his adherents out of it ; and thirdly, after the battle of Stirling he completely freed Scotland from the enemy.

† I have in this part of the story adhered to Blair and the Minstrel, though there is nothing correspondent to it in either Holinshed or Buchanan, except what may be gleaned from the following passages. After his account of the battle of Roslin, fought probably when Wallace was in France, and the succeeding invasion of Edward into Scotland, Holinshed says, " The Scots perceiving they were not of puissance able to resist his invasion, withdrew to their strengths, by means whereof the English army passed through all Scotland, even from the south parts unto the north, and found few or none to make resistance, except Wallace, and such as followed his opinion, who were fled to the mountains and the woods," &c.

Buchanan says, " To blot out the ignominy (of his defeat at Roslin), and put an end at once to a long and tedious war, he (Edward) therefore levies an army bigger than ever he had before, and assaulted Scotland both by sea and land, and made spoil of it even unto the uttermost borders of Ross, no man daring to oppose so great a force. Only Wallace and

The country's champion stood ; her people's Wallace
wight.

O black ingratitude ! thy seemly place
Is in the brutish, mean, and envious heart ;
How is it, then, thou dost so oft disgrace
The learn'd, the wise, the highly born, and art
Like cank'ring blights, the oak that scathe,
While fern and brushwood thrive beneath ;
Like dank mould on the marble tomb,
While graves of turf with violets bloom.
Selfish ambition makes the lordliest Thane
A meaner man than he, who drives the loaded wain.

XCII.

And he with heavy heart his native shore
Forsook to join his old ally once more.
And in Guienne right valiant deeds he wrought ;
Till under iron yoke oppress'd,
From north to south, from east to west,
His most unhappy groaning country sought
The generous aid she never sought in vain ;
And with a son's unwearied love,
Which fortune, time, nor wrongs could
move,
He to maintain her cause again repass'd the
main.
The which right bravely he maintain'd ;
And divers castles soon regain'd.
The sound e'en of his whisper'd name
Revived in faithful hearts the smother'd flame,
And many secretly to join his standard came, †
St. Johnston's leaguer'd walls at length
Were yielded to his growing strength ;
And on, with still increasing force,
He southward held his glorious course.

XCIII.

Then Edward thought the chief to gain,
And win him to his princely side
With treasured gold and honours vain ‡,
And English manors fair and wide.

his men, sometimes in the front, sometimes in the rear, sometimes in the flanks, would snap either those that rashly went before or loitered behind, or that in plundering straggled too far from the main body ; neither did he suffer them to stray from their colours.

† Holinshed's Chronicles.—" It is said that King Edward required by a messenger sent unto this Wallace, that if he would come in and be sworn his liege-man and true subject, he would have at his hands great lordships and possessions within England to mainteine his post, as was requisite to a man of verie honorable estate. But Wallace refused these offers, saing that he preferred liberty with small revenues in Scotland before anie possession of lands in England, were the same never so great ; considering he might not enjoy them under the yoke of bondage. * * * * * Furthermore before his (King Edward's) departure out of Scotland, he appointed all the Scottish nobles to assemble at Scone, where he called them to take a new oth, that from henceforth they would take him for their Sovereigne Lord, and to obete him in all things as loial subjects. All the nobility of Scotland was sworne to him that day, Wallace onlie excepted, who eschued more than the companie of a serpent to have anie thing to doo with the English, touching any agreement to be made with them, agreeable to their desires."

But with flush'd brow and angry eye
 And words that shrewdly from him broke,
 Stately and stern, he thus bespoke
 The secret embassy.
 "These kingly profers made to me!
 "Return and say it may not be.
 "Lions shall troop with herdsmen's droves,
 "And eagles roost with household doves,
 "Ere William Wallace draw his blade
 "With those who Scotland's rights invade.
 "Yea, e'en the touch of bondsman's chain,
 "Would in my thrilling members wake
 "A loathful sense of rankling pain
 "Like coiling of a venom'd snake."
 The King abash'd, in courtly hold,
 Received this answer sooth and bold.

XCIII.

But ah! the fated hour drew near
 That stopp'd him in his bold career.
 Menteith, a name which from that day, I ween,
 Hateful to ever Scottish ear hath been*,
 Which highland kern and lowland hind
 Have still with treacherous guile combined,—
 The false Menteith, who under show
 Of friendship, sold him to the foe,
 Stole on a weary secret hour,
 As sleeping and disarm'd he lay,
 And to King Edward's vengeful power
 Gave up the mighty prey.

XCIV.

At sight of noble Wallace bound,
 The Southrons raised a vaunting sound,
 As if the bands which round his limbs they drew,
 Had fetter'd Scotland too.
 They gazed and wonder'd at their mighty thrall;
 Then nearer drew with movements slow,
 And spoke in whispers deep and low.—
 "This is the man to whom did yield
 "The doughtiest knight in banner'd field,
 "Whose threat'ning frown the boldest did appal!"
 And, as his clanging fetters look,
 Cast on him oft a fearful look,
 As doubting if in verity
 Such limbs with iron might holden be.
 While boldest spearmen by the pris'ner's side
 With beating heart and haggard visage ride.

Buchanan also says, "Edward sought by great promises to bring him over to his party; but his constant tone was, that he devoted his life to his country, to which it was due; and if he could do it no further service, yet he would die in pious endeavours for its defence." He also mentions Wallace's refusing to take the oath of allegiance, taken by all the nobles of Scotland.

* Buchanan, after relating the tyrannical use which Edward made of his power, burning the records of Scotland, &c., and the story of Bruce being betrayed by Comyn, &c. &c., says, "About this time also, Wallace was betrayed in the county of Glasgow (where he had hid himself) by his own familiar friend John Menteith, whom the English had corrupted with money, and so was sent to London, where by Edward's com-

XCV.

Thus on to London they have pass'd
 And in the Tower's dark dungeons cast
 The hero; where, in silent gloom,
 He must abide his fatal doom.
 There pent, from earthly strife apart,
 Scotland still rested on his heart.
 Ay; every son that breathed her air
 On cultured plain, on mountain bare,
 From chief in princely castle bred
 To herdsman in his sheeling shed,
 From war-dight youth to barefoot child,
 Who picks in brake the berry wild;—
 Her gleamy lakes and torrents clear,
 Her towns, her towers, her forests green,
 Her fields where warlike coil hath been,
 Are to his soul most dear.

XCVI.

His fetter'd hands support a head,
 Whose nodding plume had terror spread
 O'er many a face, e'en seen from far,
 When moving in the ranks of war.
 Lonely and dark, unseen of man,
 But in that Presence, whose keen eye
 Can darkest breast of mortal scan,
 The bitter thought and heavy sigh
 Have way uncheck'd, and utter'd grief
 Gave to his burthen'd heart a soothing, sad relief.

XCVII.

"It hath not to this arm been given
 "From the fell tyrant's grinding hand
 "To set thee free, my native land!
 "I bow me to the will of Heaven!
 "But have I run my course in vain?
 "Shalt thou in bondage still remain?
 "The spoiler o'er thee still have sway,
 "Till virtue, strength, and pride decay?
 "O no! still panting to be free,
 "Thy noblest hearts will think of me.
 "Some brave, devoted, happier son
 "Will do the work I would have done;
 "And blest be he, who nobly draws
 "His sword in Scotland's cause!"

XCVIII.

Perhaps his vision'd eye might turn
 To him who fought at Bannockburn.

mands he was wofully butchered and his limbs, for the terror of others, hanged up in the most noted places of London and Scotland."

Holinshed says, "About the same time was William Wallace taken at Glasgow, by means of Sir John Menteith and others, in whom he had ever put a most special trust; but they being corrupted with the offer of large rewards, promised by King Edward to such as wuld helpe to take him, wrought such fetches, that he was apprehended at last by Odomere de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, who, with a great power of men, brought him to London, where he was put to death, and his quarters sent to Scotland, and set up in sundrie great towns there for a spectacle, as it were, to give example to others."

Or is it wildness to believe
 A dying patriot may receive,
 (Who sees his mortal span diminish'd
 To nought, his generous task unfinish'd,
 A seeming fruitless end to cheer,
 Some glimpses of the gifted seer?
 O no! 'tis to his closing sight
 A beacon on a distant height, —

The moon's new crescent, seen in cloudy kirtled [night.

XCIX.

And much he strove with Christian grace,
 Of those who Scotland's foes had been,
 His soul's strong hatred to efface,

A work of grace, I ween!
 Meekly he bow'd o'er bead and book,
 And every worldly thought forsook.*

C.

But when he on the scaffold stood,
 And cast aside his mantling hood,
 He eyed the crowd, whose sullen hum,
 Did from ten thousand upcast faces come,
 And armed guardsmen standing round,
 As he was wont on battle-ground,
 Where still with calm and portly air,
 He faced the foe with visage bare;
 As if with baton of command
 And vassal chiefs on either hand,
 Towering her marshall'd files between,
 He Scotland's warden still had been.
 This flash of mortal feeling past, —
 This gleam of pride, it was the last.
 As on the cloud's dense skirt will play,
 While the dark tempest rolls away,
 One parting blaze; then thunders cease,
 The sky is clear, and all is peace.
 And he with ready will a nobler head
 Than e'er was circled with a kingly crown,
 Upon the block to headsman's stroke laid down,
 And for his native land a generous victim bled.

CI.

What though that head o'er gate or tower,
 Like felons on the cursed tree,

* The blind Minstrel gives this account of his death, page 398.—

“ On Wednesday false Southeron forth him brought
 To martyr him as they before had wrought.
 Right sooth it is a Martyr Wallace was,
 As Oswald, Edward, Edmund, and Thomas.
 Of men in arms led him a full great rout.
 With a bold spirit Wallace blinked about.
 A Priest he asked for God who died on tree.”

Then, after telling how King Edward refused his request,
 and was rebuked for so doing by an English bishop, he continues,—

“ A sheriff gart his clerk soon from him pass,
 Right as they durst, they grant what he would ask.
 A psalter book Wallace had on him ever,
 From his childhood with it he would not sever;

Visited by sun and shower,
 A ghastly spectacle may be!
 A fair renown, as years wear on,
 Shall Scotland give her noblest son.
 The course of ages shall not dim
 The love that she shall bear to him.

CII.

In many a castle, town, and plain,
 Mountain and forest, still remain
 Fondly cherish'd spots, which claim
 The proud distinction of his honour'd name.†

CIII.

Swells the huge ruin's massy heap
 In castled court, 'tis Wallace' keep.
 What stateliest o'er the rest may lower
 Of time-worn wall, where rook and daw,
 With wheeling flight and ceaseless caw,
 Keep busy stir, is Wallace' tower.
 If through the green wood's hanging screen,
 High o'er the deeply-bedded wave,
 The mouth of arching cleft is seen
 Dark yawning, it is Wallace' cave.
 If o'er its jutting barrier grey,
 Tinted by time, with furious din,
 The rude crags silver'd with its spray,
 Shoots the wild flood, 'tis Wallace' lin.
 And many a wood remains, and hill, and glen
 Haunted, 'tis said, of old by Wallace and his men.

CIV.

There schoolboy still doth haunt the sacred ground,
 And musing oft its pleasing influence own,
 As starting at his footsteps' echo'd sound,
 He feels himself alone.

CV.

Yea, e'en the cottage matron, at her wheel,
 Although with daily care and labour crost,
 Will o'er her heart the soothing magic feel,
 And of her country's ancient prowess boast;

Better he trowed in viage for to speed,
 But then he was dispulized of his weed.
 This grace he ask'd of Lord Clifford, that knight,
 To let him have his psalter book in sight;
 He gart a Priest it open before him hold,
 While they to him had done all that they would.
 Steadfast he read for ought they did him thare,
 Fell Southerons said that Wallace felt no sare.
 Good devotion, so was his beginning,
 Continued therewith, and fair was his ending,
 While speech and spirit all at once can fair
 To lasting bliss, we trow, for ever mare.”

† This is too well known to require any confirmation; but I cannot help mentioning the pleasure I lately received in being shown, by two simple country children on the Blantyre Craigs, opposite to Bothwell Castle (one of those castles which boasts the honour of having a Wallace's tower), the mark of Wallace's footstep in the rocky brink of a little trickling well.

While on the little shelf of treasured books,
For what can most of all her soul delight,
Beyond or ballad, tale, or jest, she looks, —
The history renown'd of Wallace wight.

CVI.

But chiefly to the soldier's breast
A thought of him will kindling come,
As waving high his bonnet's crest,
He listens to the rolling drum,
And trumpet's call and thrilling fife,
And bagpipe's loud and stormy strain,
Meet prelude to tumultuous strife
On the embattled plain.

CVII.

Whether in highland garb array'd,
With kirtle short and highland plaid,
Or button'd close in lowland vest,
Within his doughty grasp, broad sword, or gun be
press'd, —
Rememb'ring him, he still maintains
His country's cause on foreign plains,
To grace her name and earn her praise,
Led by the brave of modern days.*

CVIII.

Such, Abercrombie, fought with thee
On Egypt's dark embattled shore,
And near Corunna's bark-clad sea
With great and gallant Moore;

* I have named our distinguished Scotch leaders only as being naturally connected with the subject. That I have meant no neglect to other brave commanders of these warlike days, when our troops from every part of the United Kingdoms have fought so valiantly and successfully, under the ablest general that has appeared since the time of the great Marlborough, will, I suppose, be readily believed.

† Buchanan gives this noble testimony to his worth: —
“Such an end had this person, the most famous man of the age in which he lived, who deserved to be compared to the most renowned captains of ancient times, both for his greatness of mind in undertaking dangers, and for his valour and wisdom in overcoming them. For love to his country, he was second to none; who, when others were slaves, was alone free, neither could be induced by any rewards or moved by threats to forsake the public cause which he had once undertaken.”

With Baird, with Ferguson, and Grame,
A leader worthy of the name,
And fought in pride of Scotland's ancient fame
With firmer nerve and warmer will:
And wheresoe'er on hostile ground,
Or Scot or hardy Celt are found,
Thy spirit, noble Wallace, fighteth still!

CXIX.

O Scotland! proud may be thy boast!
Since Time his course through circling years hath
run,
There hath not shone, in Fame's bright host,
A nobler hero than thy patriot son.†

CX.

Manly and most devoted was the love
With which for thee unweariedly he strove;
No selfish lust of power, not e'en of fame,
Gave ardour to the pure and generous flame.
Rapid in action, terrible in fight,
In counsel wise, inflexible in right,
Was he, who did so oft, in olden days,
Thy humbled head from base oppression raise.
Then be it by thy generous spirit known,
Ready in freedom's cause to bleed,
Spurning corruption's worthless meed,
That in thy heart thou feelst this hero was thine
own!

“A thousand thre hundyr and the fyft yhere
Efter the byrth of our Lord dere,
Schyre John of Menteth in tha days
Tak in Glasgow Willame Walays,
And send him in-till Ingland swne,
Thare he was wateryd and wndwne,
Be dyspyte and hat envy;
There he tholyd this maryry.
In all Ingland thare was nought thane
As Willame Walays swa lele a mane.
Quhat he did agayne that natyown
Thai made him provocatyown:
Na to them oblyst nevr was he,
In fayth full owshype na sawte;
For in his tyme, I hard well say,
That fykkit thai ware, all tyme of fay.”

Wyntown's Chronicle, p. 130.

THE LEGEND OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

Is there a man, that, from some lofty steep,
Views in his wide survey the boundless deep,
When its vast waters, lined with sun and shade,
Wave beyond wave, in serried distance, fade
To the pale sky ;—or views it, dimly seen,
The shifting skreens of drifted mist between,
As the huge cloud dilates its sable form,
When grandly curtain'd by th' approaching storm,—
Who feels not his awed soul with wonder rise
To Him whose power created sea and skies,
Mountains and deserts, giving to the sight
The wonders of the day and of the night ?

But let some fleet be seen in warlike pride,
Whose stately ships the restless billows ride,
While each, with lofty masts and bright'ning sheen,
Of fair spread sails, moves like a vested queen ;—
Or rather, be some distant bark, astray,
Seen like a pilgrim on his lonely way,
Holding its steady course from port and shore,
A form distinct, a speck, and seen no more,—
How doth the pride, the sympathy, the flame,
Of human feeling stir his thrilling frame !
“ O Thou ! whose mandate dust inert obey'd !
“ What is this creature man whom Thou hast
made ? ”

I.

On Palos' shore, whose crowded strand
Bore priests and nobles of the land,
And rustic hinds and townsmen trim,
And harness'd soldiers stern and grim,
And lowly maids and dames of pride,
And infants by their mothers' side,—
The boldest seaman stood that e'er
Did bark or ship through tempest steer ;
And wise as bold, and good as wise ;

* Herrera's History of America, translated by Stevens, vol. i. p. 51.—Columbus was tall of stature, long visaged, of a majestic aspect, his nose hooked, his eyes grey, a complexion clear, somewhat ruddy; his beard and hair, when young, fair, though through many hardships they soon turned grey. He was witty and well-spoken, and eloquent, moderately grave, affable to strangers, to his own family mild. His conversation was discreet, which gained him the affection of those he had to deal with; and his presence attracted respect, having an air of authority and grandeur; always temperate in eating and drinking, and modest in his dress."

† It is curious to see the many objections, which were made by prejudice and ignorance, to his proposals; and also the means by which he became at length successful in his suit to the crown of Castile; to perceive what small considerations, and petty applications of individuals, are sometimes concerned

The magnet of a thousand eyes,
That on his form and features cast,
His noble mien and simple guise*,
In wonder seem'd to look their last:
A form which conscious worth is gracing,
A face where hope, the lines effacing
Of thought and care, bestow'd, in truth,
To the quick eyes' imperfect tracing
The look and air of youth.

II.

Who, in his lofty gait, and high
Expression of th' enlighten'd eye,
Had recognised in that bright hour
The disappointed suppliant of dull power,
Who had in vain of states and kings desired †
The pittance for his vast emprise required ?—
The patient sage, who, by his lamp's faint light,
O'er chart and map spent the long silent night? ‡—
The man who meekly fortune's buffets bore,
Trusting in One alone, whom heaven and earth
adore ?

III.

Another world is in his mind,
Peopled with creatures of his kind,
With hearts to feel, with minds to soar,
Thoughts to consider and explore ;
Souls, who might find, from trespass shriven,
Virtue on earth and joy in heaven.
That Power divine, whom storms obey,
(Whisper'd his heart,) a leading star,
Will guide him on his blessed way § ;
Brothers to join, by fate divided far.
Vain thoughts ! which heaven doth but ordain
In part to be, the rest, alas ! how vain !

in promoting or preventing the greatest events, see the Appendix, No. 11.

† Herrera: "He was very knowing in astrology, expert in navigation, understood Latin, and made verses."

‡ Herrera:—"As to religion, he was very zealous and devout, often saying, 'I will do this in the name of the Trinity;' kept the fasts of the church very strictly; often confessed and communicated; said all the canonical hours; abhorred swearing and blasphemy, had a peculiar devotion to our Lady and St. Francis; was very thankful to Almighty God for the mercies he received, zealous for God's honor, and very desirous of the conversion of the Indians. In other respects, he was a man of undaunted courage and high thought, fond of great enterprizes, patient, ready to forgive wrongs, and only desirous that offenders should be sensible of their faults; unmoved in the many troubles and adversities that attended him; ever relying on Divine Providence."

IV.

But hath there lived of mortal mould,
Whose fortunes with his thoughts could hold
An even race? Earth's greatest son
That e'er earn'd fame, or empire won,
Hath but fulfill'd, within a narrow scope,
A stinted portion of his ample hope.

With heavy sigh and look depress'd,
The greatest men will sometimes hear
The story of their acts address'd
To the young stranger's wond'ring ear,
And check the half-sworn tear.

Is it or modesty or pride
Which may not open praise abide?
No; read his inward thoughts: they tell,
His deeds of fame he prizes well.
But, ah! they in his fancy stand,
As relics of a blighted band,
Who, lost to man's approving sight,
Have perish'd in the gloom of night;
Ere yet the glorious light of day
Had glitter'd on their bright array.
His mightiest feat had once another,
Of high Imagination born,—
A loftier and a nobler brother,
From dear existence torn;
And she for those, who are not, steeps
Her soul in woe,—like Rachel, weeps.

V.

The signal given, with hasty strides
The sailors climb'd their ships' dark sides;
Their anchors weigh'd; and from the shore
Each stately vessel slowly bore.
High o'er the deeply shadow'd flood,
Upon his deck their leader stood,
And turn'd him to the parted land,
And bow'd his head and waved his hand.
And then, along the crowded strand,
A sound of many sounds combined,
That wax'd and waned upon the wind,
Burst like heaven's thunder, deep and grand;
A lengthen'd peal, which paused, and then
Renew'd, like that which loathly parts,
Oft on the ear return'd again,
The impulse of a thousand hearts;
But as the lengthen'd shouts subsided,
Distincter accents strike the ear,
Wafting across the current wide,
Heart-utter'd words of parting cheer:
"Oh! shall we ever see again
Those gallant souls re-cross the main?
"God keep the brave! God be their guide!
"God bear them safe through storm and tide!
"Their sails with fav'ring breezes swell!
"O brave Columbus! fare thee well!"

VI.

From shore and strait, and gulph and bay,
The vessels held their daring way,
Left far behind, in distance thrown,
All land to Moor or Christian known,
Left far behind the misty isle,
Whose fitful shroud, withdrawn the while,
Shows wood and hill and headland bright
To later seamen's wond'ring sight,
And tide and sea left far behind
That e'er bore freight of human kind;
Where ship or bark to shifting gales
E'er tack'd their course or spread their sails.
Around them lay a boundless main
In which to hold their silent reign;
But for the passing current's flow,
And cleft waves, brawling round the prow,
They might have thought some magic spell
Had bound them, weary fate! for ever there to
dwell.

VII.

What did this trackless waste supply
To soothe the mind or please the eye?
The rising morn through dim mist breaking,
The flicker'd east with purple streaking;
The mid-day cloud through thin air flying,
With deeper blue the blue sea dying;
Long ridgy waves their white manes rearing,
And in the broad gleam disappearing;
The broaden'd blazing sun declining,
And western waves like fire-flood shining;
The sky's vast dome to darkness given,
And all the glorious host of heaven.

VIII.

Full oft upon the deck, while others slept,
To mark the bearing of each well-known star
That shone aloft, or on th' horizon far,
The anxious Chief his lonely vigil kept;
The mournful wind, the hoarse wave breaking
near,
The breathing groans of sleep, the plunging lead,
The steersman's call, and his own stilly tread,
Are all the sounds of night that reach his ear.
His darker form stalk'd through the sable gloom
With gestures discomposed and features keen,
That might not in the face of day be seen,
Like some unblest spirit from the tomb.
Night after night, and day succeeding day,
So pass'd their dull, unvaried time away;
Till Hope, the seaman's worship'd queen, had flown
From every valiant heart but his alone;
Where still, by day, enthroned, she held her state
With sunny look and brow elate.

IX.

But soon his dauntless soul, which nought could bend,
 Nor hope delay'd, nor adverse fate subdue,
 With more redoubled danger must contend
 Than storm or wave—a fierce and angry crew.*
 “Dearly,” say they, “may we those visions rue
 “Which lured us from our native land,
 “A wretched, lost, devoted band,
 “Led on by hope’s delusive gleam,
 “The victims of a madman’s dream ;
 “Nor gold shall e’er be ours, nor fame ;
 “Not e’en the remnant of a name,
 “On some rude-letter’d stone to tell
 “On what strange coast our wreck befell.
 “For us no requiem shall be sung,
 “Nor prayer be said, nor passing knell
 “In holy church be rung.”

X.

To thoughts like these, all forms give way
 Of duty to a leader’s sway ;
 All habits of respect, that bind
 With easy tie the human mind.
 E’en love and admiration throw
 Their nobler bands aside, nor show
 A gentler mien ; relations, friends,
 Glare on him now like angry fiends ;
 And, as he moves, ah, wretched cheer !
 Their mutter’d curses reach his ear,
 But all undaunted, firm and sage,
 He scorns their threats, yet thus he soothes their rage :
 “I brought you from your native shore
 “An unknown ocean to explore.
 “I brought you, partners, by my side,
 “Want, toil, and danger, to abide.
 “Yet weary stillness hath so soon subdued
 “The buoyant soul, the heart of pride,
 “Men who in battle’s brunt full oft have firmly
 stood.
 “That to some nearing coast we bear,
 “How many cheering signs declare !
 “Way-faring birds the blue air ranging,
 “Their shadowy line to blue air changing,

* Herrera, vol. i. p. 37. — “The men being all unacquainted with that voyage, and seeing no hopes of any comfort, nothing appearing but sky and water for so many days, all of them carefully observed every token they saw, being then further from land than any man had ever been. The 19th of September, a sea-gull came to the Admiral’s ship * * * As the aforesaid tokens proved of no effect, the men’s fears increased, and they took occasion to mutter, gathering in parcels aboard the ships, saying that the Admiral, in a mad humour, had thought to make himself great at the expense of their lives, and though they had done their duty, and sailed further from land than ever any man had done before, they ought not to contribute to their own destruction, still proceeding without any reason till their provisions failed them, which, though they were ever so sparing, would not suffice to carry them back, no more than the ships, that were already very crazy, so that nobody would think they had done amiss; and that so many had opposed the Admiral’s project, the more credit would be given to them. Nay, there wanted not some who said, that, to put an end to all debates, the best way would be

“Pass o’er our heads in frequent flocks ;
 “While sea-weed from the parent rocks
 “With fibry roots, but newly torn,
 “In tressy lengthen’d wreaths are on the clear wave
 borne.
 “Nay, has not e’en the drifting current brought
 “Things of rude art,—of human cunning wrought?
 “Be yet two days your patience tried,
 “And if no shore be then descried,
 “E’en turn your dastard prows again,
 “And cast your leader to the main.”

XI.

And thus awhile with steady hand
 He kept in check a wayward band,
 Who but with half-express’d disdain
 Their rebel spirit could restrain.
 The vet’ran rough as war-worn steel,
 Oft spurn’d the deck with grating heel ;
 The seaman, bending o’er the flood,
 With stony gaze all listless stood ;
 The sturdy bandit, wildly rude,
 Sang, as he strode, some garbled strain,
 Expressive of each fitful mood.
 Timed by his sabre’s jangling chain
 The proud Castilian, boasted name !
 Child of an ancient race
 Which proudly prized its spotless fame,
 And deem’d all fear disgrace,
 Felt quench’d within him honour’s generous flame,
 And in his gather’d mantle wrapp’d his face.

XII.

So pass’d the day, the night, the second day
 With its red setting sun’s extinguish’d ray.
 Dark, solemn midnight coped the ocean wide,
 When from his watchful stand Columbus cried,
 “A light, a light !”—blest sounds that rang
 In every ear.—At once they sprang
 With haste aloft, and, peering bright,
 Descried afar the blessed sight.
 “It moves, it slowly moves, like ray
 “Of torch that guides some wand’rer’s way ! †

to throw him into the sea, and say he had unfortunately fallen in as he was attentively gazing on the stars; and since nobody would go about to inquire into the truth of it, that was the best means for them to return and save themselves. Thus the mutinous temper went on from day to day, and the evil designs of the men, which very much perplexed Columbus: but sometimes giving good words, and at other times putting them in mind of the punishment they would incur, if they obstructed the voyage, he cured their insolence with fear; and as a confirmation of the hopes he gave them of concluding their voyage successfully, he often put them in mind of the above-mentioned signs and tokens, promising they would soon find a vast rich country, where they would all conclude their labour well bestowed.”

† Herrera:—“..... But afterwards it was seen twice, and looked like a little candle raised up, and then taken down; and Columbus did not question but it was a true light, and that they were near land, and so it proved, and it was of people passing from one house to another.”—(See Appendix, No. III.)

"And other lights more distant, seeming
 "As if from town or hamlet streaming!
 "'Tis land, 'tis peopled land; man dwelleth
 there,

"And thou, O God of Heaven! hast heard thy
 servant's prayer!"

XIII.

Returning day gave to their view
 The distant shore and headlands blue
 Of long-sought land. Then rose on air
 Loud shouts of joy, mix'd wildly strange
 With voice of weeping and of prayer,
 Expressive of their blessed change
 From death to life, from fierce to kind,

From all that sinks, to all that elevates the mind.

Those who by faithless fear ensnared,
 Had their brave chief so rudely dared,
 Now, with keen self-upbraiding stung,
 With every manly feeling wrung,
 Repentant tears, looks that entreat,
 Are kneeling at his worship'd feet.

"O pardon blinded, stubborn guilt!

"O henceforth make us what thou wilt!

"Our hands, our hearts, our lives are thine,

"Thou wondrous man! led on by power divine!"

XIV.

Ah! would some magic could arrest
 The generous feelings of the breast,
 Which 'thwart the common baser mass
 Of sordid thoughts, so fleetly pass,—

A sun glimpse through the storm!
 The rent cloud closes, tempests swell,
 And its late path we cannot tell;
 Lost is its trace and form.

No; not on earth such fugitives are bound;
 In some veild future state will the bless'd charm be
 found.

XV.

Columbus led them to the shore,
 Which ship had never touch'd before;
 And there he knelt upon the strand
 To thank the God of sea and land*;

* Herrera, vol. i. p. 46.—"When day appeared, they perceived it was an island fifteen leagues in length, plain, much wooded, well watered, having a lake of fresh water in the middle of it, well stored with people, who stood full of admiration on the shore imagining the ships to be some monsters, and with the utmost impatience to know what they were; and the Spaniards were no less eager to be on land. The Admiral went ashore in his boat, armed, and the royal colours flying, as did the captains Martin Monzo Pinzon and Vincent Yanez Pinzon, carrying the colours of their enterprize, being a green cross, with some crowns, and the names of their Catholic Majesties. Having all of them kissed the ground, and on their knees given thanks to God for the goodness he had shown them, the Admiral stood up, and gave that island the name of St. Salvador, which the natives call Cannaham, being one of those afterwards called the Lucayo Islands, 950 leagues from the Canaries, discovered after they had sailed thirty-three days. Then, with the proper solemnity of expressions,

And there, with mien and look elate,
 Gave welcome to each toil-worn mate.
 And lured with courteous signs of cheer,
 The dusky natives gath'ring near;
 Who on them gazed with wond'ring eyes,
 As mission'd spirits from the skies.
 And there did he possession claim,
 In Isabella's royal name.

XVI.

It was a land, unmarr'd by art,
 To please the eye and cheer the heart:
 The natives' simple huts were seen
 Peeping their palmy groves between,—
 Groves, where each dome of sweepy leaves
 In air of morning gently heaves,
 And, as the deep vans fall and rise,
 Changes its richly verdant dies;

A land whose simple sons till now
 Had scarcely seen a careful brow;
 They spent at will each passing day
 In lightsome toil or active play.
 Some their light canoes were guiding,
 Along the shore's sweet margin gliding.
 Some in the sunny sea were swimming,
 The bright waves o'er their dark forms gleam-

ing;
 Some on the beach for shell-fish stooping
 Or on the smooth sand gaily trooping;
 Or in link'd circles featly dancing
 With golden braid and bracelet glancing.
 By shelter'd door were infants creeping,
 Or on the shaded herbage sleeping;
 Gay feather'd birds the air were winging,
 And parrots on their high perch swinging,
 While humming-birds, like sparks of light,
 Twinkled and vanish'd from the sight.

XVII.

They eyed the wondrous strangers o'er and
 o'er,—

Those beings of the ocean and the air †,
 With humble, timid reverence; all their store
 Of gather'd wealth inviting them to share;

he took possession of it in the name of their Catholic Majesties, for the crowns of Castile and Leon, testified by Roderick Escovedo, notary of the fleet, a great multitude of the natives looking on. The Spaniards immediately owned him for their Admiral and Viceroy, and swore obedience to him as representing the King's person in that country, with all the joy and satisfaction that so great an event deserved, all of them begging his pardon for the trouble and uneasiness they had given him, by inconstancy and faint-heartedness."

† It is often mentioned by Herrera, that the Indians considered the Spaniards as beings come from heaven. It is mentioned, page 55., that in an island, where Columbus had sent his men to explore the interior, "The prime men came out to meet them, led them by the arms, and lodged them in one of those new houses, causing them to sit down on seats made of one solid piece of wood in the shape of a beast with very short legs, the tail turned up, and the head before, with eyes and ears of gold; and all the Indians sat about them on

To share whate'er their lowly cabins hold ;
Their feather'd crowns, their fruits, their arms,
their gold.

Their gold, that fatal gift ! — O foul disgrace !
Repaid with cruel wreck of all their harmless race.

XVIII.

There some short, pleasing days with them he
dwelt,

And all their simple kindness dearly felt,
But they of other countries told,
Not distant, where the sun declines,
Where reign Caziques o'er warriors bold,
Rich with the gold of countless mines.
And he to other islands sail'd,
And was by other natives hail'd.

Then on Hispaniola's shore,
Where bays and harbours to explore
Much time he spent, a simple tower
Of wood he built, the seat to be
And shelter of Spain's infant power ;
Hoping the nursing fair to see,
Amidst those harmless people shoot
Its stately stem from slender root.

There nine and thirty chosen men he placed,
Gave parting words of counsel and of cheer* ;
One after one his nobler friends embraced,
And to the Indian chieftain, standing near,
" Befriend my friends, and give them aid,
" When I am gone," he kindly said,
Bless'd them, and left them there his homeward
course to steer.

XIX.

His prayer to heaven for them preferr'd
Was not, alas ! with favour heard.
Oft, as his ship the land forsook,
He landward turn'd his farewell look,
And cheer'd his Spaniards cross the wave,
Who distant answer faintly gave ;
Distant but cheerful. On the strand
He saw their clothed figures stand
With naked forms link'd hand in hand ; —
Saw thus caress'd, assured, and bold,
Those he should never more behold.
Some simple Indians, gently won,
To visit land, where sets the sun

the ground, and one after another went to kiss their feet and hands, believing they came from heaven ; and gave them boiled roots to eat, which tasted like chestnuts, (probably potatoes,) and entreated them to stay there, or at least rest themselves for five or six days, because the Indians that went with them said many kind things of them. Abundance of women coming in to see them, all the men went out, and they with the same admiration kissed their feet and hands, touching them as if they had been holy things, offering what they brought," &c. &c.

* Herrera, after mentioning the building of the fort or rather tower of wood, says, — " He made choice of thirty-nine men to stay in the fort, such as were most willing, cheerful, and of good disposition ; the strongest and best able to endure fatigues of all that he had. * * * Whom he furnished with biscuit and wine, and other provisions, for a year, leaving seeds to sow, and all the things he had brought to barter,

In clouds of amber, and behold,
The wonders oft by Spaniards told ;
Stood silent by themselves apart,
With nature's yearnings at their heart,
And saw the coast of fading blue
Wear soft and sadly from their view.
But soon by their new comrades cheer'd,
As o'er the waves the ship career'd,
Their wond'ring eyes aloft were cast
On white swoll sails and stately mast,
And check'ring shrouds, depicted fair,
On azure sea and azure air ;
And felt, as feels the truant boy,
Who, having climb'd some crumbling mound
Or ruin'd tower, looks wildly round, —
A thrilling, fearful joy.

XX.

Then with his two small barks again
The dauntless Chief traversed the main ;
But not with fair and fav'ring gales
That erst had fill'd his western sails :
Fierce winds with adverse winds contended ;
Rose the dark deep, — dark heaven descended,
And threaten'd, in the furious strife,
The ships to sink with all their freight of precious
life.

XXI.

In this dread case, well may be guess'd
What dismal thoughts his soul depress'd :
" And must I in th' o'erwhelming deep,
" Our bold achievement all unknown,
" With these my brave adventurers sleep, —
" What we have done to dark oblivion
thrown ?
" Sink, body ! to thy wat'ry grave,
" If so God will ; but let me save
" This noble fruitage of my mind,
" And leave my name and deeds behind !"

XXII.

Upon a scroll, with hasty pen,
His wondrous tale he traced †,
View'd it with tearful eyes, and then
Within a casket placed.

being a great quantity, as also the great guns, and other arms, that were in the ship and boat that belonged to it." See Appendix, No. IV. for the speech which Columbus made to them on his departure.

† Herrera, book ii. chap. 2. — " Tuesday the 12th of February, the sea began to swell with great and dangerous storms, and he drove most of the night without any sail: afterwards he put out a little sail. The waves broke and wrecked the ships. The next morning the wind slackened; but on Wednesday night it rose again with dreadful waves, which hindered the ship's way, so that he could not shift them. The Admiral kept under a main-top-sail, reefed only to bear up the ship against the waves; but perceiving how great the danger was, he let it run before the wind, there being no remedy. * * * The Admiral finding himself near death, to the end that some knowledge might come to their Catholic Majesties of

"Perhaps," said he, "by vessel bound
 "On western cruize thou wilt be found ;
 "Or make, sped by the current swift,
 "To Christian shore thy happy drift.
 "Thy story may by friendly eyes be read ;
 "O'er our untimely fate warm tears be shed ;
 "Our deeds rehearsed by many an eager tongue,
 "And requiems for our parted souls be sung."

This casket to the sea he gave ;
 Quick sank and rose the freightage light,—
 Appear'd on many a booming wave,
 Then floated far away from his still gazing sight.
 Yet after many a peril braved,—
 Of many an adverse wind the sport,
 He, by his Great Preserver saved,
 Anchor'd again in Palos' port.*

XXIII.

O, who can tell the acclamation loud
 That, bursting, rose from the assembled crowd,
 To hail the Hero and his gallant train,
 From such adventure bold return'd again !—
 The warm embrace, the oft-repeated cheer,
 And many a wistful smile and many a tear !
 How, pressing close, they stood ;
 Look'd on Columbus with amaze,—
 "Is he," so spake their wond'ring gaze,
 "A man of flesh and blood ?"
 While cannon far along the shore
 His welcome gave with deaf'ning roar.

XXIV.

And then with measured steps, sedate and slow,
 They to the Christian's sacred temple go.
 Soon as the chief within the house of God
 Upon the hallow'd pavement trode,
 He bow'd with holy fear :—
 "The God of wisdom, mercy, might,
 "Creator of the day and night,
 "This sea-girt globe, and every star of light,
 "Is worship'd here."
 Then on the altar's steps he knelt,
 And what his inward spirit felt,
 Was said unheard within that cell
 Where saintly thoughts and feelings dwell ;
 But as the choral chaunters raise
 Through dome and aisle the hymn of praise,
 To heaven his glist'ning eyes were turn'd,
 With sacred love his bosom burn'd.

what he had done in their service, he writ as much as he could of what he had discovered on a skin of parchment; and having wrapped it in a piece of ceer-cloth, he put it into a wooden cask, and cast it into the sea, all the men imagining it had been some piece of devotion, and presently the wind slackened."

* Herrera:—"Wednesday, the 13th of March, he sailed with his caravel for Sevil. Thursday, before sun-rising, he found himself off Cape St. Vincent, and Friday the 15th off Saltes, and at noon he passed over the bar, with the flood,

On all the motley crowd
 The gen'rous impulse seized ; high Dons of pride
 Wept like the meekest beadsman by their side,
 And women sobb'd aloud.

XXV.

Nor statesmen met in high debate
 Deciding on a country's fate,
 Nor saintly chiefs with fearless zeal
 Contending for their churches' weal,
 Nor warriors, 'midst the battle's roar,
 Who fiercely guard their native shore ;—
 No power by earthly coil possess
 To agitate the human breast,
 Shows, from its native source diverted,
 Man's nature noble, though perverted,
 So strongly as the transient power
 Of link'd devotion's sympathetic hour.
 It clothes with soft unwonted grace
 The traits of many a rugged face,
 As bend the knees unused to kneel,
 And glow the hearts unused to feel ;
 While every soul, with holy passion moved,
 Claims one Almighty Sire, fear'd, and adored, and
 loved.

XXVI.

With western treasures, borne in fair display,
 To Barcelona's walls, in grand array †,
 Columbus slowly held his inland way,
 And still where'er he pass'd along,
 In eager crowds the people throng.
 The wildest way o'er desert drear
 Did like a city's mart appear.
 The shepherd swain forsook his sheep ;
 The goat-herd from his craggy steep
 Shot like an arrow to the plain ;
 Mechanics, housewives, left amain
 Their broken tasks, and press'd beside
 The truant youth they meant to chide :
 The dull Hidalgo left his tower,
 The donna fair her latticed bower ;
 Together press'd, fair and uncouth,
 All motley forms of age and youth.
 And, still along the dark-ranged pile
 Of clust'ring life, was heard the while
 Mix'd brawling joy, and shouts that rung
 From many a loud and deaf'ning tongue.
 Ah ! little thought the gazing throng,

into the port from whence he had first departed, on Friday the 3d of August the year before, so that he spent six months and a half on the voyage. * * * He landed at Palos, was received with a solemn procession and much rejoicing of the whole town, all admiring so great an action," &c.
 † Herrera:—"He carried with him green and red parrots, and other things to be admired, never before seen in Spain. He set out from Sevil, and the fame of this novelty being spread abroad, the people flocked to the road to see the Indians and the Admiral."

As pass'd that pageant show along,
 How Spain should rue, in future times,
 With desert plains and fields untill'd,
 And towns with listless loit'ers fill'd,
 The with'ring spoil received from foreign elimes!
 Columbus gave thee, thankless Spain!
 A new-found world o'er which to reign;
 But could not with the gift impart
 A portion of his liberal heart
 And manly mind, to bid thee soar
 Above a robber's lust of ore,
 Which hath a curse entail'd on all thy countless
 store.*

XXVII.

To Barcelona come, with honours meet
 Such glorious deeds to grace, his sov'reigns
 greet
 Their mariner's return.† Or hall,
 Or room of state was deem'd too small
 For such reception. Pageant rare!
 Beneath heaven's dome, in open square,
 Their gorgeous thrones were placed;
 And near them on a humbler seat,
 While on each hand the tiled great,
 Standing in dizen'd rows, were seen,
 Priests, guards, and crowds, a living screen,—
 Columbus sat, with noble mien,
 With princely honours graded.
 There to the royal pair his tale he told:
 A wondrous tale, that did not want
 Or studied words or braggart's vaunt;
 When at their royal feet were laid
 Gems, pearls, and plumes of many a shade,
 And stores of virgin gold,

* The effects of the narrow policy of the Spanish government, regarding her dealings with America, and the short-sighted avarice of the many adventurers sent out to her colonies there, are thus mentioned by Robertson:—

Robertson, Hist. of America, book 3. —“ Under the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, and Charles the Fifth, Spain was one of the most flourishing countries of Europe. Her manufactures in wool, and flax, and silk, were so extensive as not only to furnish what was necessary for her own consumption, but to afford a surplus for exportation. When a market for them formerly unknown, and to which she alone had access, was opened in America, she had recourse to her domestic store, and found there an abundant supply. This new employment must naturally have added vivacity to the spirit of industry, nourished and invigorated by it, the manufacturers, the population, the wealth of Spain, might have gone on increasing in the same proportion with the growth of her colonies, &c. * * * But various causes prevented this. The same thing happens to nations as to individuals. The wealth which flows in gradually and with moderate increase, feeds and nourishes that activity which is friendly to commerce, and calls it forth into vigorous and well-conducted exertions; but when opulence pours in suddenly, and with too full a stream, it overturns all sober plans of industry, and brings along with it a taste for what is wild and extravagant, and daring in business or in action. Such was the great and sudden augmentation of power and revenue that the possession of America brought into Spain, and some symptoms of its pernicious influence upon the political operations of that monarchy soon began to appear.”

(See this subject pursued further in the Appendix, No. III.)

Whilst, in their feather'd guise array'd,
 The Indians low obeisance paid.
 And at that wondrous story's close
 The royal pair with rev'rence rose,
 And kneeling on the ground, aloud
 Gave thanks to heaven. Then all the crowd,
 Joining from impulse of the heart
 The banded priests' eestate art,
 With mingled voice Te Deum sang;
 With the grand choral burst, walls, towers, and
 welkin rang.

XXVIII.

This was his brightest hour, too bright
 For human weal;—a glaring light,
 Like sunbeam through the rent cloud pouring
 On the broad lake, when storms are roaring;
 Bright centre of a wild and sombre scene;
 More keenly bright than Summer's settled sheen.

XXIX.

With kingly favour brighten'd, all
 His favour court, obey his call.
 At princely boards, above the rest,
 He took his place, admired, caress'd †:
 Proud was the don of high degree,
 Whose honour'd guest he deign'd to be.
 Whate'er his purposed service wanted
 With ready courtesy was granted:
 No envious foe durst cross his will.
 While eager shipwrights ply their skill,
 To busy doek-yard, quay, or port,
 Priests, lords, and citizens resort:
 There wains the heavy planks are bringing,
 And hammers on the anvil ringing,

† Herrera, vol. i. page 93.—“ The Admiral arrived at Barcelona about the middle of April, where a solemn reception was made him, the whole court flocking out in such numbers, that the streets could not hold them, admiring to see the Admiral, the Indians, and the things he had brought, which were carried uncovered; and the more to honour the Admiral, their Majesties ordered their royale throne to be placed in public, where they sat, with Prince John. The Admiral came in attended by a multitude of gentlemen: when he came near, the King stood up and gave him his hand to kiss, bid him rise, ordered a chair to be brought, and him to sit down in the royal presence, where he gave an account, in a very sedate and discreet manner, of the mercy God had shewn him in favour of their Highnesses, of his voyage and discoveries, and the hopes he had conceived of discovering greater countries, and showed him the Indians as they went in their own native places, and the other things he had brought. Their Majesties arose, and kneeling down with their hands lifted up and tears in their eyes, returned thanks to God, and then the singers of the chapel began the Te Deum.”

† Herrera.—“ The King took the Admiral by his side when he went along the city of Barcelona, and did him much honour other ways; and therefore, all the grandes and other noblemen honoured and invited him to dinner; and the cardinal of Spain, Don Pedro Gonzeles de Mendoza, a prince of much virtue and a noble spirit, was the first grandee, that, as they were going one day from the palace, carried the Admiral to dine with him, and seated him at the head of the table, and caused his meat to be served up covered and the essay to be taken, and from that time forward he was served in that manner.”

The far-toss'd boards on boards are falling,
 And brawny mate to work-mate calling :
 The cable strong on windlass winding ;
 On wheel of stone the edge-tool grinding ;
 Red fire beneath the caldron gleaming,
 And pitchy fumes from caldron steaming.
 To sea and land's men too, I ween,
 It was a gay, attractive scene ;
 Beheld, enjoy'd, day after day,
 Till all his ships, in fair array,
 Were bounden for their course at last ;
 And amply stored and bravely mann'd
 Bore far from blue, receding land.
 Thus soon again, th' Atlantic vast
 With gallant fleet he past.

XXX.

By peaceful natives hail'd with kindly smiles,
 He shortly touch'd at various pleasant isles ;
 And when at length her well-known shore appear'd,
 And he to fair Hispaniola near'd,
 Upon the deck, with eager eye,
 Some friendly signal to descry,
 He stood ; then fired his signal shot,
 But answer'ing fire received not.*
 " What may this dismal silence mean ?
 " No floating flag in air is seen,
 " Nor e'en the tower itself, though well
 " Its lofty site those landmarks tell.
 " Ha ! have they so regardless proved
 " Of my command ? — their station moved !"
 As closer to the shore they drew,
 To hail them came no light canoe ;
 The beach was silent and forsaken :
 Nor clothed nor naked forms appear'd,
 Nor sound of human voice was heard ;
 Nought but the sea-birds from the rock
 With busy stir that flutt'ring broke ;
 Sad signs, which in his mind portentous fears
 Awaken.

* Herrera, vol. i. page 112. — " The next day, Monday, all the fleet entered the port : the Admiral saw the port burnt down, whence he concluded that all the Christians were dead, which troubled him very much, and the more because no Indians appeared. The next day he went ashore very melancholy, finding nobody to inquire of. Some things belonging to the Spaniards were found, the sight whereof was grievous."

† Herrera: — " Wednesday the 27th of November, he came to anchor with his fleet at the mouth of the river Navedad. About midnight a canoe came aboard to the Admiral; the Indians cried '*Amirante*,' that is, Admiral. * * * He inquiring of them after the Spaniards, they said some had died, and that others were gone up the country with their wives. The Admiral guessed that they were all dead, but was obliged not to take notice of it. * * * Near the fort they discovered seven or eight men buried and others not far off, whom they knew to be Christians by their being clad; and it appeared that they had not been buried above a month. Whilst they were searching about, one of Gascannagarie's (the Cazique's) brothers came with some Indians who had learnt a little Spanish. * * * They said, that as soon as

XXXI.

Then eagerly on shore he went,
 His scouts abroad for tidings sent ;
 But to his own loud echo'd cry
 An Indian came with fearful eye,
 Who guess'd his questions' hurried sound,
 And pointed to a little mound,
 Not distant far. With eager haste
 The loosens'd mould aside was cast.
 Bodies, alas ! within that grave were found,
 Which had not long been laid to rest †,
 Though so by changeful death defaced,
 Nor form, nor visage could be traced, —
 In Spanish garments dress'd.
 Back from each living Spaniard's cheek the blood
 Ran chill, as round their noble chief they stood,
 Who sternly spoke to check the rising tear.
 " Eight of my valiant men are buried here ;
 " Where are the rest ? " the timid Indian shook
 In every limb, and slow and faintly spoke.
 " Some are dead, some sick, some flown ;
 " The rest are up the country gone,
 " Far, far away." A heavy groan
 Utters the chief ; his blanch'd lips quiver ;
 He knows that they are gone for ever.

XXXII.

But here 'twere tedious and unmeet
 A dismal story to repeat,
 Which was from mild Cazique received,
 Their former friend, and half believed.
 Him, in his cabin far apart,
 Wounded they found, by Carib dart ;
 Received, said he, from savage foe
 Spaniards defending. Then with accents low
 He spoke, and ruefully began to tell,
 What to those hapless mariners befell.
 How that from lust of pleasure and of gold,
 And mutual strife and war on Caribs made,
 Their strength divided was, and burnt their
 hold,
 And their unhappy heads beneath the still earth laid.

the Admiral was gone, they began to fall out among themselves and to disobey their commander, going about in an insolent manner to take what women and gold they pleased ; and that Peter Gutierrez and Escovedo (Spaniards) killed one Tacoon ; and that they two, with nine others, went away with the women they had taken, and the baggage, to the country of a lord whose name was Caunabo, and was lord of the mines, who killed them all."

Further on it is said, that when Columbus went to visit the Cazique, he told him the same story, and showed his wounds from Indian weapons, which he had received in defending the Spaniards.

So many disasters, partly from misconduct, and partly from the difficulties they had to encounter from the climate, and depending on the old world for provisions, befell the first colonists which were settled in the West Indies, that the places where they had once been were afterwards looked upon by the Spaniards with a superstitious dread, as haunted by spectres and demons.

(See Appendix, No. V. for a curious anecdote in confirmation of this.)

XXXIII.

Yet, spite of adverse fate, he in those climes
Spain's infant power establish'd ; after-times
Have seen it flourish, and her sway maintain
In either world, o'er many a fair domain.

But wayward was his irksome lot the while,
Striving with malice, mutiny, and guile ;

Yet vainly striving : that which most

His generous bosom sought to shun,

Each wise and lib'ral purpose cross'd,

Must now at Mammon's ruthless call be done.*

Upon their native soil,

They who were wont in harmless play

To frolic out the passing day,

Must pine with hateful toil.

XXXIV.

Yea ; this he did against his better will ;

For who may stern ambition serve, and still

His nobler nature trust ?

May on unshaken strength rely,

Cast Fortune as she will her die,

And say " I will be just ? "

XXXV.

Envy mean, that in the dark

Strikes surely at its noble mark,

Against him rose with hatred fell,

Which he could brave, but could not quell. †

Then he to Spain indignant went,

And to his sov'reigns made complaint,

With manly freedom, of their trust,

Placed, to his cost, in men unjust,

And turbulent. They graciously

His plaint and plea received ; and hoisting high

His famed and gallant flag upon the main,

He to his western world return'd again.

Where he, the sea's unwearied, dauntless rover,

Through many a gulph and strait, did first dis-
cover

That continent, whose mighty reach

From th' utmost frozen north doth stretch

E'en to the frozen south ; a land

Of surface fair and structure grand.

* It is sad to reflect that Columbus, always friendly and gentle to the natives, and most anxious to have them converted to the Christian religion, was yet compelled, in order to satisfy the impatient cupidity of their Catholic Majesties, to make them work in the mines, which very soon caused great mortality amongst them. Gold must be sent to Spain ; otherwise the government of those countries would have been transferred from him to a set of rapacious and profligate adventurers.

† From evil reports sent against the admiral to Spain, one John Aguado was sent to the new world with credentials to this effect: " Gentlemen, Esquires, and others, who by our command are in the Indies, we send to you John Aguado, our groom, who will discourse you in our name. We desire you to give entire credit to him. Madrid, April 9th, 1495." This same groom, as might be expected, did not fail to thwart Columbus in many affairs, and set a bad example to others:

XXXVI.

There, through vast regions rivers pour,
Whose midway skiff scarce sees the shore ;
Which, rolling on in lordly pride,
Give to the main their ample tide ;
And dauntless then, with current strong,
Impetuous, roaring, bear along,
And still their separate honours keep,
In bold contention with the mighty deep. ‡

XXXVII.

These broad-based mountains from the sight
Conceal in clouds their vasty height,
Whose frozen peaks, a vision rare,
Above the girdling clouds rear'd far in upper air,
At times appear, and soothly seem
To the far distant, upcast eye,
Like snowy watch-towers of the sky, —
Like passing visions of a dream.

XXXVIII.

These forests grand of olden birth
O'er-canopy the darken'd earth,
Whose trees, growth of unreckon'd time,
Rear o'er whole regions far and wide
A checker'd dome of lofty pride,
Silent, solemn, and sublime. —
A pillar'd lab'rinth, in whose trackless gloom
Unguided feet might stray till close of mortal doom.

XXXIX.

These grassy plains of verdant green
Spread far beyond man's ken are seen,
Whose darker bushy spots that lie
Strew'd o'er the level vast, descry
Admiring strangers, from the brow
Of hill or upland steep, and show,
Like a calm ocean's peaceful isles,
When morning light through rising vapours smiles.

XL.

O'er this, his last — his proudest fame,
He did assert his mission'd claim.
Yet dark ambitious envy, more
Incensed and violent than before,

he resolved therefore to return to Spain and clear himself of those slanders to their Majesties.

‡ It is scarcely necessary to give any authority for the immense width and power of those rivers ; but as this fact is implied in a sublime and descriptive simile in the writings of a modern poet, whose rich imagination is perhaps never betrayed into inaccuracy, I am tempted to insert it.

— " The battle's rage

Was like the strife which currents wage,

When Orinoco in his pride

Folls to the main no tribute tide,

But 'gainst broad ocean urges far

A rival sea of roaring war ;

While in ten thousand eddies driven,

The billows fling their foam to heaven ;

And the pale pilot seeks in vain

Where rolls the river, where the main." — *Rookby.*

With crafty machinations gain'd
His royal master's ear, who stain'd
His princely faith, and gave it power
To triumph, in a shameful hour.

A mission'd gownsman o'er the sea

Was sent his rights to supersede*,

And all his noble schemes impede,—

His tyrant, spy, and judge to be.

With parehment scrolls and deeds he came

To kindle fierce and wasteful flame.

Columbus' firm and dauntless soul

Submitted not to base control.

For who that hath high deeds achieved,

Whose mind hath mighty plans conceived,

Can of learn'd ignorance and pride

The petty vexing rule abide?

The lion trampled by an ass!—

No; this all-schoo'd forbearance would surpass.

Insulted with a felon's chain,

This noble man must cross the main,

And answer his foul charge to cold, ungrateful

Spain.

XLI.

By India's gentle rae alone

Was pity to his suff'rings shown.

They on his parting wait,

And looks of kindness on him cast,

Or touch'd his mantle as he pass'd,

And mourn'd his alter'd state.

"May the Great Spirit smooth the tide

"With gentle gales, and be thy guide!"

And when his vessel wore from land,

With meaning nods and gestures kind,

He saw them still upon the strand

Tossing their dark arms on the wind.

He saw them like a helpless flock

Who soon must bear the cruel shock

Of savage wolves, yet reckless still,

Feel but the pain of present ill.

He saw the fate he could not now control.

And groan'd in bitter agony of soul.

* Herrera, vol. i. page 237.—"Mention has been made of the discoveries made by the Spaniards in the years 1499 and 1500, and of what the Portuguese found by chance, as also that the Admiral's messengers arrived at the court with an account of the insurrection of Francis Roldan, and the persons sent by him, who gave their complaints against the Admiral. Having heard both parties, their Majesties resolved to remove the Admiral from the government, under colour that he himself desired a judge should be sent over to inquire into the insolencies committed by Roldan and his followers, and a lawyer that should take upon himself the administration of justice. * * * Their Majesties made choice of Francis Bovadilla, commendary of the order of Calatrava, a native of Medina del Campo, and gave him the title and commission of Examiner, under which he was to enter the island; as also governor, to make use of and publish these in due time." (He was at first to conceal the extent of his commission.)

See, on this subject, Appendix, No. VI.

† Herrera:—"In short, Bovadilla seized the Admiral and both his brothers, Don Bartholomew and Don James, without even so much as seeing or speaking to them. They

XLII.

He trode the narrow deck with pain,

And oft survey'd his ranking chain.†

The ship's brave captain grieved to see

Base irons his noble pris'ner gall,

And kindly sued to set him free;

But proudly spoke the lofty thrall,

"Until the King whom I have served,

"Who thinks this recompense deserved,

"Himself command th' unclasping stroke ‡,

"These gyved limbs will wear their yoke.

"Yea, when my head lies in the dust,

"These chains shall in my coffin rust.

"Better than lesson'd saw, though rude,

"As token, long preserved, of black ingratitude!"

XLIII.

Thus pent, his manly fortitude gave way

To brooding passion's dark tumultuous sway.

Dark was the gloom within, and darker grew

Th' impending gloom without, as onward drev

Th' embattled storm that, deep'ning on its way,

With all its marshal'd host obscured the day.

Volume o'er volume, roll'd the heavy clouds,

And oft in dark dim masses, sinking slow,

Hung in the nether air, like misty shrouds,

Veiling the sombre, silent deep below;

Like eddying snow-flakes from a lowering sky,

Athwart the dismal gloom the frighten'd sea-fowl
fly.

Then from the solemn stillness round

Utters the storm its awful sound.

It groans upon the distant waves;

O'er the mid-ocean wildly raves;

Recedes afar with dying strain,

That sadly through the troubled air

Comes like the wailings of despair,

And with redoubled strength returns again:

Through shrouds and rigging, boards and mast,

Whistles and howls, and roars th' outrageous
blast.

were all put into irons, and no person permitted to converse with them; a most inhuman action, considering the dignity of the person, and the inestimable service he had done the crown of Spain. The Admiral afterwards kept his fetters, and ordered they should be buried with him, in testimony of the ingratitude of this world. Bovadilla resolved to send the Admiral into Spain aboard the two ships that had brought him over. Alonzo de Vallejo was appointed to command the two caravels, and ordered, as soon as he arrived at Cadiz, to deliver the prisoners to the bishop, John Rodrigues de Fousico; and it was reported that Bovadilla had put this affair upon its Admiral to please the bishop. It was never heard that Francis Roldan, or Don Fernando de Guevera, or any other of the mutineers who had committed so many outrages in that island, were punished, or any proceedings made against them."

‡ Herrera:—"Alonzo de Vallejo and the master of the caravel, Gordo, aboard which the Admiral was brought over, treated him and his brothers very well, and would have knocked off their fetters; but he would not consent to it himself, till it was done by order of their Majesties."

XLIV.

From its vast bed profound with heaving throes
 The mighty waste of weltring waters rose.
 O'er countless waves, now mounting, now deprest,
 The ridgy surges swell with foaming crest,
 Like Alpine barriers of some distant shore,
 Now seen, now lost amidst the deafning roar ;
 While, higher still, on broad and sweepy base,
 Their growing bulk the mountain billows raise,
 Each far aloft in lordly grandeur rides,
 With many a vassal wave roughning his furrow'd
 sides,
 Heaved to its height, the dizzy skiff
 Shoots like an eagle from his cliff
 Down to the fearful gulf, and then
 On the swollen waters mounts again,—
 A fearful way ! a fearful state
 For vessel charged with living freight !

XLV.

Within, without the tossing tempests rage
 This was, of all his earthly pilgrimage,
 The injured Hero's fellest, darkest hour.
 Yet swiftly pass'd its gloomy power ;
 For as the wild winds louder blew,
 His troubled breast the calmer grew ;
 And, long before the mighty hand,
 That rules the ocean and the land,
 Had calm'd the sea, with pious rev'rence fill'd,
 The warring passions of his soul were still'd,
 Through softly parting clouds the blue sky
 peer'd,
 And heavenward turn'd his eye with better feelings
 cheer'd.
 Meek are the wise, the great, the good ;—
 He sigh'd, and thought of Him, who died on holy
 rood.

XLVI.

No more the angry tempest's sport,
 The vessel reach'd its destined port.
 A town of Christendom he greets,
 And treads again its well-known streets ;
 A sight of wonder, grief, and shame
 To those who on his landing came,
 And on his state in silence gazed.
 " This is the man whose dauntless soul "—
 So spoke their looks—" Spain's power hath
 raised,
 " To hold o'er worlds her proud controul !

* Herrera, vol. i. page 251.—"Admiral Columbus being come to court, after having made his complaints against Francis de Bovadillo, and what had been said as before ordered, never ceased soliciting to be restored to his full rights and prerogatives, since he had performed all he had promised, and had been so great a sufferer in the service of the crown, offering, though he was old and much broken, to make considerable discoveries, believing that he might find a straight or passage about that part where Nombre de Dios now stands. Their Majesties fed him with fair words and promises, till they could hear what account Nicholas de Obando would send them

" His honour'd brows with laurel crown'd,
 " His hands with felon fetters bound ! "

XLVII.

And he before his Sov'reign Dame
 And her stern Lord, indignant came ;
 And bold in conscious honour, broke
 The silence of his smother'd flame,
 In words that all his inward anguish spoke.
 The gentle Queen's more noble breast
 Its generous sympathy express'd ;
 And as his varied story show'd
 What wrongs from guileful malice flow'd,
 Th' indignant eye and flashing cheek
 Did oft her mind's emotion speak.
 The sordid King, with brow severe,
 Could, all unmoved, his pleadings hear ;
 Save that, in spite of royal pride,
 Which self-reproach can ill abide,
 His crimson'd face did meanly show
 Of conscious shame th' unworthy glow.
 Baffled, disgraced, his enemies remain'd,
 And base ambition for a time restrain'd.

XLVIII.

With four small vessels, small supply
 I trow ! yet granted tardily,
 For such high service*, he once more
 The western ocean to explore
 Directs his course. On many an isle
 He touch'd, where cheerly, for a while,
 His mariners their cares beguile
 Upon the busy shore.
 And there what wiles of barter keen
 Spaniard and native pass between † ;
 As feather'd crowns, whose colours change
 To every hue, with vizards strange,
 And gold and pearls arc giv'n away,
 For bead, or bell, or bauble gay !
 Full oft the muttering Indian eyes
 With conscious smile his wondrous prize,
 Beneath the shady plaitain seated,
 And thinks he hath the stranger cheated ;
 Or foots the ground like vaunting child,
 Snapping his thumbs with antics wild.

XLIX.

But if, at length, tired of their guests,
 Consuming like those hateful pests,

about affairs of the island. Columbus demanded four ships and provisions for two years, which they granted him, with a promise that, if he died by the way, his son Don James should succeed him in all his rights and prerogatives. The Admiral set out from Granada to forward this business at Sevil and Cadiz, where he brought four vessels, the biggest not above seventy ton, and the least not under fifty ; with one hundred and fifty men, and all necessaries."

† Many accounts given by Herrera of the barter carried on between the Spaniards and Indians, are not unlike that which I have given in this passage of the legend.

Locusts or ants, provisions stored
 For many days, they will afford
 No more, withholding fresh supplies,
 And strife and threat'ning clamours rise,—
 Columbus gentle craft pursues,
 And soon their noisy wrath subdues.
 Thus speaks the chief,—“ Refuse us aid
 “ From stores which heaven for all hath made !
 “ The moon, your mistress, will this night
 “ From you withhold her blessed light*,”
 “ Her ire to show ; take ye the risk.”
 Then, as half-frighten'd, half in jest,
 They turn'd their faces to the east,
 From ocean rose her broaden'd disk ;
 But when the deep eclipse came on,
 By science sure to him foreknown,
 How cover'd each savage at his feet,
 Like spaniel couching to his lord,
 Awed by the whip or angry word,
 His pardon to entreat !
 “ Take all we have, tho' heavenly man !
 “ And let our mistress smile again !”

L.

Or, should the ship, above, below,
 Be fill'd with crowds, who will not go ;
 Again, to spare more hurtful force,
 To harmless guile he has recourse. †
 “ Ho ! Gunner ! let these scramblers know
 “ The power we do not use ;” when, lo !
 From cannon's mouth the silv'ry cloud
 Breaks forth, soft curling on the air,
 Through which appears the lightning's glare,
 And bellowing roars the thunder loud.
 Quickly from bowsprit, shroud, or mast,
 Or vessel's side, the Indians cast
 Their naked forms, the water dashing
 O'er their dark heads, as stoutly lashing
 The briny waves with arms outspread,
 They gain the shore with terror's speed.

* This circumstance is so well known that it were needless to mention it here, only as the account given of it by Herrera is rather curious, the reader may, perhaps, be amused by it. After telling how greatly the Spaniards were distressed for provisions, and how the Indians refused to supply them, he says,—“ The Admiral knew there would be an eclipse of the moon within three days, whereupon he sent an Indian that spoke Spanish to call the Cazineos and prime men of those parts to him. They being come a day before the eclipse, he told them, that the Spaniards were Christians, servants of the Great God that dwells in heaven, Lord and Maker of all things, and rewards the good and punishes the wicked,” &c. * * * “ Wherefore they might that night observe, at the rising of the moon, that she would appear of a bloody hue, to denote the punishment God would inflict on them. When he had made his speech, some of them went away in a fright, and others scoffed at it ; but the eclipse beginning as soon as the moon was up, and increasing the higher she was, it put them into such a consternation, that they hastened to the ships, grievously lamenting, and loaded with provisions ; entreating the Admiral to pray God that he would not be angry with them, and they would for the future bring all the provisions he should have occasion for. The Admiral answered, he would offer up his prayers to God, and then, shutting himself up, waited till the eclipse was at its height, and

LL.

Thus checker'd still with shade and sheen
 Pass'd in the West his latter sence,
 As through the oak's toss'd branches pass
 Soft moon-beams, flickering on the grass ;
 As on the lake's dark surface pour
 Broad flashing drops of summer-shower ; —
 As the rude cavern's sparry sides
 When past the miner's taper glides.
 So roam'd the Chief, and many a sea
 Fathom'd and search'd unweariedly,
 Hoping a western way to gain
 To eastern climes,—an effort vain † ;
 For mighty thoughts, with error uncombined,
 Were never yet the meed of mortal mind.

LII.

At length, by wayward fortune cross'd,
 And oft-renew'd and irksome strife
 Of sordid men,—by tempests tost,
 And tired with turmoil of a wand'rer's life,
 He sail'd again for Europe's ancient shore,
 So will'd high heav'n ! to cross the seas no more.
 His anchor fix'd, his sails for ever fur'd,—
 A toil-worn pilgrim in a weary world.

LIII.

And thus the Hero's sun went down,
 Closing his day of bright renown.
 Eight times through breeze and storm he pass'd
 O'er surge and wave th' Atlantic vast ;
 And left on many an island fair
 Foundations, which the after-care
 Of meaner chieftains shortly rear'd
 To seats of power, served, envied, fear'd.
 No kingly conqueror, since time began
 The long career of ages, hath to man
 A scope so ample given for trade's bold range,
 Or caused on earth's wide stage such rapid mighty
 change. §

ready to decrease, telling them he had prayed for them,” &c. * * * “ The Indians perceiving the eclipse to go off, and entirely to cease, returned the Admiral many thanks,” &c.

† This expedient of Columbus for clearing his ship, when the Indians had become too fond of being aboard, is told in an amusing manner by Herrera ; but I cannot at present discover the passage.

‡ This was one great object with Columbus, when he first projected his great discoveries, and it made him so unwilling when he came to the mouth of one of the large rivers of the continent, to believe it was a river, as a great continent there made against the probability of his discovering what he desired. Another notion of his, more fanciful, is mentioned by Herrera.

“ The Admiral was surprised at the emense quantity of fresh water before spoken of, and no less at the extraordinary coolness of the air so near the equinoctial ; and he particularly observed that the people thereabouts were whites, their hair long and smooth, more subtle and ingenious than those he had seen before. These things made him conceit that the terrestrial Paradise might be in those parts, with other notions which make not to our purpose.”

§ Those mighty conquerors who have overrun the greatest extent of country, have, generally speaking, produced only temporary change ; the kingdoms subdued by them falling

LIV.

He, on the bed of sickness laid,
Saw, unappall'd, death's closing shade !
And there, in charity and love
To man on earth and God above,
Meekly to heaven his soul resign'd,
His body to the earth consign'd.
'Twas in Valladolid he breathed his last*,
And to a better, heavenly city past ;
But St. Domingo, in her sacred fane [contain.
Doth his blest spot of rest and sculptured tomb

LV.

There burghers, knights, adventurers brave
Stood round in fun'ral weeds bedight ;
And bow'd them to the closing grave,
And wish'd his soul good night.

LVI.

Now all the bold companions of his toil,
Tenants of many a clime, who wont to come,
(So fancy trows) when vex'd with worldly coil,
And linger sadly by his narrow home ;—
Repentant enemies, and friends that grieve
In self-upbraiding tenderness, and say,
"Cold was the love he did from us receive,"—
The fleeting restless spirits of a day,
All to their dread account are pass'd away.

LVII.

Silence, solemn, awful, deep,
Doth in that hall of death her empire keep ;

back again to their old masters, or becoming, under the successors of the conqueror, nearly the same in government and manners which they would have been, had he never existed. The discoveries of Columbus opened a boundless and lasting field for human exertion, which gave a new impulse to every maritime country in Europe. There is one conqueror indeed, Mahomet, the exertions of whose extraordinary life produced, unhappily, wide and lasting effects, but of a character so different from those produced by Columbus, that they can scarcely be considered as at variance with what is here asserted of the great navigator. The change which his discoveries occasioned in the new world must also be taken into the account ; and though this is a very melancholy consideration, as far as the West Indies are concerned, yet that which took place on the continent of America, though for a time at great expense of life, was good, and most thankfully to be acknowledged by every friend to humanity. It put an end to the most dismal and bloody superstition under the tyrannical government of Mexico ; and we can scarcely regret the overthrow of the milder religion and government of Peru, though we may lament the manner of it, and detest the cruelty and injustice of the conquerors ; for human flesh was not an unheard-of banquet in that country ; and, at the funerals of great people, many servants and dependents were killed or buried alive to become their servants still in another state of being.

See what Herrera says on this subject, Appendix, No. IX. Robertson says, in speaking of the Mexicans,—"The aspect of superstition in Mexico was gloomy and atrocious ; its divinities were clothed with terror, and delighted in vengeance ; they were exhibited to the people under detestable forms which created horror ; the figures of serpents, tygers, and of other destructive animals, decorated their temples. Fear was the only principle that inspired their votaries. Fasts, mortifications, and penances, all rigid and many of them excruciating to an extreme degree, were the means employed to

Save when at times the hollow pavement, smote
By solitary wand'rer's foot, amain
From lofty dome and arch and aisle remote
A circling loud response receives again.
The stranger starts to hear the growing sound,
And sees the blazon'd trophies waving near ;—
"Ha ! tread my feet so near that sacred ground !"
He stops and bows his head :—"Columbus resteth
here !"

LVIII.

Some ardent youth, perhaps, ere from his home
He launch his venturous bark, will hither come,
Read fondly o'er and o'er his graven name
With feelings keenly touch'd,—with heart of flame ;
Till wrapp'd in fancy's wild delusive dream,
Times past and long forgotten, present seem.
To his charm'd ear, the east wind rising shrill
Seems through the Hero's shroud to whistle still.
The clock's deep pendulum swinging, through the
blast,
Sounds like the rocking of his lofty mast ;
While fitful gusts rave like his clam'rous band,
Mix'd with the accents of his high command.
Slowly the stripling quits the pensive scene,
And burns, and sighs, and weeps to be what he has
been.

LIX.

O ! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name ?
Whilst in that sound there is a charm
The nerves to brace, the heart to warm,

appease the wrath of their gods, and the Mexicans never approached their altars, without sprinkling them with blood drawn from their own bodies. But of all offerings, human sacrifices were the most acceptable. This religious belief, mingling with the implacable spirit of vengeance, and adding new force to it, every captive taken in war was brought to the temple, was devoted as a victim to the deity, and sacrificed with rites no less solemn than cruel. The heart and the head were the portion consecrated to the gods ; the warrior, by whose prowess the prisoner had been seized, carried off the body to feast upon it with his friends. Under the impression of ideas so dreary and terrible, and accustomed daily to scenes of bloodshed, rendered awful by religion, the heart of man must harden, and be steeled to every sentiment of humanity. The spirit of the Mexicans was accordingly unfeeling, and the genius of their religion so far counter-balanced the influence of policy and arts, that notwithstanding their progress in both, their manners, instead of softening, became more fierce. To what circumstances it was owing that superstition assumed such a dreadful form among the Mexicans, we have not sufficient knowledge of their history to determine. But its influence is visible, and produced an effect that is singular in the history of the human species. The manners of the people of the new world, who had made the greatest progress in the arts of policy, were in several respects the most ferocious, and the barbarity of some of their customs exceeds even those of the savage state."

* Herrera, vol. i. page 311.—"When their Adeluntado Don Bartholomeu Columbus was soliciting, as has been above said, the Admiral's distemper grew upon him, till having made the necessary dispositions, he departed this life with much piety at Valladolid on Ascension-day, being the 20th of May, 1506. His body was conveyed to the monastery of Carthusians at Sevil, and from thence to the city of Santo Domingo, in Hispaniola, where it lies in the chancel of the cathedral."

As, thinking of the mighty dead,
The young, from slothful couch will start,
And vow, with lifted hands outspread,
Like them to act a noble part!

LX.

O! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name?
When, but for those, our mighty dead,
All ages past, a blank would be,
Sunk in oblivion's murky bed,—
A desert bare, a shipless sea!
They are the distant objects seen,—
The lofty marks of what hath been.

LXI.

O! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name?
When records of the mighty dead
To earth-worn pilgrim's wistful eye
The brightest rays of cheering shed,
That point to immortality!

LXII.

A twinkling speck, but fix'd and bright,
To guide us through the dreary night,
Each hero shines, and lures the soul
To gain the distant happy goal.
For is there one who, musing o'er the grave
Where lies interr'd the good, the wise, the brave,
Can poorly think, beneath the mould'ring heap,
That noble being shall for ever sleep?
No; saith the gen'rous heart, and proudly swells,—
"Though his cwerd' corse lies here, with God his
spirit dwells."

APPENDIX.

No. I.

HERRERA'S Hist. vol. i. page 24.—"Don Christopher Columbus, whom the Spaniards, for the more easy pronunciation, called Colon, was born in the city of Genoa, in which particular, as also that his father's name was Dominick, all who write or treat of him do agree, and he himself owns it; and as for his original, some say it was from Plasencia, and others from Cucureo, on the coast near the same city; but some say he was descended from the lords of the castle of Cucaro, which is that part of Italy formerly called Lygurina, now the dukedom of Montserrat, so near Alexandria de la Polla, that the bells are heard from the one to the other; but which was the most certain descent, was left to be decided by the supreme council of the Indies. It appears that the Emperor Otho the Second, in the year 940, confirmed to the Earls Peter, John, and Alexander Columbus, the lands they held as fiefs, and in fee simple, within the liberties of the cities of Acqui, Savona, Aste, Monferrat, Turin, Vercelli, Parma, Cremona, and Bergamo, and all their other possessions in Italy; and it further appears by other deeds, that the Columbi of Cucaro, Cucures, and Plasencia, were the same; and that the aforesaid Emperor, the same year, 940, granted to the said brothers of the house of Columbus, Peter, John, and Alexander, the castles of Cucaro, Conzano, Rosignano, and others, and the fourth part of Bistagno, all which belonged to the empire, which is a testimony of the antiquity of this house."

No. II.

Herrera, vol. i. page 24.—"He came into Spain, and more particularly into Portugal, when he was very young.—And being very positive in the notion he had long conceived, that there were new lands, undiscovered, he resolved to make the same public; but being sensible that such an enterprise was only fit for great Princes, he first proposed it to the republic of Genoa, which looked upon it as a dream; and after that to King John of Portugal, who, though he gave him a favourable hearing, being then taken up with the discovery of the coast of Africk on the ocean, did not think fit to undertake so many things at once, and yet referred it to Doctor Colzadilla, called Don Diego Ortiz, Bishop of Ceuta, who was a Castilian, born at Calzadillo, and to Master Rodrigo and Jusepe, Jewish physicians, to whom he gave credit in affairs of discoveries and cosmography; and, though they affirmed they looked upon it as a fabulous notion, having heard Don Christopher Columbus, and understood the motives he had, and what course he designed to steer, not altogether rejecting the project, they advised him to send a caravel, upon pretence of sailing to Cabo Verde, to endeavour to find by what course Don Christopher proposed to discover the secret; but that vessel, having been many days out at sea, and in great storms, returned without finding any thing, making a jest of Columbus's project, who was not ignorant of this attempt.

"This action very much troubled Columbus; and he took such an aversion to Portugal, that, being rid of his wife, who was dead, he resolved to go away into Spain; and, for fear of being served as he had been in Portugal, he was resolved to send his brother, Don Bartholomew Columbus, into England, where Henry the Seventh then reigned. He was a long time on his way, having been taken by pirates, and staid there to be acquainted with the humours of the court, and the method of managing affairs. Don Christopher, designing to propose that affair to their Catholic Majesties, Ferdinand and Elizabeth, (Herrera here calls this queen Elizabeth,) in the year 1484, privately made his way from Portugal by sea, toward Andaluza, being satisfied that the king was convinced that his project was well-grounded, and that those who went in the caravel had not performed what he expected of them, and therefore designed to attempt that affair again. He arrived at Palos de Moquer, whence he went away to the court, which was then at Cordova. * * * He began to propose his affair at Cordova, where the most encouragement he found was in Alonzo de Quintanilla, controller of the revenue of Castile, a very discreet man, and who delighted in great undertakings; who, looking upon Columbus as a man of worth, gave him maintenance, without which he could not have subsisted so long in that tedious suit, which was so home pressed, that their Catholic Majesties, giving some attention to the affair, referred it to Father Ferdinand de Talavera, of the order of St. Jerome, Prior of Prado, and the Queen's confessor, who was afterwards the first Bishop of Granada. He held an assembly of cosmographers, who debated about it; but there being few of that profession in Castile, and those none of the best in the world, and, besides, Columbus would not altogether explain himself, lest he should be served as he had been in Portugal, they came to a resolution nothing answerable to what he had expected: some alledging, that since, during so many ages as there were from the creation of the world, men so well versed in marine affairs had known nothing of those countries Columbus persuaded them must be found, it was not to be imagined that he could know more than all of them; others, adhering more to cosmographical reasons, urged, that the world was so large, that there would be no coming to the utmost extent of the east in three years' sail, whither Columbus said he intended his voyage; and, in confirmation thereof, they alledging that Seneca, by way of dispute, said, that many discreet men did not agree upon the question, whether the ocean were infinite, and doubted whether it could be sailed, and supposing it to be navigable, whether there was any country inhabited on the other side, and whether it was possible to go to it; they added, that no part of this inferior sphere was inhabited, except only a small compass which was left in our hemisphere above the water, and that all the rest was sea; and that notwithstanding it were so, that it were possible to arrive at the extreme part of the East, it would be also granted, that from Spain they go to the extreme part of the West."

Herrera, in the following chapter to the above, says,

"There were also others who affirmed, that if Columbus should sail away directly westward, he would not be able to return to Spain, by reason of the roundness of the globe; because, whosoever should go beyond the hemisphere known by Ptolemy, would fall down so low, that it would be impossible ever to return, by reason it would be like climbing up a hill; and though Columbus fully answered these arguments, they could not comprehend him; for which reason those of the assembly judged the enterprize to be vain and impracticable, and that it was not becoming the grandeur of such mighty Princes to proceed upon so imperfect an account.

"After much delay, their Catholic Majesties ordered this answer to be given to Columbus, that being engaged in several wars, particularly in the conquest of Granada, they could not enter upon fresh expenses; but when that was over, they would cause further inquiry to be made into his proposals, and so dismissed him. * * * Having received the answer above, Columbus went away to Sevil, very melancholy and discontented, after having been five years at court to no effect. He caused the affair to be proposed to the Duke de Medina Sidonia, and, some say, to the Duke de Medina Celi at the same time; and they also rejecting him, he writ to the King of France, designing to go over to England to look for his brother, of whom he had heard nothing for a long time, in case the French would not employ him. With this design he went to the monastery for his son Don Diego, in order to leave him at Cordova; and communicating his design to Father John Perez, marchese of Granada, he served this discoverer for the crown of Castile and Leon, and Columbus going unwillingly to treat with other Princes, because, by reason of the long time he had lived in Spain he looked upon himself as a Spaniard, he put off his journey at the request of Father John Perez, who to be the better informed of the grounds Columbus went upon, sent for Garcí Hernandez, a physician, and they three conferred together upon what Columbus proposed, which gave Garcí Hernandez, as being a philosopher, much satisfaction. Whereupon Father John Perez, who was known to the Queen, as having confessed her sometimes, writ to her, and she ordered him to come to court, which was then in the town of Santa Fé, at the siege of Granada, and to leave Columbus at Palos, giving him the hopes of success in his design. Father John Perez having been with the Queen, she ordered twenty thousand maravedies in florins to be sent to Columbus by James Prieto, an inhabitant of Palos, for him to go to court; where he being come, the affair began to be canvassed again. But the prior of Prado, and others who followed them, being of a contrary opinion, and Columbus demanding very high terms, and, among the rest, to have the title of Admiral and Viceroy, they thought he demanded too much, if the enterprize succeeded, and looked upon it as a discredit, if it did not; whereupon the treaty entirely ceased, and Columbus resolved to go away to Cordova, in order to proceed from thence to France, being positive not to go to Portugal upon any account.

"Alonso de Quintanilla, and Lewis de Santangel, a clerk of the revenue of the crown of Arragon, were much concerned to think that this enterprize should be disappointed. Now, at the request of Father John Perez, and Alonso de Quintanilla, the Cardinal Don Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza had heard Columbus, and looking upon him as a grave man, he had an esteem for him. * * * In January, 1492, he set out from Santa Fé for Cordova, in great anguish, the city of Granada being then in possession of their Catholic Majesties. The same day, Lewis de Santangel told the Queen, he wondered that she, who had never wanted spirit for the greatest undertakings, should now fall, where so little could be lost, and so much might be gained; for, in case the affair succeeded, and fell into the hands of another Prince, as Columbus affirmed it was like to do in case Spain would not accept of it, she might guess how prejudicial it would be to her crown; and since Columbus appeared to be a discreet man, and demanded no reward but out of what he should find, and was willing to defray a part of the charge, venturing his own person also, the thing ought not to be looked upon as altogether so impracticable as the cosmographers said, nor be reckoned as lightness to have attempted such a mighty enterprize, though it should prove unsuccessful, inasmuch as it became great and generous monarchs to be acquainted with the wonders and secrets of the world, by which other Princes have gained everlasting renown; besides, that Columbus demanded only a million of maravedies to fit him

out; and therefore he intreated her not to suffer the apprehension of so small an expense to disappoint so great an enterprize.

"The Queen, finding herself importuned on the same account by Alonso de Quintanilla, who was much in credit with her, thanked them for their advice, and said, she accepted it, provided they would stay till she could recover a little from the expense of the war; however, if they thought it should be immediately put into execution, she would consent that they should borrow what money was requisite upon some of her jewels. Quintanilla and Santangel kissed her hands, for that she had at their request resolved to do what she had refused to do so many others, and Lewis de Santangel offered to lend as much of his own as was necessary. Upon this resolution, the queen ordered an Alguazil of the court to go post after Columbus, and to tell him from her, that she commanded him to return, and to bring him away. The Alguazil overtook him two leagues from Granada, at the bridge of Pinos, and though much concerned for the small regard shown him, he returned to Santa Fé, where he was received, and the secretary John Coloma was ordered to draw up conditions and dispatches, after he had spent eight years inculcating the enterprize, and enduring many crosses and hardships."

No. III.

Herrera, vol. i. page 45.—"It pleased God in his mercy, at the time when Don Christopher Columbus could no longer withstand so much muttering, contradiction and contempt, that on Thursday the 11th of October, of the aforesaid year 1492, in the afternoon, he received some comfort by the manifest tokens they perceived of their being near land; for the men aboard the Admiral saw a green rush near the ship, and next a large green fish, of those that keep close to the rocks. Those aboard the caravel Pinta saw a cane and a staff, and took up one that was artificially wrought, and a little board, and saw abundance of woods, fresh torn off the shore. Those aboard the caravel Nina saw other such like tokens, and a branch of a thorn with the berries on it which appeared to be newly broken off; for which reasons, and because they brought up sand on sounding, there was a certainty of their being near land, which was confirmed by the shifting of the winds, which seemed to come from shore. Columbus, being satisfied that he was near land, after night-fall, when they had said the Antiphon, *Salve Regina*, as is usual among the sailors every night, he discoursed the men, telling them, how merciful God had been to them, carrying them safe so long a voyage; and that, since the tokens were hourly more manifest, he desired them to watch all night, since they knew that, in the first article of the instructions he had given them when they came out of Spain, he told them, that when they had run seven hundred leagues without discovering land, they were to lie after midnight till day and be upon the watch, for he firmly confided that they would find land that night, and that, besides the ten thousand maravedies' annuity their Highnesses had promised the person that should first discover it, he would give a velvet doublet. Two hours before midnight, Columbus, standing on the poop, he saw a light, and privately called Peter Gutierrez, groom of the privy-chamber to the King," [it appears from this that the crew had not been on the watch as he desired them,] "and bid him look at it, and he answered he saw it. Then they called Roderick Sanchez de Segovia, purser of the fleet, who could not discern it; but afterwards it was seen twice, and looked like a little candle, &c. * * * Two hours after midnight, the caravel Pinta being always ahead, it made signs of land, which was first discovered by a sailor whose name was Roderick de Triana, but two leagues distant. But their Catholic Majesties declared that the ten thousand maravedies' annuities belonged to the Admiral, and it was always paid him at the shambles of Sevil, because he saw the light amidst the darkness, meaning the spiritual light that was then coming into those barbarous people: God so ordering it, that when the war with the Moors was ended, after they had been seven hundred and twenty years in Spain, this work should be taken in hand, to the end that the kings of Castile and Leon should be always employed in bringing infidels over to the light of the Catholic faith."

No. IV.

"When all things were ready, and he was upon the point of departing, he called them together, and spoke to them to

this effect:—“He bid them offer up their prayers to God, and return thanks to him for having carried them to such a country to plant his holy faith, and not forsake him, but to live like good Christians, and he would protect them. That they should pray to God to grant him a good voyage, that he might soon return to them with a greater power; that they should love and obey their captain, because it was requisite for their own preservation, and he charged them so to do in the name of their Highnesses. That they should respect Gaucanagari, and give no offence to any of his people, nor offer violence to man or woman, that the opinion of their coming from heaven might be confirmed. That they should not part nor go up the country, nor out of Gaucanagari's dominions, since he loved them so well, that with his consent they should survey the coast in canoes and their boat, endeavouring to discover gold mines, and some good harbour, because he was not well pleased with that where they remained, which he called the Nativity; that they should endeavour to barter the most they could fairly, without shewing covetousness; and endeavour to learn the language, since it would be so useful to them, since they had opened the way to that new world.” They answered they would punctually perform all he ordered them. Wednesday, the 2d of January, 1493, he went ashore to take his leave, dined with Gaucanagari and his Caziques, recommended the Christians to him, whom he had commanded to serve and defend him from the Caribes. He gave him a fine shirt, and said, he would soon return with presents from the King of Spain. He answered with great tokens of sorrow for his departure.”

No. V.

Herrera (vol. i. page 125.) having related how the Admiral founded a colony at Isabella, in the island of Hispaniola, left it for a time to build a fort in another part of the country, and after a time returned to it again, when he found many of the settlers dead, and the rest suffering from sickness and want of provisions, proceeds in these words:—“I found the men much fatigued, many of them dead, and those who were in health very disconsolate for fear they should not long survive, and they sickened the faster as the provisions declined. * * * Being thus out of hopes of any relief, starving with hunger, and sick, many of them persons of distinction, who had never undergone such hardships, they died very impatient and almost desperate; and therefore, after this colony of Isabella was abandoned, it was reported that dreadful cries were heard in that place, so that people durst not go that way. It was positively affirmed, that two men passing along among the buildings of the Isabella, there appeared to them in the street, two ranks of men very well clad, their swords by their sides, with mufflers about their faces, as travellers used to wear at that time in Spain; and those two persons wondering to see such new-comers there, so well dressed, whereas there was no knowledge of them in the island, saluted them, and asked them when and from whence they came; the others returned no answer, but putting their hands to their hats, with them took off their heads, and so vanished, which was such a surprise to the aforesaid two men, that they came not to themselves in a long time after.”

No. VI.

Herrera, vol. i. page 252., gives this account of the fate of Bovadilla:—“He (Columbus, from Spain) arrived there (Santo Domingo) the 29th of June, and sent Peter de Terreros, captain of a ship, to acquaint Nicholas de Obando with the necessity he was under of leaving that ship there, and to desire he would permit him to enter the port with his ships, not only to change or buy another, but also to shelter himself from a great storm he was sure would soon happen. Obando would not consent to it, and the Admiral being informed that the fleet of thirty-two sail was ready to put to sea, sent to advise him not to permit it to go out in eight days, because there would be a most dreadful tempest, for which reason he was going to put into the next harbour he should find, as accordingly he did to Puerto Hermosa, sixteen leagues from Santo Domingo. Nicholas de Obando would not believe it, and the pilots made a jest of it, calling him a prophet. Among many tokens of a storm observed by mariners, one is, the porpoises and other such like fishes playing upon the superficies of the water, from which and other observations, the Admiral had concluded that there would be a storm.

“As soon as Obando arrived at Hispaniola, he put his orders in execution, and accordingly Francis de Bovadilla was sent aboard the fleet with Francis Roldan, and all the rest that had been concerned in his insurrection, as also the Cazique Gaurinoex, lord of the Vale Royal, one hundred thousand castellanos of gold, besides the above-mentioned vast grain of gold” (so large that they had dined off it instead of a table,) “and one hundred thousand more belonging to passengers, at which time those two hundred thousand castellanos were worth more than two millions. The fleet, consisting of thirty-one ships, set sail about the beginning of July, and within forty hours there arose such a violent storm as had not been known in many years, so that twenty ships were cast away, and not a man saved, and all the town of Santo Domingo, which was then on the other side of the river, the houses being slight, was blown down. The Admiral's ships were dispersed and in the utmost danger, but met again in Puerto Hermoso, and thus the Admiral and his ships escaped, and the fleet perished because they would not believe him. There Francis de Bovadilla, who had sent the Admiral in irons to Spain, perished, as did Francis Roldan and his companions who had rebelled against the King. The two hundred thousand castellanos of gold and the vast grain above mentioned, were also lost. The worst ship in the fleet, on board which the Admiral had four thousand pesos, escaped, and was the first that arrived in Spain.”

No. VII.

Robertson's History of America, book iii.—“For a considerable time the supply of treasure from the new world was scanty and precarious, and the genius of Charles the Fifth conducted public measures with such prudence that the effects of this influence were little perceived. But when Philip the Second ascended the Spanish throne, with talents far inferior to those of his father, and remittances from the colonies became a regular and a considerable branch of revenue, the fatal operation of this rapid change in the state of the kingdom, both on the monarch and his people, was at once conspicuous. Philip, possessing the spirit of unceasing assiduity, which often characterises the ambition of men of moderate talents, entertained such an opinion of his own resources, that he thought nothing too arduous for him to undertake. Shut up himself in the solitude of the Escorial, he troubled and annoyed all the nations round him. He waged open war with the Dutch and English, who encouraged and aided a rebellious faction in France; he conquered Portugal, and maintained armies and garrisons in Italy, Africa, and both the Indies. By such a multiplicity of great and complicated operations, pursued with ardour during the course of a long reign, Spain was drained both of men and money.”

After mentioning the wretched impolicy of Philip the Third, in banishing the Moors from Spain, continuing the subject, he says:—

“In proportion as the population and manufactures of the parent state declined, the demands of her colonies continued to increase. The Spaniards, like their monarch, intoxicated with the wealth which they poured in annually upon them, deserted the paths of industry, to which they had been accustomed, and repaired with eagerness to those regions from which this opulence issued. By this rage of emigration, another drain was opened, and the strength of the colonies augmented by exhausting that of the mother-country. All those emigrants, as well as the adventurers, who had at first settled in America, depended absolutely on Spain for almost every article of necessary consumption. Engaged in more alluring and lucrative pursuits, or prevented by restraints which government imposed, they could not turn their own attention towards establishing the manufactures requisite to comfortable subsistence. They received their clothing, their furniture, whatever ministers to the ease or luxury of life, and even their instruments of labour, from Europe. Spain, thinned of people, and decreasing in industry, was unable to supply their growing demands. She had recourse to her neighbours. The manufactures of the Low Countries, of England, of France, and of Italy, which her wants called into existence, or animated with new vivacity, furnished in abundance whatever she required. * * * In short, not above a twentieth part of the commodities exported to America were of Spanish growth or fabric: all the rest was the property of foreign merchants, though entered in the name of

Spaniards. The treasure of the new world may be said henceforward not to have belonged to Spain. Before it reached Europe, it was anticipated as the price of goods purchased from foreigners. That wealth which, by internal circulation, would have spread through each vein of industry, and have conveyed life and movement to every branch of manufacture, flowed out of the kingdom with such a rapid course as neither enriched nor animated it. On the other hand, the artisans of other nations, encouraged by this quick sale of their commodities, improved so much in skill and industry as to be able to afford them at a rate so low, that the manufactures of Spain, which could not vie with theirs, either in quality or cheapness of work, were still more depressed. This destructive commerce drained off the riches of the nation faster and more completely than even the extravagant schemes of ambition carried on by its monarchs. Spain was so much astonished and distressed at beholding her American treasures vanish almost as soon as they were imported, that Philip the Third, unable to supply what was requisite in circulation, issued an edict, by which he endeavoured to raise copper money to a value in currency nearly equal to that of silver: and the Lord of Peruvian and Mexican mines was required to write a patent, which he is the last resource of petty impoverished states. * * * Spain early became sensible of her declension from her former prosperity, and many respectable and virtuous citizens employed their thoughts in devising methods for reviving the decaying industry and commerce of their country. From the violation of the remedies proposed, we may judge how desperate and fatal the malady appeared. Some, confounding a violation of police with criminality against the State, contended that, in order to check illicit commerce, every person convicted of carrying it on should be punished with death and confiscation of all his effects. Others, forgetting the distinction between civil offences and acts of impiety, insisted that counterfeit trade should be raised among the crimes reserved for the cognizance of the Inquisition; that such as were guilty of it might be tried and punished, according to the secret and summary form in which that dreadful tribunal exercises its jurisdiction."

No. VIII.

Herrera, vol. iv. p. 298.—"The seventh Inga Yapaugne, as soon as his father was dead, paid him very great honours, and a greater number of women and servants was shut up in his tomb, to die there, and serve him in the other world, than any other had before; and he had more treasure, more provisions, and more clothes, put in with them, and more men and women hanged themselves in their own hair. * * * This custom of burying women and other persons with the dead was universal among the mountain and Yunga Indians. When Acoya, Lord of the greatest part of the vale of Xauxa, died, a boy ran away to the Spaniards, because they would have shut him up alive in that prince's tomb."

This author says, that the Mexicans and those under their dominions computed, that every third child of the poorer sort was taken for sacrifice, and their idols were the better served, as the legs and arms of the victims were a most acceptable feast to the worshippers. To the deity of agriculture, when the reeds of the Indian wheat were small, they sacrificed newborn babes, and others bigger, as it grew up, till it was eared and ripe, and then they sacrificed men.

"Speaking of the temple of Mexico, he says, vol. ii. p. 380.—"Either to shew the multitude of sacrifices they offered to their gods, or to keep in their minds the remembrance of death, to which all men are subject, they had a charnel of the skulls of men, taken in war and sacrificed, which was without the temple."—After describing it, he adds: "The number was so great, that Gomora, who had it from Andrew de Tapia and Gonzalvo de Umbría, two persons that took the pains to count them, tells us, they amounted to above one hundred and thirty thousand skulls, beside those that were in the towers, which they could not count," (when we consider that the Mexicans had not been in possession, by their own account, of the country above two centuries, and the temple probably not built for many years after their first arrival, this is a very great number) and the said Gomora condemns this practice, in regard that they were the heads of men sacrificed, as being the effect of so cruel a cause as was the killing so many innocent persons; and he is in the right, for had they been the heads of men that had died a natural death, it was com-

mendable to expose them to public view, to put the living in mind of their end."

The Indians seem to have had great intercourse with the devil, as well became the gloomy cruelty of their worship; and the Spaniards, impressed with horror at the dreadful waste of human life for sacrifices and feasts, which always went together, seem in some degree to have credited the reality of that intercourse. These following passages from Herrera are curious, and will shew how far this was the case:—

"The suns over the gates of the palace, borne in Montezuma's colours and those of his ancestors, were an eagle stooping to a tyger, with the talons ready to lay hold. Some will have it to be a griffon, not an eagle; affirming that there are griffons on the mountains of Taguacan, and that they unperceive the vale of Anacutlan, devouring the inhabitants. * * * This is not certain, there being nothing to prove it but their bare word; for hitherto the Spaniards never saw any griffon in that country, though the Indians shewed the pictures of some among their antiquities. They were represented to have down, and no feathers, and said to be so strong that they could break the strongest bones of men and deer; their shape between a lion and an eagle, with four legs, a head, talons, and wings to fly. * * * Pliny and other natural philosophers speak up what is said of the griffon as a fable, though many tales and stories are told of them. Our people, never having seen any, some conclude and affirm, that ever since the beginning of idolatry among the Indians in New Spain, the devil was wont to appear in that shape, as he did in many others that were no less fierce and frightful."

After describing the great riches in gold and jewels, &c. of a private chapel, "where Montezuma was wont to pray many nights, and the devil appeared and spoke to him, giving answers and advice suitable to his petition and request," he proceeds to give an account of his various houses, and thus concludes:—"None of these houses belonging to the King were without chapels or oratories to the devil, whom they worshipped for the sake of what was there, and accordingly they were all large, and had many people belonging to them, which shews how superstitious they were, and how many ways the devil endeavoured to be honoured and worshipped."

In an account of the manners of Castilla del Oro, or the country about the isthmus of America, there is this passage:—"There was a sort of men among them called masters, in their language, each of these had a very little cottage without a door, and open at the top. The master went into it at night, pretended to talk with the devil, forming several voices, and then told the lord what the devil had discovered and answered to him. In these provinces, there were witches that did harm to children, and even to great people at the investigation of the devil, who gave them ointments made of certain herbs, with which they daubed themselves. He appeared to them in the shape of a beautiful male child, to the end that those simple people might believe him without being frightened. They never saw his hands, or his feet; he had three claws like a griffon, and he attended the witches when they went to do any harm. The Adelantado Pascuas de Andagoya affirmed, he had proof that a witch was one night in a town, with other women, and that at the same time she was seen a league and a half from thence, at a farm, where there were some people belonging to her lord."

In an account of the religion and manners of the Indians in some part of the new kingdom of Grenada, there is this curious passage:—"As to the origin of the human race, the barbarians of that country believe that a man they call Are, who always lay down, and was not really a man, but a shadow of a man, carved the faces of men and women on pieces of wood, and casting them into the water, they came out alive, and he married them. They went away from him, began to till the ground, and they never saw that Are again; and this, they say, happened on the other side of the great river of the Magdalena. Their prayers and devotions were performed on the water, and the devil strangely deluded them, and they talked with him, who persuaded them that it was not good to go to heaven, besides many more absurdities. They accounted the Sun their father and the Moon their mother; and when she was eclipsed, they wept, saying, 'Whither are you going, mother?' &c. * * * And then they made noise with their trumpets, pipes, drums and other instruments; and the devil persuaded them that the heaven with all its light would be turned upside down."

In mentioning the Indians amongst the mountains of Abibe—"Most of the Indians about this mountain were subject to

a Cazique, Nutibara, who was carried about on a golden bier, and had heads of his enemies before his house, for they were wont to eat their bodies; they worshipped the sun; the devil appeared, and spoke to them in several shapes. An Indian woman, who went away with Bovadillo's men, told them, that when Captain Cesar returned to Carthage, the prime men of those vales assembled, and having offered extraordinary sacrifices, the devil appeared to them in the shape of a tyger, and told them that those men were come from beyond sea, and would soon return to subdue the country, therefore they should prepare for their defence; and then he vanished, after which preparations were made accordingly, and all the gold being taken out of the graves, was hid."

In another part of the history, he says,—"In this city of Tascalala was a spring to which they carried new-born children to be bathed, in the nature of baptism, which they thought delivered them from misfortunes, and there they offered flowers, perfumes, and sacrificed men. They were great conjurers, wizards, and diviners; used to cast lots, and believe in dreams and prodigies. They saw strange apparitions of the devil, in the shape of a lion, tyger, or other borrowed body, and he would talk to them, and was known by having

no shadow, no small bones in the joints, neither eyebrows nor eyelids, his eyes round, without balls or white. * * * * Their temples were pyramidal, with steps going up to the top, where was one or two little chapels, and before them large columns, with fires and perfumes on them day and night. * * * * They were exact in the service of their temples, and the greatest sacrifice was of men and dogs, so that there were shambles of dogs sacrificed; but the prime sacrifice of all was that of the first prisoner taken in war. One who had been a priest, and was converted, said, that when they tore out the heart of the wretched person sacrificed, it did beat so strongly, that he took it up from the ground three or four times; fill it cooled by degrees, and then he threw the body, still moving, down the steps. To know whether the devil consented to what they asked, they offered him something like henbane, an herb reckoned of great virtue for distempers, which they placed on certain vessels on the altar; when the priests came to see those vessels, and found the print of eagles' feet on them, they declared the same to the people, and then they joyfully began the solemnity with trumpets, drums, horns, and other instruments, the multitude celebrating that token given them by the devil."

THE LEGEND OF LADY GRISELD BAILLIE.

WHEN sapient, dauntless, strong, heroic man!
Our busy thoughts thy noble nature scan,
Whose active mind, its hidden cell within,
Frames that from which the mightiest works begin,
Whose secret thoughts are light to ages lending,
Whose potent arm is right and life defending,
For helpless thousands, all on one high soul depending:—

We pause, delighted with the fair survey,
And haply in our wistful musings say,
What mate, to match this noble work of heaven,
Hath the all-wise and mighty Master given?
One gifted like himself, whose head devises
High things, whose soul at sound of battle rises,
Who with glaved hand will through arm'd squadrons ride,

And, death confronting, combat by his side;
Will share with equal wisdom grave debate,
And all the eares of chieftain, kingly state?
Ay, such, I trow, in female form hath been
Of olden times, and may again be seen,
When cares of empire or strong impulse swell
The generous breast, and to high deeds impel;
For who can these as meaner times upbraid,
Who think of Saragossa's valiant maid?

But she of gentler nature, softer, dearer,
Of daily life the active, kindly cheerer;
With generous bosom, age or childhood shielding,
And in the storms of life, though moved, unyielding;

Strength in her gentleness, hope in her sorrow,
Whose darkest hours some ray of brightness borrow

From better days to come, whose meek devotion
Calms every wayward passion's wild commotion;
In want and suff'ring, soothing, useful, sprightly,
Bearing the press of evil hap so lightly,
Till evil's self seems its strong hold betraying
To the sweet witch'ry of such winsome playing;
Bold from affection, if by nature fearful,
With varying brow, sad, tender, anxious, cheerful,—

This is meet partner for the loftiest mind, [kind!
With crown or helmet graeced,—yea, this is woman—

Come ye, whose grateful memory retains
Dear recollection of her tender pains,
To whom your oft-con'd lesson, daily said,
With kiss and cheering praises was repaid;
To gain whose smile, to shun whose mild rebuke,
Your irksome task was learnt in silent nook,
Though truant thoughts the while, your lot exchanging

With freer elves, were wood and meadow ranging;—
And ye, who best the faithful virtues know
Of a link'd partner, tried in weal and woe,
Like the slight willow, now aloft, now bending,
But still unbroke, with the blast contending,
Whose very look call'd virtuous vigour forth,
Compelling you to match her noble worth;—
And ye, who in a sister's modest praise
Feel manly pride, and think of other days,
Pleased that the playmate of your native home
Hath in her prime an honour'd name become;—
And ye, who in a dutious child have known
A daughter, helpmate, sister, blent in one,

From whose dear hand, which to no hireling leaves
Its task of love, your age sweet aid receives,
Who reckless marks youth's waning faded hue,
And thinks her bloom well spent, when spent for
you ;—

Come all, whose thoughts such dear remembrance
bear,

And to my short and faithful lay give ear !

I.

Within a prison's hateful cell,
Where, from the lofty window fell,
Through grated bars, the sloping beam,
Defined, but faint, on couch of stone,
There sat a pris'n'er sad and lone,
Like the dim tenant of a dismal dream.

Deep in the shade, by low-arch'd door,
With iron nails thick studded o'er,
Whose threshold black is cross'd by those
Who here their earthly being close,
Or issue to the light again
A scaffold with their blood to stain,—
Moved something softly. Wistful ears
Are quick of sense, and from his book
The pris'n'er raised his eyes with eager look,—

“ Is it a real form that through the gloom appears ? ”

II.

It was indeed of flesh and blood,
The form that quickly by him stood ;
Of stature low, of figure light,
In motion like some happy sprite ;
Yet meaning eyes and varying check,
Now red, now pale, seem'd to bespeak
Of riper years the cares and feeling
Which with a gentle heart were dealing.

“ Such sense in eyes so simply mild !

“ Is it a woman or a child ? *

“ Who art thou, damsel sweet ? art not mine eyes
beguiled ? ”

III.

“ No ; from the Redbraes' tower I come ;
“ My father is Sir Patrick Hume ;
“ And he has sent me for thy good,
“ His dearly honour'd Jerviswood.
“ Long have I round these walls been straying,
“ As if with other children playing ;
“ Long near the gate have kept my watch
“ The sentry's changing time to catch.
“ With stealthy steps I gain'd the shade
“ By the close-winding staircase made,

“ And when the surly turnkey enter'd,
“ But little dreaming in his mind
“ Who follow'd him so close behind,
“ Into this darken'd cell, with beating heart, I
ventur'd.”

IV.

Then from the simple vest that braced
Her gentle breast, a letter traced
With well-known characters, she took,
And with an eager, joyful look,
Her eyes up to his visage cast,

His changing countenance to scan,
As o'er the lines his keen glance past.

She saw a faint glow tinge the sickly wan ;
She saw his eyes through tear-drops raise
To heaven their look of silent praise,
And hope's fresh touch undoing lines of care
Which stress of evil times had deeply graven there.
Meanwhile, the joy of sympathy to trace
Upon her innocent and lovely face,
Had to the sternest, darkest sceptic given
Some love of human kind, some faith in righteous
heaven.

V.

What blessings on her youthful head
Were by the grateful patriot shed,
(For such he was †, good and devoted,
And had at risk of life promoted
His country's freedom and her faith,
Nor reck'ning made of worldly seath)
How warm, confiding, and sincere,

He gave to her attentive ear
The answer which her cautious squire
Did to his secret note require ;—
How after this with queries kind,
He ask'd for all she left behind

In Redbraes' tower, her native dwelling,
And set her artless tongue a-telling,
Which urchin dear had tallest grown,
And which the greatest learning shown,
Of lesson, sermon, psalm, and note,
And sabbath questions learnt by rote,
And merry tricks and gambols play'd
By ev'ning fire, and forfeits paid,—

I will not here rehearse, nor will I say,
How, on that bless'd and long-remember'd day,
The pris'n'er's son, deserving such a sire,
First saw the tiny maid, and did admire,
That one so young and wise and good and fair
Should be an earthly thing that breathed this nether
air.

* She was at that time twelve years old (see Lady Murray's Narrative.)—“ When Mr. Baillie was first imprisoned, Sir Patrick sent his daughter Grizeld to Edinburgh, with instructions to obtain admission unsuspectingly into the prison, to deliver a letter to Mr. Baillie, and bring back from him

what intelligence she could. She succeeded in this difficult enterprise, and having at this time met with Mr. Baillie's son, the intimacy and friendship was formed which was afterwards completed by their marriage.”

† See the Appendix.

VI.

E'en let my reader courteously suppose,
That from this visit happier days arose ;
Suppose the pris'n'er from his thralldom freed,
And with our lay proceed.

VII.

The damsel, glad her mission'd task was done,
Back to her home long since had blithely gone ;
And there remain'd, a meek and duteous child,
Where useful toil, with play between,
And pastime on the sunny green,
The weeks and months of passing years beguill'd.

VIII.

Scotland the while convulsive lay
Beneath a hateful tyrant's sway ;
For James's bigot mind th' ascendant gain'd,
And fiercely rag'd blind ruthless power ;
While men, who true to conscience' voice remain'd,
Were forced in caves and dens to cover :
Bereft of home or hold or worldly wealth
Upon the bleak and blasted heath,
They sang their glorious Maker's praise by stealth,
Th' inclement sky beneath.
And some were forced to flee their native land,
Or in the grated prison's gloom,
Dealt to them by corruption's hateful hand,
Abide their fatal doom.*

IX.

And there our former thrall, the good,
The firm, the gentle Jerviswood
Again was pent, with sickness worn,
Watching each pulse's feebler beat,
Which promised, ere the fated morn,
The scaffold of its prey to cheat.

X.

And now that patriot's ancient, faithful friend,
Our maiden's sire, must to the tempest bend.
He too must quit his social hearth,
The place where cheerful friends resort,
And trav'lers rest and children spout,
To lay him on the mould'ring earth ;

* It made the persecution of the Calvinists in those days more intolerable to them, when they considered that it was no motives of conscience which actuated their persecutors, who were the servile agents of a tyrant, assuming zeal in his service from corrupted and worldly views ; and that had the king changed the religion every half-year, they would have been equally zealous in persecuting the opposers of the established church for the time being.

† " Sir Patrick Hume concealed himself in a burying-vault in Polworth church."—*Lady M.'s Nar.*

‡ " The frequent examination oaths put to servants, in order to make discoveries, were so strict, they durst not run the risk of trusting any of them."—" By the assistance of this man, a carpenter, who was the only person beside Lady Hume and Griseld who knew the place of his confinement, they got a bed and bed-clothes carried in the night to the burying-place, a vault under ground at Polworth church, a mile from

Through days of lonely gloom to rest his head
With them, who, in those times unblest,
Alone had sure and fearless rest,
The still, the envied dead. †

XI.

Sad was his hiding-place, I ween,
A fearful place, where sights had been,
Full oft, by the benighted rustic seen ;
Ay, elrich forms in sheeted white,
Which, in the waning moonlight blast,
Pass by, nor shadow onward cast,
Like any earthly wight :
A place, where midnight lights had shone
Through charnel windows, and the glancing
Of wand'ring flame, on church-path lone,
Betray'd the hour when fiends and hags were dancing,
Or to their vigil foul with trooping haste advancing :
A place, whose gate with weeds o'ergrown,
Hemlock and dock of deep dull green,
That climbing rank the lintels screen,
What time the moon is riding high,
The very hounds went covering by,
Or watch'd afar with howling moan ;
For brutes, 'tis said, will see what meets no human eye. ‡

XII.

You well may guess his faithful wife
A heart of heavy cheer had then,
List'ning her household's hum of life,
And thinking of his silent den.
" Oh ! who will to that vault of death,
" At night's still watch repair,
" The dark and chilly sky beneath,
" And needful succour bear ?
" Many his wants, who bideth lonely there !"

XIII.

Perhaps had you been to have beheld,
Like fire-sparks from the stricken stone,
Like sun-beams on the rain-drop thrown,
The kindling eye of sweet Griseld,
When thus her mother spoke, for known
Was his retreat to her alone.

the house, where he was concealed for a month, and had only for light an open slit at one end, through which nobody could see what was doing below. She (Lady Griseld) went every night by herself to carry him victuals and drink, and stayed with him as long as she could to get home before day."

‡ This is a very general belief, particularly regarding dogs and horses. When the dog cowers by his master's side, or stops short on his way, and gives a stifled bark, it is something far more terrible than the skulking thief or robber, which the belated peasant apprehends to be near him.—" But have you never seen a ghost yourself?" was once my eager question to the sexton of the parish, who had been telling me many frightful stories of apparitions.—" No," answered he very seriously ; " I never have, myself, but I am very sure that my dog has seen them."

The wary dame to none beside
 The dangerous secret might confide.
 "O fear not, mother! I will go,
 "Betide me good or ill:
 "Nor quick nor dead shall daunt me; no;
 "Nor witch-fires, dancing in the dark,
 "Nor owl's shriek, nor watch-dog's bark,
 "For I shall think, the while, I do God's blessed
 will.
 "I'll be his active Brownie sprite*,
 "To bring him needful food, and share his lonely
 night."

XIV.

And she, ere stroke of midnight bell,
 Did bound her for that dismal cell;
 And took that haunted, fearful way,
 Which, till that hour, in twilight grey,
 She never by herself had past,
 Or e'en athwart its copse-wood cast
 A hasty glance, for dread of seeing
 The form of some unearthly being.
 But now, far other forms of fear
 To her scared sight appear,
 And, like a sudden fit of ague, dove her;
 The stump of some old, blasted tree,
 Or upright stone, or colt broke free
 To range at will the dewy lea,
 Seem lurking spy or rustic lover,
 Who may, e'en through the dark, her secret drift
 discover.

XV.

She pauses oft. — "What whispers near? —
 "The babbling bourn sounds in mine ear.
 "Some hasty form the pathway crosses: —
 "'Tis but a branch the light wind tosses.
 "What thing is that by church-yard gate,
 "That seems like spearman tall to wait?
 "'Tis but the martyr's slender stone
 "Which stands so stately and alone;
 "Why should I shrink? why should I fear?
 "The vault's black door is near."
 And she with icy fingers knock'd,
 And heard with joy the door unlock'd,
 And felt the yawning fence give way
 As deep and harsh the sounding hinges bray.

* After the many ingenious works which have brought into notice of late years our Scottish superstitions, it would be foolish to acquaint the reader with the nature and properties of a Brownie; I shall only say, that they are described by those who have been fortunate enough to get a sight of them, as resembling a short square man, of a brown colour, and hairy. I once knew a woman, whose mother was the last person who saw a certain Brownie, long attached to a family of note in Lanrickshire; and, though she was so frightened at the sight, that she *swarf'd* (swooned) for fear, such was her description of him. One of those beings is often supposed to be attached to particular families, and to be occasional night-servants for several generations. Mr. Hog, in his in-

XVI.

But to describe their tender meeting,
 Tears shed unseen, affection utter'd
 In broken words, and blessings mutter'd,
 With many a kiss and kindly greeting,
 I know not; would my feeble skill
 Were meeter yoke-mate to my will!

XVII.

Then from the struck flint flew the spark,
 And lighted taper, faint and small,
 Gave out its dun-rays through the dark,
 On vaulted roof and crusted wall;
 On stones reversed in crumbling mould,
 And blacken'd poles of bier decay'd
 That lumb'ring on the ground were laid;
 On sculptured wrecks, defaced and old,
 And shreds of painted 'scutcheons torn,
 Which once, in pointed lozenge spread,
 The pillar'd church aloft had worn;
 While new-swept nook and lowly bed,
 Strange sight in such a place!
 Betray'd a piteous case, —
 Man from man's converse torn, the living with the
 dead.

XVIII.

The basket's store of viands and bread,
 Produced with looks of kind inviting,
 Her hands with busy kindness spread;
 And he her kindly care requiring,
 Fell to with thanks and relish keen,
 Nodded and quaff'd her health between,
 While she his glee return'd, her smiles with tears
 uniting.
 No lordling at his banquet rare
 E'er tasted such delicious fare;
 No beauty on her silken seat,
 With lover kneeling at her feet,
 E'er wept and smiled by turns with smiles so fondly
 sweet.

XIX.

But soon youth's buoyant gladsome nature
 Spreads joy unmix'd o'er every feature,
 As she her tale is archly telling
 Of feuds within their busy dwelling,
 While, round the sav'ry table sitting,
 She gleans his meal, the rest unwitting,

genious tale of the Brownie of Bodsbeck, accounts very plausibly for the frequent traditions of those supernatural labourers in Scotland; and in all countries where persecuted or outlawed men have subsisted on the secret bounty, or pilfered provisions of a neighbouring mansion, we may well suppose similar traditions to have existed; for wretched and persecuted men will be more inclined gratefully to repay what necessity has obliged them to take or receive, than those who are more happily circumstanced. The Lubber Fiend is mentioned by Milton, and, I believe, other poets. Fortunately, perhaps, for the reader, want of learning prevents me from tracing the matter further.

How she, their open eyes deceiving,
 So dext'rous has become in thieving,
 She tells, how, of some trifle prating,
 She stirs them all to keen debating,
 While into napkin'd lap she's sliding
 Her portion, oft renew'd, and hiding,
 Beneath the board, her store; amazing
 Her jealous Frere, oft on her gazing.
 Then with his voice and eager eye,
 She speaks in harmless mimicry.
 "Mother! was e'er the like beheld?
 "Some wolf possesses our Griseld;
 "She clears her dish, as I'm a sinner!
 "Like ploughman at his new-year's dinner."*

XX.

And what each urchin, one by one,
 Had best in sport or lesson done,
 She fail'd not to repeat:
 Though sorry tales they might appear
 To a fastidious critic's ear,
 They were to him most sweet.

XXI.

But they must part till o'er the sky
 Night cast again her sable dye;
 For ah! her term is almost over!
 How fleetly hath it flown!
 As fleetly as with trysted lover
 The stealthy hour is gone.
 And could there be in lovers' meeting
 More powerful chords to move the mind,
 Fond heart to heart responsive beating,
 Than in that tender hour, pure, pious love entwined?

XXII.

Thus, night succeeding night, her love
 Did its unwearied nature prove,
 Tender and fearless; till, obscured by crimes,
 Again so darkly lower'd the changeful times,
 That her good sire, though shut from light of
 day,
 Might in that lowly den no longer stay.

XXIII.

From Edinburgh town a courier came,
 And round him flock'd the castle's dame,

* Lady M.'s Nar.—"There was also difficulty in getting food to carry him without the servants suspecting; the only way it was done was by stealing it off her plate at dinner into her lap; many a diverting story she has told about this and things of the like nature. Her father liked sheep's-head, and while the children were eating the brook, she had conveyed most of one into her lap; when her brother Sandy (the late Lord Marchmont) had done, he looked up with astonishment and said, "Mother, will you look at Griseld; while we have been eating our brook, she has eat up all the sheep's-head!"

† See the Appendix. And Laing's Hist., book viii. page 139., where it is mentioned that his sister-in-law supported him to the scaffold.

Children and servants, young and old.
 "What news? what news? thy visage sad
 "Betrays too plainly tidings bad."
 And so it did; alas! sad was the tale he told.
 "From the oppressor's deadly hate
 "Good Jerviswood has met his fate
 "Upon the lofty scaffold, where
 "He bore himself with dauntless air;
 "Albeit, with mortal sickness spent,
 "Upon a woman's arm he leant.
 "From earth to heaven at yestere'en he went."

XXIV.

In silence deep the list'ners stood,
 An instant horror chill'd their blood.
 The lady groan'd, and turn'd aside
 Her fears and troubled thoughts to hide.
 The children wept, then went to play;
 The servants cried "Ah! well a day!"
 But oh! what inward sights, which borrow
 The forms that are not, changing still,
 Like shadows on a broken rill,

Were blended with our damsel's sorrow!
 Those lips, those eyes so sweetly mild,
 That bless'd her as a humble child;
 The block in sable, deadly trim,
 The kneeling form, the headman grim,
 The sever'd head with life-blood streaming,—
 Were ever 'thwart her fancy gleaming.
 Her father, too, in perilous state,
 He may be seiz'd, and like his friend
 Upon the fatal scaffold bend.
 May heaven preserve him still from such a dreadful
 end!

And then she thought, if this must be,
 Who, honour'd sire, will wait on thee,
 And serve thy wants with decent pride,
 Like Baillie's kinswoman, subduing fear †
 With fearless love, thy last sad scene to cheer,
 E'en on the scaffold standing by thy side?
 A friend like his, dear father, thou shalt have,
 To serve thee to the last, and linger round thy
 grave.

XXV.

Her father then, who narrowly
 With life escaped, was forced to fly †

† Lady M.'s Nar.—"Sir P. Hume, on hearing of the death of Jerviswood, fled from this country, and took refuge in Holland, where his wife and her large family joined him. My aunt Julian, the youngest child, was so ill that she could not go with them. My mother returned from Holland by herself, to bring her over and negotiate business. * * * They landed at the Brill. From that they set out at night, on foot, with a gentleman, who was of great use to them, that came over at the same time to take refuge in Holland. It was a cold wet night; my aunt, a girl not well able to walk, soon lost her shoes in the dirt; my mother took her upon her back, and carried her the rest of the way, the gentleman carrying the small luggage."

His dangerous home, a home no more,
 And cross the sea. A friendly shore
 Received the fugitive, and there,
 Like prey brok'n from the spoiler's snare,
 To join her hapless lord, the dame
 Ere long with all her children came ;
 And found asylum, where th' oppress
 Of Scotland's patriot sons had rest,
 Like sea-fowl clust'ring in the rock
 To shun some rising tempest's shock.

XXVI.

But said I all the children ? no :
 Word incorrect ! it was not so :
 For onc, the youngest child, confin'd
 With fell disease, was left behind ;
 While certain things, as thus by stealth
 They fled, regarding worldly wealth
 Of much import, were left undone ;
 And who will now that peril run,
 A gain to visit Scotland's shore,
 From whence they did in fear depart,
 And to each parent's yearning heart
 The darling child restore ?

XXVII.

And who did for affection's sake
 This task of peril undertake ?
 O ! who but she, whose bosom swell'd
 With feelings high, whose self-devotion
 Follow'd each gen'rous, strong emotion,
 The young, the sweet, the good, the brave Griseld !

XXVIII.

Yes ; she again cross'd o'er the main,
 And things of moment left undone,
 Though o'er her head had scarcely run
 Her nineteenth year, no whit deluded
 By wily fraud, she there concluded,
 And bore the youngling to its own again.

XXIX.

But when she reach'd the Belgian strand,
 Hard was her lot. Fast fell the rain,
 And there lay many miles of land,
 A stranger's land, ere she might gain
 The nearest town. With hardship cross'd,
 The wayward child its shoes had lost ;
 Their coin was spent, their garments light,
 And dark and dreary was the night,
 Then like some gypsy girl on desert moor,
 Her helpless charge upon her back she bore.
 Who then had guess'd that figure slight*,
 So bending in such humble plight,

* Lady M.'s Nar.—“She was middle-sized, well made, and clever in her person; very handsome, with a life and sweetness in her eyes very uncommon, and great delicacy in all her features.”

† Lady M.'s Nar.—“All the time they were there (Holland), there was not a week my mother did not sit up

Was one of proud and gentle race ;
 Possessing all that well became
 Th' accomplish'd maid or high-born dame,
 Befitting princely hall or monarch's court to grace ?

XXX.

Their minds from many racking cares relieved,
 The gladsome parents to their arms received
 Her and the infant dear, caressing
 The twain by turns ; while many a blessing,
 Which sweetly all her toil repaid,
 Was shed upon their gen'rous maid :
 And though the inmates of a humble home,
 To which they had as wretched outlaws come,
 Though hard their alter'd lot might be,
 In crowded city pent,
 They lived with mind and body free
 In grateful, quiet content.

XXXI.

And well, with ready hand and heart,
 Each task of toilsome duty taking †,
 Did one dear inmate play her part,
 The last asleep, the earliest waking.
 Her hands each nightly couch prepared,
 And frugal meal on which they fared ;
 Unfolding spread the servet white,
 And deck'd the board with tankard bright.
 Through fretted hose and garment rent,
 Her tiny needle deftly went,
 Till hateful penury, so graced,
 Was scarcely in their dwelling traced.
 With rev'rence to the old she clung,
 With sweet affection to the young.
 To her was crabbed lesson said,
 To her the sly petition made.
 To her was told each petty care :
 To her was lisp'd the tardy prayer,
 What time the urchin, half undrest
 And half asleep, was put to rest.

XXXII.

There is a sight all hearts beguiling, —
 A youthful mother to her infant smiling,
 Who, with spread arms and dancing feet,
 And cooing voice, returns its answer sweet.
 Who does not love to see the grandame mild,
 Lesson with yearning looks the list'ning child ?
 But 'tis a thing of saintlier nature,
 Amidst her friends of pigmy stature,
 To see the maid in youth's fair bloom,
 A guardian sister's charge assume,

two nights to do the business that was necessary. She went to the market, and the mill to have the corn ground, as was the way with good managers there ; dressed the linen, cleaned the house, made ready dimer, mended the children's stockings and other clothes, made what she could for them, and in short did every thing.”

And, like a touch of angel's bliss,
 Receive from each its grateful kiss ; —
 To see them, when their hour of lore is past,
 Aside their grave demeanour cast.
 With her in mimic war they wrestle ;
 Beneath her twisted robe they nestle ;
 Upon her glowing cheek they revel,
 Low bended to their tiny level ;
 While oft, her lovely neck bestriding,
 Crows some arch imp, like huntsman riding.
 This is a sight the coldest heart may feel ;
 To make down rugged cheeks the kindly tear to
 steal.

XXXIII.

But when the toilsome sun was set,
 And ev'ning groups together met,
 (For other strangers shelter'd there
 Would seek with them to lighten care*,)
 Her feet still in the dance moved lightest,
 Her eye with merry glance beam'd brightest,
 Her braided locks were coil'd the neatest,
 Her carol song was trill'd the sweetest ;
 And round the fire, in winter cold,
 No archer tale than hers was told. †

XXXIV.

O ! spirits gay, and kindly heart !
 Precious the blessings ye impart !
 Though all unwittingly the while,
 Ye make the pining exile smile,
 And transient gladness charm his pain,
 Who ne'er shall see his home again.
 Ye make the stern misanthrope's brow
 With tint of passing kindness glow,
 And age spring from his elbow-chair
 The sport of lightsome glee to share.
 Thus did our joyous maid bestow
 Her beamy soul on want and woe ;
 While proud, poor men, in threadbare suit,
 Frisk'd on the floor with lightsome foot,
 And from her magic circle chase
 The fiends that vex the human race.

XXXV.

And do not, gentle reader, chide,
 If I record her harmless pride,
 Who sacrificed the hours of sleep,
 Some show of better times to keep ;
 That, though as humble soldier dight,
 A stripling brother might more trimly stand
 With pointed cuff and collar white, [band. †
 Like one of gentle race mix'd with a homelier

* The house of Sir Patrick Hume was much frequented by his countrymen, many of whom had taken refuge in Holland under similar circumstances with himself; and those meetings were enlivened with dancing and music, and all innocent amusements which cheerful poverty may enjoy.

† She was very neat in her dress, sung well, and had a great deal of humour in telling a story, being of a very cheerful disposition. (See Lady M.'s Nar.)

And in that band of low degree
 Another youth of gentle blood
 Was found, who late had cross'd the sea,
 The son of virtuous Jerviswood,
 Who did as common sentry wait
 Before a foreign prince's gate.
 And if his eye oft on the watch,
 One look of sweet Griseld might catch,
 It was to him no dull nor irksome state.

XXXVI.

And thus some happy years stole by ;
 Adversity with Virtue mated
 Her state of low obscurity
 Set forth but as deep shadows, fated
 By Heaven's high will to make the light
 Of future skies appear more bright.
 And thus, at lowest ebb, man's thoughts are oft
 elated.
 He deems not that the very struggle
 Of active virtue, in the war
 She bravely holds with present ill,
 Sustain'd by hope, does by the skill
 Of some conceal'd and happy juggle,
 Become itself the good which yet seems distant far.
 So, when their lamp of fortune burn'd
 With brightest ray, our worthies turn'd
 A recollection, fondly bent,
 On these, their happiest years, in humble dwelling
 spent. §

XXXVII.

At length the sky, so long with clouds o'ercast,
 Unveil'd its cope of azure hue,
 And gave its fair expanse to view ; —
 The pelting storm of tyranny was past.

XXXVIII.

For he, the Prince of glorious memory,
 The Prince, who shall, as passing ages fly,
 Be blest ; whose wise, enlighten'd, manly mind,
 E'en when but with a stripling's years combined,
 Had with unyielding courage oft contended
 For Europe's freedom, — for religion, blended
 With just, forbearing charity, and all
 To man most dear ; — now, at the honour'd call
 Of Britain's patriot sons, the ocean plough'd
 With gallant fleet, encompass'd by a crowd
 Of soldiers, statesmen, souls of proof, who vow'd
 Firm by his side to stand, let good or ill befall.
 And with those worthies, 'twas a happy doom,
 Right fairly earn'd, embark'd Sir Patrick Hume.

† Lady M. says, in her Narrative, that her elder brother, for a time, was a private in the Prince of Orange's guards, as was also young Jerviswood, when she took such pains to have his cuffs and cravat pointed after the fashion of those days.

§ Lady M. records, that her mother talked of those years as the happiest part her life.

Their fleet, though long at sea, and tempest-toss'd,
In happy hour at last arrived on England's coast.

XXXIX.

Meantime his Dame and our fair Maid
Still on the coast of Holland stay'd,
With anxious and misgiving minds,
List'ning the sound of warring winds* :
The ocean rose with deaf'ning roar,
And beat upon the trembling shore,
Whilst breakers dash'd their whit'ning spray
O'er mound and dyke with angry bray,
As if it would engulf again
The land once rescued from its wild domain.

XL.

Of on the beach our damsel stood
Midst groups of many a fearful wight,
Who view'd, like her, the billowy flood,
Silent and sad, with visage shrunk and white,
While bloated corse and splinter'd mast,
And bale and cask on shore were cast, —
A sad and rueful sight !
But when, at the Almighty will,
The tempest ceased, and sea was still,
From Britain's isle glad tidings came,
Received with loud and long acclaim.

XLI.

But joy appears with shrouded head
To those who sorrow o'er the dead † ;
For, struck with sore disease, while there
They tarried pent in noisome air,
The sister of her heart, whom she
Had watch'd and tended lovingly,
Like blighted branch whose blossoms fade,
That day was in her coffin laid.
She heard the chim'd bells loudly ringing,
She heard the carol'd triumph singing,
And clam'rous throng, and shouting boys,
And thought how vain are human joys !

XLII.

Howbeit, her grief at length gives way
To happier thoughts, as dawns the day

* Lady M.'s Nar. — "When the long-expected happiness of the Prince going to England took place, her father and brother, and my father, went with him. They (Griseld and Lady Hume) soon heard the melancholy report of the whole fleet being cast away or dispersed, and immediately came from Utrecht to Helvoet-Sluis, to get what information they could. The place was crowded by people from all quarters, come for the same purpose ; so that her mother and she and her sister were forced to lie in the boat they came in, and for three days continually to see come floating in, beds, chests, horses, &c., that had been thrown overboard in their distress."

† Lady M.'s Nar. — "Yet when that happy news (the Prince's safe arrival in England) came, it was no more to my mother than any occurrence she had not the least concern in, for that very day her sister Christian died of a sore throat,

When her kind parent and herself depart,
In royal Mary's gentle train,
To join, ere long, the dearest to her heart,
In their own native land again.
They soon their own fair island hail'd,
As on the rippling sea they sail'd.
Ye well may guess their joyful cry,
With up-raised hands and glist'ning eye,
When, rising from the ocean blue,
Her chalky cliffs first met their view,
Whose white verge on th' horizon rear'd,
Like wall of noon-day clouds appear'd.

XLIII.

These ye may guess, for well the show
And outward signs of joy we know.
But cease we on this theme to dwell,
For pen or pencil cannot tell
The thrill of keen delight from which they flow.
Such moments of ecstatic pleasure
Are fancy's fairest, brightest treasure,
Gilding the scope of duller days
With oft-recurring retrospect,
With which right happily she plays.
E'en as a moving mirror will reflect
Its glancing rays on shady side
Of holme or glen, when school-boys guide
With skilful hands their mimic sun
To heaven's bright sun opposed ; we see
Its borrow'd sheen on fallow dun,
On meadow green, on rock and tree,
On broomy steep, on rippling spring,
On cottage thatch, and every thing.

XLIV.

And Britain's virtuous Queen admired
Our gentle Maid, and in her train
Of ladies will'd her to remain ‡ ;
What more could young ambition have desired ?
But, like the blossom to the bough,
Or wall-flower to the ruin's brow §,
Or tendril to the fost'ring stock,
Or sea-weed to the briny rock,
Or mistletoe to sacred tree,
Or daisy to the swarded lea

which was so sore an affliction to both her and her mother, that they had no feeling for any thing else."

‡ Lady M.'s Nar. — "My grandmother and she came over with the Princess. She was offered to be made one of her maids of honour, and was well qualified for it. * * * She declined being maid of honour, and chose going home with the rest of her family."

§ I fear I have not here nor any where done justice to the sweetness and modesty of her character ; for her daughter says of her, "She greatly disliked flattery. I have often seen her put out of countenance at speeches made to her, and had not a word to say. * * * And this was joined with a modesty which was singular. To her last, she had the bashfulness of a girl, and was as easily put out of countenance."

So truly to her own she clung ;—
Nor cared for honours vain, from courtly favour
sprung.

XLV.

Nor would she in her native North,
When woo'd by one of wealth and worth,

The neighbour of her happy home,
Though by her gentle parents press'd,
And flatter'd, courted and caress'd,

A splendid bride become.

"I may not," said her gentle heart,

"The very thought endure,

"That those so kind should feel the smart

"A daughter's wants might oft impart,

"For Jerviswood is poor.

"But yet, though poor, why should I smother

"This dear regard? he'll be my brother*,

"And thus through life we'll love each other.

"What though, as changing years flit by,

"Grey grow my head, and dim his eye!

"We'll meekly bear our wayward fate,

"And scorn their petty spite who rate,

"With senseless gibes, the single state,

"Till we are join'd, at last, in heavenly bliss on
high."

XLVI.

But heaven for them decreed a happier lot:

The father of the virtuous youth,

Who died devoted for the truth,

Was not, when better times return'd, forgot:

To the right heir was given his father's land,

And with his lady's love, he won her hand.

XLVII.

Their long-tried faith in honour plighted,

They were a pair by heaven united,

Whose wedded love, through lengthen'd years,

The trace of early fondness wears.

Her heart first guess'd his doubtful choice,

Her ear first caught his distant voice,

And from afar, her wistful eye

Would first his graceful form descry.

E'en when he hid him forth to meet

The open air in lawn or street,

She to her casement went,

And after him, with smile so sweet,

Her look of blessing sent.†

* Knowing that her parents objected to her union with Jerviswood, on account of his circumstances, she resolved never to marry.—(See Lady M.'s Nar.)

† Lady M. in speaking of her affection for her husband says,—“To the last of his life she felt the same tender love and affection for him, and the same desire to please him in the smallest trifle, that she had at their first acquaintance. Indeed, her principal pleasure was to watch and attend to every thing that could give him pleasure or make him easy. He never went abroad but she went to the window to look after him.”

‡ When her father became very old, so that business be-

The heart's affection,—secret thing!

Is like the cleft rock's ceaseless spring,

Which free and independent flows

Of summer rains or winter snows.

The fox-glove from its side may fall,

The heath-bloom fade or moss-flower white,

But still its streamlet, bright though small,

Will issue sweetly to the light.

XLVIII.

How long an honour'd and a happy pair,

They held their seemly state in mansion fair,

I will not here in chiming verses say,

To tire my reader with a lengthen'd lay;

For tranquil bliss is as a summer day

O'er broad Savannah shining; fair it lies,

And rich the trackless scene, but soon our eyes,

In search of meaner things, turn heavily away.

XLIX.

But no new ties of wedded life,

That bind the mother and the wife,

Her tender, filial heart could change †,

Or from its earliest friends estrange.

The child, by strong affection led,

Who braved her terror of the dead

To save an outlaw'd parent, still

In age was subject to his will.

She then was seen with matron air,

A dame of years, with count'nance fair,

Though faded, sitting by his easy chair:

A sight that might the heart's best feelings move!

Behold her seated at her task of love!

Books, papers, pencil, pen, and slate,

And column'd scrolls of ancient date,

Before her lie, on which she looks

With searching glance, and gladly brooks

An irksome task, that else might vex

His temper, or his brain perplex;

While, haply, on the matted floor,

Close nestling at her kirtled feet,

Its lap enrich'd with childish store,

Sits, hush'd and still, a grandchild sweet,

Who looks at times with eye intent,

Full on its grandame's parent bent,

Viewing his deeply furrow'd brow,

And sunken lip and locks of snow,

In serious wonderment.

came a trouble to him, we find it recorded by Lady M., that Lady Griseld went to him once every year, or as often as was necessary, and looked over all his papers and accounts, which were often long and intricate. Very unlike, too, many married women, who, in taking upon them the duties of a wife and mother, suffer these to absorb every other; and visit their father's house seldom, and as a stranger who has nothing to do there but to be served and waited upon. If misfortune or disease come upon their parents, it is the single daughters only who seem to be concerned in all this.—She who is a neglectful daughter, is an attentive wife and mother from a mean cause.

Well said that grateful sire, I ween !
Still through life's many a varied scene,
Griseld our dear and helpful child hath been.*

L.

Though ever cheerfully possessing
In its full zest the present blessing,
Her grateful heart remembrance cherish'd
Of all to former happiness allied,
Nor in her fostering fancy perish'd
E'en things inanimate that had supplied
Means of enjoyment once. Maternal love,
Active and warm, which nothing might restrain,
Led her once more, in years advanced, to rove
To distant southern climes, and once again
Her footsteps press'd the Belgian shore,
The town, the very street that was her home of
yore.

LI.

Fondly that homely house she eyed,
The door, the windows, every thing †
Which to her back-cast thoughts could bring
The scenes of other days. — Then she applied
To knocker bright her thrilling hand,
And begg'd, as strangers in the land,
Admittance from the household dame,
And thus prefer'd her gentle claim :
" This house was once my happy home,
" Its rooms, its stair, I fain would see ;
" Its meanest nook is dear to me,
" Let me and mine within its threshold come." †
But no ; this might not be !
Their feet might soil her polish'd floor,
The dame held fast the hostile door,
A Belgian housewife she.
" Fear not such harm ! we'll doff our shoes :
" Do not our earnest suit refuse !
" We'll give thee thanks, we'll give thee gold ;
" Do not kind courtesy withhold !"
But still it might not be ;
The dull unpliant dame refused her gentle plea.

* This was the commendation which her mother gave her, upon her death-bed.

† Lady M.'s Nar. — "When she came to Utrecht, the place of her former abode, she had the greatest pleasure in showing us every corner of the town which seemed fresh in her memory, particularly the house she had lived in, which she had a great desire to see ; but when she came there, they would not let her in, by no argument, either of words or money, for no reason but for fear of dirtying it ; she offered to put off her shoes, but could not prevail, and she came away much mortified at her disappointment."

‡ I have here fallen short of the liberality recorded by Lady Murray ; for she says, that Lady Griseld gave to those distressed people of both parties as long as she had any money to give, and when that was exhausted, borrowed from others to relieve them. I have no reason to question this statement, and there were, no doubt, circumstances which permitted her to do so, consistently with the justice and good sense of her character ; but as those circumstances are not mentioned, and if they were, would probably make very un- toward matter for a metrical story, I have chosen rather to

LII.

With her and her good lord, who still
Sweet union held of mated will,
Years pass'd away with lightsome speed ;
But ah ! their bands of bliss at length were riven ;
And she was clothed in widow's sable weed,
Submitting to the will of heaven.
And then a prosperous race of children good
And tender, round their noble mother stood.
And she the while, cheer'd with their pious
love,
Waited her welcome summons from above.

LIII.

But whatsoever the weal or woe
That heaven across her lot might throw,
Full well her Christian spirit knew
Its path of virtue, straight and true.
When came the shock of evil times, menacing
The peaceful land — when blood and lineage tracing
As the sole claim to Britain's throne, in spite
Of Britain's weal or will, chiefs of the North,
In warlike muster, led their clansmen forth,
Brave, faithful, strong and toughly nerved,
Would they a better cause had served !
For Stuart's dynasty to fight,
Distress to many a family came,
Who dreaded more th' approaching shame
Of penury's ill-favour'd mien,
Than e'en the pang of hunger keen.
How softly then her pity flow'd !
How freely then her hand bestow'd ! †
She did not question their opinion
Of party, kingship, or dominion :
She would not e'en their folly chide,
But like the sun and showers of heaven,
Which to the false and true are given,
Want and distress relieved on either side.

LIV.

But soon, from fear of future change,
The evil took a wider range. §

omit the full extent of her beneficence, than injure a young reader with giving him fantastical notions of generosity. Too many of our modern comedies have been, with the best intention in their authors, hurtful in this respect. But less, I believe, in making (as might be supposed) either young or old very imprudently or heedlessly liberal, than in teaching them to despise a reasonable liberality, as beneath a sentimental gentleman or lady ; and, therefore, to omit the virtue altogether, unless it can be exercised with becoming grace on becoming occasions ; which occasions, some how or other, never occur, or if they do, prove of so exhausting a nature that many reasonable and moderate calls on generosity pass afterwards unregarded.

§ Lady M., after mentioning her distress at the time of the rebellion in the year 1725, and her charity for those who differed with her in opinion, and liberality to all in distress, while it was in her power, adds : "When the situation of things made it impossible for her to get any money from Scotland, and what she had was at an end, she sent for her butcher, and baker, and brewer, &c., whom she regularly paid every month, told them she could not do so, and perhaps

The Northern farmers, spoil'd and bare,
No more could rent or produce spare
To the soil's lords. All were distress'd,
And on our noble dame this evil sorely press'd.
Her household numerous, her means withheld ;
Shall she her helpless servants now dismiss
To rob or starve, in such a time as this,
Or wrong to others do ? But nothing quell'd
Her calm and upright mind.— " Go, summon
here

Those who have served me many a year."
The summons went ; each lowly name
Full swiftly to her presence came,
And thus she spoke : " Ye've served me long,
" Pure, as I think, from fraud or wrong,
" And now, my friendly neighbours, true
" And simply I will deal with you.
" The times are shrewd, my treasures spent,
" My farms have ceased to yield me rent ;
" And it may chance that rent or grain
" I never shall receive again.
" The dainties which my table fed
" Will now be changed for daily bread,
" Dealt sparingly, and for this I must
" Be debtor to your patient trust,
" If ye consent."— Swift through the hall,
With eager haste, spoke one and all.
" No, noble dame ! this must not be !
" With heart as warm and hand as free,
" Still thee and thine we'll serve with pride,
" As when fair fortune graced your side.
" The best of all our stores afford
" Shall daily smoke upon thy board ;
" And shouldst thou never clear the score,
" Hear'n for thy sake will bless our store."
She bent her head with courtesy,
The big tear swelling in her eye,
And thank'd them all. Yet plain and spare,
She order'd still her household fare,
Till fortune's better die were cast,
And adverse times were past.

LV.

Good, tender, gen'rous, firm, and sage,
Through grief and gladness, shade and sheen,
As fortune changed life's motley scene,
Thus pass'd she on to rev'rend age.
And when the heavenly summons came,
Her spirit from its mortal frame

never might be able to pay them at all, of which she thought it just to give them warning, that they might choose whether they would continue to serve her ; they all said she should be in no pain, but take from them whatever she had occasion for, because they were sure, if ever she was able to pay them, she would, and if she was not, she was very welcome, which was the least they owed for such long punctual payments as they had got from her."

* The friendly affectionate terms on which she lived with her numerous offspring is often noticed by Lady M., so that they had all good cause to lament her loss.

And weight of mortal cares to free,
It was a blessed sight to see,
The parting saint her state of honour keeping
In gifted dauntless faith, whilst round her, weeping,
Her children's children mourn'd on bended
knee.*

LVI.

In London's fair imperial town
She laid her earthly burthen down.
In Mellerstain, her northern home,
Was raised for her a graven tomb
Which gives to other days her modest, just renown. †

And now, ye polish'd fair of modern times,
If such indeed will listen to my rhymes,
What think ye of her simple, modest worth,
Whom I have faintly tried to shadow forth ?
How vain the thought ! as if ye stood in need
Of pattern ladies in dull books to read.
Will she such antiquated virtues prize,
Who with superb Signoras proudly vies ;
Trilling before the dear admiring crowd,
With out-stretch'd straining throat, bravuras loud,
Her high heaved breast press'd hard, as if to boast
The inward pain such mighty efforts cost ?
Or who on white-chalk'd floor, at midnight hour,
Her head with many a flaunting full-blown flower
And bartizan of braided locks enlarged,
Her flimsy gown with twenty frounces charged,
Wheels gaily round the room on pointed toe,
Softly supported by some dandy beau :—
Will she, forsooth ! or any belle of spirit,
Regard such old, forgotten, homely merit ?

Or she, whose cultured, high-strain'd talents soar
Through all th' ambitious range of letter'd lore
With soul enthusiastic, fondly smitten
With all that e'er in classic page was written,
And whilst her wit in critic task engages,
The echoed praise of all praised things outrages ;
Whose finger, white and small, with ink-stain
tipt,
Still scorns with vulgar thimble to be clipt ;
Who doth with proud pretence her claims ad-
vance
To philosophic, honour'd ignorance
Of all, that, in divided occupation,
Gives the base stamp of female degradation ;

† The inscription to her memory is written by Judge Burnet, and says that,—

" While an infant,
At the hazard of her own, she preserved her father's life,
Who, under the persecution of ambitious power,
Sought refuge in the close confinement of a tomb,
Where he was nightly supplied with necessaries conveyed
by her,

With a caution above her years,
A courage above her sex,
A real instance of the so much celebrated Roman charity."

Protests she knows not colour, stripe, nor shade,
 Nor of what stuff her flowing robe is made,
 But wears, from petty, frivolous fancies free,
 Whatever careful Betty may decree ;
 As certes, well she may, for Betty's skill
 Leaves her in purple, furbelow, or frill,
 No whit behind the very costliest fair
 That woos with daily pains the public stare ;
 Who seems almost ashamed to be a woman,
 And yet the palm of parts will yield to no man,
 But holds on battle-ground eternal wrangling,
 The plainest case in mazy words entangling :—
 Will she, I trow, or any kirtled sage,
 Admire the subject of my artless page ?

And yet there be of British fair, I know,
 Who to this legend will some favour show
 From kindred sympathy ; whose life proceeds
 In one unwearied course of gentle deeds,
 Who pass untainted through the earthly throng,
 Like souls that to some better world belong.
 Nor will I think, as sullen cynics do,
 Still libelling present times, their number few.
 Yea, leagued for good they act, a virtuous band,
 The young, the rich, the loveliest of the land*,
 Who clothe the naked, and each passing week,
 The wretched poor in their sad dwellings seek,
 Who, cheer'd and grateful, feebly press and kiss
 The hands which princes might be proud to kiss—
 Such will regard my tale, and give to fame
 A generous helpful Maid,—a good and noble
 Dame.

* It is a very pleasing trait of the present times, that our women, particularly young women of the higher classes of society, are so actively benevolent. Many of them, associated with those of more experienced age, are to be found, who, like Sisters of Mercy, visit the abodes of want and misery in our great metropolis ; dispensing their bounty, not thoughtlessly, to get rid of a painful sympathy, as casual charity is frequently bestowed, but with judicious and careful consideration. They join the manners of the world to the considerate methodical benevolence of the Society of Quakers ; and how far, by example, we may be indebted to that Society for this useful manner of doing good, it would not here be proper to inquire. There is an honoured name—a most distinguished woman belonging to that respectable sect, who may hereafter, in the hands of a better poet, become the subject of a lay more generally interesting, though less romantic, than that of the Lady Griseld Baillie.

APPENDIX.

Wodrow's History, page 394. chap. 8. book 3.—“ Mr. Robert Baillie of Jerviswoode, with whose sufferings I shall end this section, was a gentleman who had testimony of some of the greatest men of this age, whom I could name, for the best of men and greatest of statesmen, and so was a very proper object of the fury of this period, and could scarce escape the rage and malice of the duke of York, and such as were with him, carrying on the plot against our religion, reformation, and liberty.

“ Indeed, he fell a sacrifice for our holy reformation, and received the crown of martyrdom on account of his zealous appearances against popery and arbitrary power. I can never consider this great man, and several others, in this and suc-

ceeding years, of the most judicious and notable of our martyrs, neglected of design by the collectors of the *cloud of witnesses*, but I blame their private and party spirit.

“ Jerviswood's trial was published by the managers, and I may perhaps make some remarks afterwards upon it. I shall here give some few hints I meet with in the records with relation to him when before the council, of which there is nothing in his printed trial.

“ Through his long confinement and bad treatment when in prison, this good man turned very sickly and tender ; and it was reckoned almost certain by all, that, had the managers spared this gentleman a few weeks longer, they would have been rid of him by a natural death, and escaped the indelible blot of inhumanity and barbarity to so excellent a person. He was evidently a dying man when tried before the Justiciary, and was obliged to appear in his nightgown before them, and was scarce able to stand when he spake ; and yet he was kept in the panel for ten hours, and behoved to take cordials several times ; and next day he was carried in a chair in his nightgown to the scaffold.

“ By the council books, I find, August 18, ‘ the Lady Jerviswood is, upon her petition, allowed to see her dying husband with the physicians, but to speak nothing to him but what they hear and are witnesses to.’ I am of opinion, this low state of his health put the managers at first off the design of processing him criminally ; and to secure his estate, while he was dying a natural death, brought on by his maltreatment, they raise a process, in order to fine him to the value of six thousand pounds.

“ Thus, August 30, the Council order the Advocate to pursue Jerviswood, for resetting, entertaining and corresponding with rebels, and, as far as I can find, he was not able to appear before the council when they passed a decree against him, only he ordered his advocate to appear for him.”

Page 39.—(The interrogatories put to Jerviswood on his examination by a committee appointed by the council.)

“ 1. Did you harbour or intercommune with Mr. Samuel Arnot ?” &c. &c. (a long list of names.)

“ 2. Did you reset Alexander Tweedy, your gardener, after Bothwell's-brid ?” (Refusing to answer to these, he was fined in the sum of six thousand pounds.)

“ September 10.—The council give orders to remove the Lady Garden, his sister, and the Lady Jerviswood, from his room in prison, they being informed that he is recovered of his indisposition. We shall find this was but a very slender recovery, and that afterwards he grew worse, in part no doubt from being deprived of the care of these excellent ladies ; and, November 9, the Lady Garden is allowed to be close prisoner with Jerviswood, because of his valedutinary condition.

“ He continued in prison, still weaker and weaker, till December 18th, when I find the king's advocate is ordered to pursue a process of treason and forfeiture against Mr. Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, to-morrow at two of the clock ; and Sir George Lockart of Carnwath, and Sir John Lauder, advocates, are appointed to concur with the king's advocates in the process. I need not again remark, that this was to prevent Jerviswood's employing them in defence of his just rights. However, the time was exceeding short, and therefore, though it seems to be the more straitening to him, the libel and indictment were not put in his hands till the 22d. Upon the 23d, Jerviswood gives a petition to the council, shewing,—

“ That only yesterday he received an indictment of treason, at eleven of the clock, to appear before the justiciary this day at two of the clock in the afternoon, which is so short a time, that the petitioner has got no lawyer consulted, nor time to raise his letters of expulcation for proving his defences and objections against the witnesses, as is allowed by the Act of Regulation, and the ordinary time in such cases is fifteen days ; and the petitioner at present being so sick and weak, that he is not able to come over his bed, without being lifted, as appears by the testimony of his physicians ; wherefore he humbly supplicates that the council may prorogate the diet to some competent time, and allow him lawyers, *viz.* Sir Patrick Hume, Mr. Walter Pringle, Mr. James Graham, Mr. William Fletcher, Mr. James Falconer, and Mr. William Baillie.—The council refuse to prorogate the diet, ‘ but grant him the advocates he seeks, and allow them to plead without hazard ; they containing themselves in their pleadings in terms of law and loyalty, as they shall answer it at their peril.’

"Jerviswood's advocates pled that he ought not to pass to the knowledge of an assize, because he had not received a citation of fifteen days, &c. &c. That his harbouring, entertaining and intercommuning with the persons named, is *res hactenus judicata*, and the panel already fined in a vast sum on that account. The advocate then restricted to the panel's entering into a conspiracy for raising a rebellion, and for procuring money to be sent to the Earl of Argyle, and for concealing this. The Earl of Tarras was brought as a witness against Jerviswood, against whose evidence it was objected, that, being himself under an indictment for high treason, and under the fear of death, his testimony ought not to be admitted. The Lords repelled all objections and called the Earl as a witness. His deposition," says Wodrow, "and that of commissary Monro, Philiphaugh, and Gallowshields, have more than once been printed, not only in Jerviswood's process, but in Pratt's History of the Rye-House Plot, and I shall not here enter on the detail of them. They prove that Jerviswood, being in hazard, as all the nation were, of oppression, after the unaccountable decision in Blackwood's case, went up to London, and did speak and talk amant methods to bring in the King, to exclude a popish successor; and that they discoursed likewise upon money to be sent to the Earl of Argyle, and Mr. Martin. In May 1683 came down to Scotland with some proposals to the Earl of Tarras, Philiphaugh, Gallowshields, and some others, to engage them to a rising, when England rose for the security of the Protestant religion; but as to a design against the King's life, nothing of that was known to any of them. Most part of them relate to the plot (as it was called) and design then in hand, and very little militates against Jerviswood in particular. They all adhere judicially to their depositions made before the Lords of the secret committee.

"Before the assize closed, the advocate had a most bloody and severe speech to them, wherein every thing is stretched to the uttermost against the panel. I shall not insert it here, since it is already published. In short, he urges the appointment of a thanksgiving, for the discovery of a conspiracy through the nations, the practice of the judges in England, who found proof enough to forfeit some of all ranks, and insists upon the witnesses being Jerviswood's relations; and if he be not punished, no man can; the conspiracy is a cheat, the King's judges murderers, and the witnesses knaves; and such as have died martyrs. * * * I wish I could give as good an account of the moving speech Mr. Baillie had to the inquest, and the home thrusts he gave the advocate; but I can only say, he appealed to the advocate's conscience, whether he was not satisfied as to his innocence, and had not owned so much to himself; which the other acknowledged, but added he acted now by order from the government; and to the advocate and judges, he, like a dying man, most pathetically disclaimed any access to or knowledge of any design against the King or his brother's life; but added, if his life must go for his essays to prevent a popish succession, he owned them, and heartily parted with his life as a testimony against a papist's mounting the throne. * * * Thus this saint of God is hasted away to his father's house. In two days' time they begin and end his process, and executed him as if they had been in fear of being prevented by a natural death. His carriage was most sedate, courageous, and Christian, after his sentence, and during the hours he had to live; and at his execution he was in the greatest serenity of soul possible almost for a person on his side of heaven, though extremely low in body. He prepared a speech to have delivered on the scaffold, but was hindered. Under the prospect of this, he left copies with his friends, and it deserves a room here, as containing a short and distinct view of his case." (See the last speech of Mr. Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, who died at the cross of Edinburgh, Dec. 24. 1684, in Wodrow's Hist. book iii. chap. 8.)

"I have several circumstances of this excellent person's carriage during the trial and execution too large to be inserted here. When his sentence was intimated, he said, 'My Lords, the time is short, the sentence is sharp, but I thank my God, who hath made me as fit to die as ye are to live.' When sent back to his room in the prison, after the sentence, he leaned over on the bed, and fell into a wonderful rapture of joy, from the assurance he had, that in a few hours he should be inconceivably happy. Being, after a little silence, asked how he was, he answered, 'never better, and in a few hours I'll be well beyond all conception; they are going to send me in pieces and quarters through the country,

they may hag and hew my body as they please, but I know assuredly nothing shall be lost, but all these, my members, shall be wonderfully gathered, and made like Christ's glorious body.' When at the scaffold, he was not able to go up the ladder without support. When on it, he said, 'My faint zeal for the Protestant religion has brought me to this end; and the drums interrupted him.'

Wodrow's additions and amendments to vol. i. and ii.— "After the case of that singular person, Baillie of Jerviswood, was printed off, I received a narrative of some further circumstances of his trial, from a worthy friend of mine, who was present, and a mournful spectator. What passed made so deep an impression, that he is distinct as to the very words and phrases that were used; and I thought they deserved a room here.

"Jerviswood, being much indisposed, came to the bar of the judiciary in his night-gown, attended by his sister, who several times gave him cordials, he being so ill that he was obliged to sit down on a stool. He heard all very patiently, only when ——— was reading his long narrative, Jerviswood would now and then look upwards, and hold up his hands. When the declaration and affidavits that came from England were read, he appeared to be in some concern, and said, 'Oh, oh!' staring upon the king's advocate."

"But when the advocate, in his discourse to the assize, insisted on those declarations, and affidavits, and enlarged more fully upon them in the speech he caused print in Jerviswood's trial, then Jerviswood stared at him very broad, and appeared to be very much troubled.

"After the advocate had ended his discourse, Jerviswood desired liberty of the Earl of Linlithgow to speak a few words, not being able to say much, because of his great weakness; which being granted, he spoke to this purpose: 'That the sickness now upon him, in all human appearance, would soon prove mortal, and he could not live many days; but he found he was intended as a public sacrifice in his life and estate; that he would say nothing as to the justice of their Lordships' interlocutor, and was sorry his trial had given them so much and so long trouble, by staying so long in the Court, it being then past midnight. And then addressed himself to the assize, telling them he doubted not but they would act as men of honour, that there were hard things in the depositions of the witnesses against him, which was to be their rule, and that nothing he could say was to prevail with them; yet, for the exonerating of his own conscience, and that his poor memory and family might not suffer unjustly, he behaved to say, that the most material witnesses were correspondents (viz. convicted of connection with the conspirators,) and life might be precious to some of them. But there is one thing,' says he, 'which vexes me extremely, and wherein I am injured to the utmost degree, and that is, for a plot to cut off the King and His Royal Highness, and that I sat up nights to form a declaration to palliate or justify such a villany. I am in probability to appear, in some hours, before the tribunal of the Great Judge, and in presence of your lordships and all here, I solemnly declare that never was I prompted or privy to any such thing, and that I abhor and detest all thoughts or principles for touching the life of His Sacred Majesty or his royal brother. I was ever for monarchical government.' And then looking directly upon the king's advocate, he said, 'My Lord, I think it very strange that you charge me with such abominable things; you may remember, that when you came to me in prison, you told me such were laid to my charge, but you did not believe them. How then, my Lord, come you to lay such a stain upon me with so much violence? Are you now convinced in your conscience that I am more guilty than before? You may remember what passed betwixt us in prison.' The whole audience fixed their eyes upon the advocate, who appeared in no small confusion, and said, 'Jerviswood, I own what you say, my thoughts there were as a private man; but what I say here is by special direction of the privy council; and' pointing to Sir William Paterson Clerk, added, 'he knows my orders.'—'Well,' said Jerviswood, 'if your lordship have one conscience for yourself and another for the council, I pray God forgive you. I do.' And turning to the justice-general, he said, 'My Lord, I trouble your lordships no further.'"

Hume's Hist. of England, chap. 69.—"The court was aware that the malcontents of England held a correspondence with those of Scotland; and that Baillie of Jerviswood, a man of merit and learning, with two gentlemen of the name of Campbell, had come to London under pretence of negoci-

ating the settlement of the Scottish Presbyterians in Carolina, but really with a view of concerting measures with the English conspirators. Baillie was sent prisoner to Edinburgh; but as no evidence appeared against him, the council required him to swear, that he would answer all questions that should be propounded to him. He refused to submit to so iniquitous a condition; and a fine of six thousand pounds was imposed upon him. At length two persons, Spence and Carstairs, being put to the torture, gave evidence which involved the Earl of Tarras and some others, who, in order to save themselves, were induced to accuse Baillie. He was brought to trial; and being in so languishing a condition from the treatment which he had met with in prison, that it was feared he would not survive that night, he was ordered to be executed the very afternoon on which he received sentence."

The husband of Lady Griseld inherited the virtue and firmness of his father. "In the year 1715, though then in

the treasury, which might have made him silent in giving an opinion against the measures of the court, he publicly declared himself for mercy to the poor unhappy sufferers by the rebellion; and amongst many arguments for it in a long speech he made in parliament, which he began by saying, he had been bred in the school of affliction, which had instructed him in both the reasonableness and necessity of showing mercy to others in like circumstances, concluded by entreating them to take the advice which the Prophet Elisha gave to the King of Israel, in the 2d book of Kings, 6th chapter, 22d and 23d verses. "And he answered, thou shalt not smite them; wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them; and when they had eaten and drank, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."—*Lady M.'s Nar.*

LORD JOHN OF THE EAST :

A BALLAD.

The fires blazed bright till deep midnight,
And the guests sat in the hall,
And the lord of the feast, Lord John of the East,
Was the merriest of them all.

His dark-grey eye, that wont so sly
Beneath his helm to scowl,
Flash'd keenly bright, like a new-waked sprite,
As pass'd the circling bowl.

In laughter light, or jocund lay,
That voice was heard, whose sound,
Stern, loud, and deep, in battle-fray
Did foe-men fierce astound;

And stretch'd, as balm, like lady's palm,
To every jester near,
That hand which through a prostrate foe
Of thrust the ruthless spear.

The gallants sang, and the goblets rang,
And they revell'd in careless state,
Till a thund'ring sound, that shook the ground,
Was heard at the castle gate.

"Who knocks without, so loud and stout?
"Some wand'ring knight, I ween,
"Who from afar, like a guiding star,
"Our blazing hall hath seen.

"If a stranger it be of high degree,
"No churl durst make such din,
"Step forth amain, my pages twain,
"And soothly ask him in.

"Tell him our cheer is the forest deer,
"Our bowl is mantling high,
"And the lord of the feast is John of the East,
"Who welcomes him courteously."

The pages twain return'd again,
And a wild, scared look had they;
"Why look ye so? — is it friend or foe?"
Did the angry baron say.

"A stately knight without doth wait,
"But further he will not hie,
"Till the baron himself shall come to the gate,
"And ask him courteously." —

"By my mother's shroud, he is full proud!
"What earthy man is he?"

"I know not, in truth," quoth the trembling youth,
"If earthy man it be.

"In reveller's plight, he is bedight,
"With a vest of cramoisie met;
"But his mantle behind, that streams on the wind,
"Is a corse's bloody sheet."

"Out, paltry child! thy wits are wild,
"Thy comrade will tell me true:
"Say plainly, then, what hast thou seen?
"Or dearly shalt thou rue."

Faint spoke the second page with fear,
And bent him on his knee,
"Were I on your father's sword to swear,
"The same it appear'd to me."

Then dark, dark lower'd the baron's eye,
 And his red cheek changed to wan ;
 For again at the gate more furiously,
 The thund'ring din began.

" And is there ne'er of my vassals here,
 " Of high or low degree,
 " That will unto this stranger go, —
 " Will go for the love of me ?"

Then spoke and said, fierce Donald the Red, —
 (A fearless man was he,)
 " Yes ; I will straight to the castle gate,
 " Lord John, for the love of thee."

With heart full stout, he hied him out,
 Whilst silent all remain :
 Nor moved a tongue those gallants among,
 Till Donald return'd again.

" O speak," said his lord, " by thy hopes of grace,
 " What stranger must we hail ?"
 But the haggard look of Donald's face
 Made his falt'ring words to fail.

" It is a knight in some foreign guise,
 " His like did I never behold ;
 " For the stony look of his beamless eyes
 " Made my very life-blood cold.

" I did him greet in fashion meet,
 " And bade him your feast partake,
 " But the voice that spoke, when he silence broke,
 " Made the earth beneath me quake.

" O such a tone did tongue ne'er own
 " That dwelt in mortal head ; —
 " It is like a sound from the hollow ground, —
 " Like the voice of the coffin'd dead.

" I bade him to your social board,
 " But in he will not hie,
 " Until at the gate this castle's lord
 " Shall entreat him courteously.

" And he stretch'd him the while with a ghastly
 " And sternly bade me say, [smile,
 " 'Twas no depute's task your guest to ask
 " To the feast of the woody bay."

Pale grew the baron, and faintly said,
 As he heaved his breath with pain,
 " From such a feast as there was spread,
 " Do any return again ?

" I bade my guest to a bloody feast,
 " Where the death's wound was his fare,
 " And the isle's bright maid, who my love betray'd,
 " She tore her raven hair.

" The sea-fowl screams, and the watch-tower
 " And the deaf'ning billows roar, [gleams,

" Where he unblest was put to rest,
 " On a wild and distant shore.

" Do the hollow grave and the whelming wave
 " Give up their dead again ?
 " Doth the surgy waste waft o'er its breast
 " The spirits of the slain ?"

But his loosen'd limbs shook fast, and pour'd
 The big drops from his brow,
 As louder still the third time roar'd
 The thund'ring gate below.

" O rouse thee, baron, for manhood's worth !
 " Let good or ill befall,
 " Thou must to the stranger knight go forth,
 " And ask him to your hall."

" Rouse thy bold breast," said each eager guest,
 " What boots it shrinking so ?
 " Be it fiend or sprite, or murder'd knight,
 " In heaven's name thou must go.

" Why shouldst thou fear ? dost thou not wear
 " A gift from the great Glendower,
 " Sandals blest by a holy priest,
 " O'er which nought ill hath power ?"

All ghastly pale did the baron quail,
 As he turn'd him to the door,
 And his sandals blest by a holy priest
 Sound feebly on the floor.

Then back to the hall and his merry mates all,
 He cast his parting eye.
 " God send thee amain, safe back again !"
 He heaved a heavy sigh.

Then listen'd they, on the lengthen'd way,
 To his faint and less'ning tread,
 And, when that was past, to the wailing blast,
 That wail'd as for the dead.

But wilder it grew, and stronger it blew,
 And it rose with an elrich sound,
 Till the lofty keep on its rocky steep,
 Fell hurtling to the ground.

Each fearful eye then glanced on high,
 To the lofty-window'd wall,
 When a fiery trace of the baron's face
 Through the casements shone on all.

But the vision'd glare pass'd through the air,
 And the raging tempest ceased,
 And never more, on sea or shore,
 Was seen Lord John of the East.

The sandals, blest by a holy priest,
 Lay unscathed on the swarded green,
 But never again, on land or main,
 Lord John of the East was seen.

MALCOLM'S HEIR:

A TALE OF WONDER.

O go not by Duntorloch's Walls
 When the moon is in the wane,
 And cross not o'er Duntorloch's Bridge,
 The farther bank to gain.

For there the Lady of the Stream
 In dripping robes you'll spy,
 A-singing to her pale wan babe,
 An elrich lullaby.

And stop not at the house of Merne,
 On the eve of good Saint John,
 For then the Swathed Knight walks his rounds
 With many a heavy moan.

All swathed is he in coffin weeds,
 And a wound is in his breast,
 And he points still to the gloomy vault,
 Where they say his corse doth rest.

But pass not near Glencromar's Tower,
 Though the sun shine e'er so bright ;
 More dreaded is this in the noon of day,
 Than those in the noon of night.

The night-shade rank grows in the court,
 And snakes coil in the wall,
 And bats lodge in the rifted spire,
 And owls in the murky hall.

On it there shines no cheerful light,
 But the deep-red setting sun
 Gleams bloody red on its battlements
 When day's fair course is run.

And fearfully in night's pale beams,
 When the moon peers o'er the wood,
 Its shadow grim stretch'd o'er the ground
 Lies blackening many a rood.

No sweet bird's chirping there is heard,
 No herd-boy's horn doth blow ;
 But the owl hoots and the pent blast sobs,
 And loud croaks the carrion-crow.

No marvel ! for within its walls
 Was done the deed unblest,
 And in its noisome vaults the bones
 Of a father's murderer rest.

He laid his father in the tomb
 With deep and solemn woe,

As rumour tells, but righteous heaven
 Would not be mocked so.

There rest his bones in the mouldering earth,
 By lord and by carle forgot ;
 But the foul, fell spirit that in them dwelt,
 Rest hath it none, I wot !

" Another night," quoth Malcolm's heir,
 As he turn'd him fiercely round,
 And closely clench'd his ireful hand,
 And stamp'd upon the ground :

" Another night within your walls
 " I will not lay my head,
 " Though the clouds of heaven my roof should be,
 " And the cold dank earth my bed.

" Your younger son has now your love,
 " And my stepdame false your ear ;
 " And his are your hawks and his are your hounds,
 " And his your dark-brown deer.

" To him you have given your noble steed,
 " As fleet as the passing wind ;
 " But me have you shamed before my friends,
 " Like the son of a base-born hind :"

Then answer'd him the white-hair'd chief,
 Dim was his tearful eye,
 " Proud son, thy anger is all too keen,
 " Thy spirit is all too high.

" Yet rest this night beneath my roof,
 " The wind blows cold and shrill,
 " With to-morrow's dawn, if so it must be,
 " E'en follow thy wayward will."

Yet nothing moved was Malcolm's heir,
 And never a word did he say,
 But cursed his father in his heart,
 And sternly strode away.

And his coal-black steed he mounted straight,
 As twilight gather'd round,
 And at his feet with eager speed
 Ran Swain, his faithful hound.

Loud rose the blast, yet ne'ertheless
 With furious speed rode he,
 Till night, like the gloom of a cavern'd mine,
 Had closed o'er tower and tree.

Loud rose the blast, thick fell the rain,
Keen flash'd the light'ning red,
And loud the awful thunder roar'd
O'er his unshelter'd head.

At length full close before him shot
A flash of sheeted light,
And the high-arch'd gate of Glencromar's tower,
Glared on his dazzled sight.

His steed stood still, nor step would move,
Up look'd his wistful Swain,
And wagg'd his tail, and feebly whined ;
He lighted down amain.

Through porch and court he pass'd, and still
His list'ning ear he bow'd,
Till beneath the hoofs of his trampling steed
The paved hall echo'd loud.

And other echoes answer gave
From arches far and grand ;
Close to his horse and his faithful dog
He took his fearful stand.

The night-birds shriek'd from the creviced roof,
And the fitful blast sang shrill,
Yet ere the mid-watch of the night,
Were all things hush'd and still.

But in the mid-watch of the night,
When hush'd was every sound,
Faint, doleful music struck his ear,
As if waked from the hollow ground.

And loud and louder still it grew,
And upward still it wore,
Till it seem'd at the end of the farthest aisle
To enter the eastern door.

O ! never did music of mortal make
Such dismal sounds contain ;
A horrid elrich dirge it seem'd—
A wild unearthly strain.

The yell of pain, and the wail of woe,
And the short shrill shriek of fear,
Through the winnowing sound of a furnace flame*,
Confusedly struck his ear.

* In Miss Holford's poem of Margaret of Anjou, there is an assemblage of sounds, preceding a scene of terrific incantation, which is finely imagined, and produces a powerful effect ; and this passage in my second ballad may, perhaps, lead the reader to suppose that I have had that description in my mind when I wrote it. Had this been the case, I should have owned it readily. But the Ballad of Malcolm's Heir was written several years before the publication of the above-mentioned poem, and in the hands of the immediate friends of my own family ; though, as no copy of it was ever given away, it was impossible it could ever reach further. I therefore claim it, though acknowledging great inferiority, as a coincidence in thought with that distinguished author.

" Their senses reel'd, — for every sound
Which the ear loves not, fill'd the air ;

And the serpent's hiss, and the tiger's growl,
And the famish'd vulture's cry,
Were mix'd at times, as with measured skill,
In this horrid harmony.

Up bristled the locks of Malcolm's heir,
And his heart it quickly beat,
And his trembling steed shook under his hand,
And Swain cower'd close to his feet.

When, lo ! a faint light through the porch
Still strong and stronger grew,
And shed o'er the walls and the lofty roof
Its wan and dismal hue.

And slowly ent'ring then appear'd,
Approaching with soundless tread,
A funeral band in dark array,
As in honour of the dead.

The first that walk'd were torchmen ten,
To lighten their gloomy road,
And each wore the face of an angry fiend,
And on cloven goats' feet rode.

And the next that walk'd as mourners meet,
Were murderers twain and twain,
With bloody hands and surtout red,
Befoul'd with many a stain.

Each with a cut-cord round his neck,
And red-strain'd, starting een,
Show'd that upon the gibbet tree,
His earthly end had been.

And after these, in solemn state,
There came an open bier,
Borne on black, shapeless rampant forms,
That did but half appear.

And on that bier a corse was laid,
As corse could never lie,
That did by decent hands composed
In nature's struggles die.

Nor stretch'd, nor swathed, but every limb
In strong distortion lay,
As in the throes of a violent death
Is fix'd the lifeless clay.

Each din that reason might confound
Echoed in ceaseless tumult there !
Swift whirling wheels, — the shriek intense
Of one who dies by violence ; —
Yells, hoarse and deep, from blood-hounds' throat ;
The night-crow's evil-boding note ;
Such wild and chattering sounds as through
Upon the moon-struck ideot's tongue ;
The roar of bursting flames, the dash
Of waters wildly swelling round,
Which, unrestrain'd by dyke or mound,
Leap down at once with hideous crash."

Margaret of Anjou, Cant. VII.

And in its breast was a broken knife,
 With the black blood bolter'd round ;
 And its face was the face of an aged man,
 With the filleted locks unbound.

Its features were fix'd in horrid strength,
 And the glaze of its half-closed eye,
 A last dread parting look express'd,
 Of woe and agony.

But, oh ! the horrid form to trace,
 That follow'd it close behind,
 In fashion of the chief-mourner,
 What words shall minstrel find ?

In his lifted hand, with straining grasp,
 A broken knife he press'd,
 The other half of the cursed blade
 Was that in the corse's breast.

And in his blasted, horrid face,
 Full strongly mark'd, I ween,
 The features of the aged corse
 In life's full prime were seen.

Ay, gnash thy teeth and tear thy hair,
 And roll thine eye-balls wild,
 Thou horrible accursed son,
 With a father's blood defiled !

Back from the bier with strong recoil,
 Still onward as they go,

Doth he in vain his harrow'd head,
 And writhing body throw.

For, closing round, a band of fiends
 Full fiercely with him deal,
 And force him o'er the bier to bend,
 With their fangs of red-hot steel.

Still on they moved, and stopp'd at length,
 In the midst of the trembling hall,
 When the dismal dirge, from its loudest pitch,
 Sank to a dying fall.

But what of horror next ensued,
 No mortal tongue can tell,
 For the thrill'd life paused in Malcolm's heir,
 In a death-like trance he fell.

The morning rose with cheerful light,
 On the country far and near,
 But neither in country, tower, nor town,
 Could they find Sir Malcolm's heir.

They sought him east, they sought him west,
 O'er hill and vale they ran,
 And met him at last on the blasted heath,
 A crazed and wretched man.

He will to no one utter his tale,
 But the priest of St. Cuthbert's cell,
 And aye, when the midnight warning sounds,
 He hastens his beads to tell.

THE ELDEN TREE :

AN ANCIENT BALLAD.

A FEAST was spread in the baron's hall,
 And loud was the merry sound,
 As minstrels played at lady's call,
 And the cup went sparkling round.

For gentle dames sat there, I trow,
 By men of mickle might,
 And many a chief with dark red-brow,
 And many a burly knight.

Each had fought in war's grim ranks,
 And some on the surgy sea,
 And some on Jordan's sacred banks,
 For the cause of Christentie.

But who thinks now of blood or strife,
 Or Moorish or Paynim foe ?
 Their eyes beam bright with social life,
 And their hearts with kindness glow.

" Gramercie Chieftain, on thy tale !
 " It smacks of thy merry mood."—
 " Ay, monks are sly, and women frail,
 " Since rock and mountain stood."

" Fy, fy ! sir knight, thy tongue is keen,
 " 'Tis sharper than thy steel."—
 " So, gentle lady, are thine eyen,
 " As we poor lovers feel."

“Come, pledge me well, my lady gay,
 “Come, pledge me, noble frere;
 “Each cheerful mate on such a day,
 “Is friend or mistress dear.”

And louder still comes jeer and boast,
 As the flagons faster pour,
 Till song, and tale, and laugh are lost,
 In a wildly mingled roar.

Ay, certes, 'tis an hour of glee,
 For the baron himself doth smile,
 And nods his head right cheerily,
 And quaffs his cup the while.

What recks he now of midnight fear,
 Or the night wind's dismal moan?
 As it tosses the boughs of that Elden Tree,
 Which he thinketh so oft upon?

Long years have past since a deed was done,
 By its doer only seen,
 And there lives not a man beneath the sun,
 Who wotteth that deed hath been.

So gay was he, so gay were all,
 They mark'd not the growing gloom;
 Nor wist they how the dark'ning hall,
 Lower'd like the close of doom.

Dull grew the goblet's sheen, and grim
 The features of every guest,
 And colourless banners aloft hung dim,
 Like the clouds of the drizzly west.

Hath time pass'd then so swift of pace?
 Is this the twilight grey?
 A flash of light pass'd through the place,
 Like the glaring noon of day.

Fierce glanced the momentary blaze
 O'er all the gallant train,
 And each visage pale, with dazzled gaze,
 Was seen and lost again.

And the thunder's rolling peal, from far,
 Then on and onward drew,
 And varied its sound like the broil of war,
 And loud and louder grew.

Still glares the lightning blue and pale,
 And roars th' astounding din;
 And rattle the windows with bickering hail,
 And the rafters ring within.

And cowering hounds the board beneath
 Are howling with piteous moan,
 While lords and dames sit still as death,
 And words are utter'd none.

At length in the waning tempest's fall,
 As light from the welkin broke,
 A frighten'd man rush'd through the hall,
 And words to the baron spoke.

“The thunder hath stricken your tree so fair,
 “Its roots on green-sward lie,”—
 “What tree?”—“The Elden planted there
 “Some thirty years gone by.”

“And wherefore starest thou on me so,
 “With a face so ghastly wild?”—
 “White bones are found in the mould below,
 “Like the bones of a stripling child.”

Pale he became as the shrouded dead,
 And his eye-balls fix'd as stone;
 And down on his bosom dropp'd his head,
 And he utter'd a stifled groan.

Then from the board, each guest amazed,
 Sprang up, and curiously
 Upon his sudden misery gazed,
 And wonder'd what might be.

Out spoke the ancient seneschal,
 “I pray you stand apart,
 “Both gentle dames and nobles all,
 “This grief is at his heart.

“Go, call St. Cuthbert's monk with speed,
 “And let him be quickly shriven,
 “And fetch ye a leech for his body's need,
 “To dight him for earth or heaven.”

“No, fetch me a priest,” the baron said,
 In a voice that seem'd utter'd with pain;
 And he shudder'd and shrank as he faintly bade
 His noble guests remain.

“Heaven's eye each secret deed doth scan,
 “Heaven's justice all should fear:
 “What I confess to the holy man,
 “Both heaven and you shall hear.”

And soon St. Cuthbert's monk stood by
 With visage sad, but sweet,
 And cast on the baron a piteous eye,
 And the baron knelt low at his feet.

“O Father! I have done a deed
 “Which God alone did know;
 “A brother's blood these hands have shed,
 “With many a fiend-like blow:

“For fiends lent strength like a powerful charm,
 “And my youthful breast impell'd,
 “And I laugh'd to see beneath my arm
 “The sickly stripling quell'd.

" A mattock from its pit I took,
 " Dug deep for the Elden Tree,
 " And I tempted the youth therein to look
 " Some curious sight to see.

 " The woodmen to their meal were gone,
 " And ere they return'd again,
 " I had planted that tree with my strength alone,
 " O'er the body of the slain.

 " Ah ! gladly smiled my father then,
 " And seldom he smiled on me,
 " When he heard that my skill, like the skill of men,
 " Had planted the Elden Tree.

 " But where was his eldest son so dear,
 " Who nearest his heart had been ?
 " They sought him far, they sought him near,
 " But the boy no more was seen.

 " And thus his life and lands he lost,
 " And his father's love beside ;
 " The thought that ever rankled most
 " In this heart of secret pride.

 " Ah ! could the partial parent wot
 " The cruel pang he gives,
 " To the child neglected and forgot,
 " Who under his cold eye lives !

 " His elder rights did my envy move,
 " These lands and their princely hall ;
 " But it was our father's partial love,
 " I envied him most of all.

" Now thirty years have o'er me past,
 " And, to the eye of man,
 " My lot was with the happy cast,
 " My heart it could not scan.

 " Oh ! I have heard in the dead of night,
 " My murder'd brother's groan,
 " And shudder'd, as the pale moon-light
 " On the mangled body shone.

 " My very miners pent in gloom,
 " Whose toil my coffers stored,
 " Who cursed belike their cheerless doom,
 " Were happier than their lord.

 " O holy man ! my tale is told
 " With pain, with tears, with shame ;
 " May penance hard, may alms of gold,
 " Some ghostly favour claim ?

 " The knotted scourge shall drink my blood,
 " The earth my bed shall be,
 " And bitter tears my daily food,
 " 'To earn heaven's grace for me."

 Now, where that rueful deed was done
 Endow'd with rights and lands,
 Its sharp spires bright'ning in the sun,
 A stately abbey stands.

 And the meekest monk, whose life is there
 Still spent on bended knee,
 Is he who built that abbey fair,
 And planted the Elden Tree.

THE GHOST OF FADON.

ON Gask's deserted ancient hall
 Was twilight closing fast,
 And, in its dismal shadows, all
 Seem'd lofty, void, and vast.

 All sounds of life, now reft and bare,
 From its walls had pass'd away,
 But the stir of small birds shelter'd there,
 Dull owl, or clatt'ring jay.

 Loop-hole and window, dimly seen,
 With faint light passing through,
 Grew dimmer still, and the dreary scene
 Was fading from the view ;

When the trampling sound of banded men
 Came from the court without ;
 Words of debate and call, and then
 A loud and angry shout.

 But mingled echoes from within
 A mimic mock'ry made,
 And the bursting door with furious din,
 On jarring hinges bray'd.

 An eager band, press'd rear on van,
 Rush'd in with clam'rous sound,
 And their chief, the goodliest, bravest man,
 That e'er trode Scottish ground.

Then spoke forthwith that leader bold,

“We war with wayward fate ;

“These walls are bare, the hearth is cold,

“And all is desolate.

“With fast unbroken and thirst unslaked

“Must we on the hard ground sleep ?

“Or, like ghosts from vaulted charnel waked

“Our cheerless vigil keep ?

“Hard hap this day in bloody field,

“Ye bravely have sustain'd,

“And for your pains this dismal bield,

“And empty board have gain'd.

“Hie, Malcolm, to that varlet's steed,

“And search if yet remain

“Some homely store, but good at need,

“Spent nature to sustain.

“Cheer up, my friends ! still, heart in hand,

“Though few and spent we be,

“We are the pith of our native land,

“And she shall still be free.

“Cheer up ! though scant and coarse our meal,

“In this our sad retreat,

“We'll fill our horn to Scotland's weal,

“And that will make it sweet.”

Then all, full cheerly, as they could,

Their willing service lent,

Some broke the boughs, some heap'd the wood,

Some struck the sparkling flint.

And a fire they kindled speedily,

Where the hall's last fire had been,

And pavement, walls, and rafters high,

In the rising blaze were seen.

Red gleam on each tall buttress pour'd,

The lengthen'd hall along,

And tall and black behind them lower'd,

Their shadows deep and strong.

The ceiling, ribb'd with massy oak,

From bick'ring flames below,

As light and shadow o'er it broke,

Seem'd wav'ring to and fro.

Their scanty meal was on the ground,

Spread by the friendly light,

And they made the brown-horn circle round,

As cheerly as they might.

Some talk of horses, weapons, mail,

Some of their late defeat,

By treach'ry caused, and many a tale

Of Southron spy's retreat.

“Ay, well,” says one, “my sinking heart

“Did some disaster bode,

“When faithless Fadon's wily art

“Beguiled us from the road.

“But well repaid by Providence

“Are such false deeds we see ;

“He's had his rightful recompence,

“And cursed let him be.”

“Oh ! curse him not ! I needs must rue

“That stroke so rashly given :

“If he to us were false or true,

“Is known to righteous heaven.”

So spoke their chief, then silent all

Remain'd in sombre mood,

Till they heard a bugle's larum call

Sound distant through the wood.

“Rouse ye, my friends !” the chieftain said,

“That blast, from friend or foe,

“Comes from the west ; through forest shade

“With wary caution go.

“And bring me tidings. Speed ye well !”

Forth three bold warriors pass'd :

Then from the east with fuller swell

Was heard the bugle blast.

Out pass'd three warriors more : then shrill

The horn blew from the north,

And other eager warriors still,

As banded scouts, went forth.

Till from their chief each war-mate good

Had to the forest gone,

And he, who feared not flesh and blood,

Stood by the fire alone.

He stood, wrapp'd in a musing dream,

Nor raised his drooping head,

Till a sudden, alter'd, paly gleam

On all around was spread.

Such dull, diminish'd, sombre sheen

From moon eclipsed, by swain

Belated, or lone herd is seen,

O'er-mantling hill and plain.

Then to the fitful fire he turn'd,

Which higher and brighter grew,

Till the flame like a baleful meteor burn'd,

Of clear sulphureous blue.

Then wist the chief, some soul unblest,

Or spirit of power was near ;

And his eyes adown the hall he cast,

Yet nought did there appear.

But he felt a strange unearthly breath
 Upon the chill air borne,
 And he heard at the gate, like a blast of wrath,
 The sound of Fadon's horn.

Owls, bats, and swallows, flutt'ring, out
 From hole and crevice flew,
 Circling the lofty roof about,
 As loud and long it blew.

His noble hound sprang from his lair,
 The midnight rouse to greet,
 Then, like a timid trembling hare,
 Crouch'd at his master's feet.

Between his legs his drooping tail,
 Like dog of vulgar race,
 He hid, and with strange piteous wail,
 Look'd in his master's face.

The porch seem'd void, but vapour dim
 Soon fill'd the lowering room,
 Then was he aware of a figure grim
 Approaching through the gloom.

And striding as it onward came,
 The vapour wore away,
 Till it stood distinctly by the flame,
 Like a form in the noon of day.

Well Wallace knew that form, that head,
 That throat unbraced and bare,
 Mark'd deep with streaming circlet red,
 And he utter'd a rapid prayer.

But when the spectre raised its arm,
 And brandish'd its glitt'ring blade,
 That moment broke fear's chilly charm
 On noble Wallace laid.

The threaten'd combat was to him
 Relief; with weapon bare,
 He rush'd upon the warrior grim,
 But his sword shore empty air

Then the spectre smiled with a ghastly grin,
 And its warrior-semblance fled,
 And its features grew stony, fix'd, and thin,
 Like the face of the stiffen'd dead.

The head a further moment crown'd
 The body's stately wreck,
 Shook hideously, and to the ground
 Dropp'd from the bolter'd neck.

Back shrank the noble chief aghast,
 And longer tarried not,
 Then quickly to the portal pass'd,
 To shun the horrid spot.

But in the portal, stiff and tall,
 The apparition stood,
 And Wallace turn'd and cross'd the hall,
 Where entrance to the wood

By other door he hoped to snatch,
 Whose pent arch darkly lower'd,
 But there, like sentry on his watch,
 The dreadful phantom tower'd.

Then up the ruin'd stairs so steep,
 He ran with panting breath,
 And from a window — desprate leap!
 Sprang to the court beneath.

O'er wall and ditch he quickly got,
 Through brake and bushy stream,
 When suddenly through darkness shot
 A red and lurid gleam.

He look'd behind, and that lurid light
 Forth from the castle came;
 Within its circuit through the night
 Appear'd an elrich flame.

Red glow'd each window, slit, and door,
 Like mouths of furnace hot,
 And tint of deepest blackness wore
 The walls and steepy moat.

But soon it rose with bright'ning power,
 Till bush and ivy green,
 And wall-flower, fringing breach and tower,
 Distinctly might be seen.

A spreading blaze, with eddyng sweep,
 Its spiral surges rear'd;
 Aloft then on the stately keep,
 Lo! Fadon's Ghost appear'd.

A burning rafter, blazing bright,
 It wielded in its hand;
 And its warrior-form of human height,
 Dilated grew, and grand.

Coped by a curling tawny cloud,
 With tints sulphureous blent,
 It rose with burst of thunder loud,
 And up the welkin went.

High, high it rose with wid'ning glare,
 Sent far o'er land and main,
 And shot into the lofty air,
 And all was dark again.

A spell of horror lapp'd him round,
 Chill'd, motionless, amazed,
 His very pulse of life was bound
 As on black night he gazed.

Till harness'd warriors' heavy tread,
 From echoing dell arose ;
 " Thank God ! " with utter'd voice, he said,
 " For here come living foes."

With kindling soul that brand he drew
 Which boldest Southron fears,
 But soon the friendly call he knew,
 Of his gallant brave compeers.

* Blind Harry, after relating how Wallace and his men, having taken shelter in the old hall of Gask, and make a meal of what provisions they had with them, were alarmed with the sound of a horn, which caused the chief to send out into the wood two of his followers at a time, repeatedly, till he was left alone, continues thus :—

" When that alone Wallace was leaved there
 The awful blast abounded meikle mare ;
 Then trowed he well they [the enemy] had his lodging
 seen ;
 His sword he drew of noble metal keen,
 Syne forth he went whereat he heard the horn :
 Without the door, Fawdon was him beforne,
 As to his sight, his own head in his hand :
 A cross he made, when he saw him so stand.

With haste each wondrous tale was told,
 How still, in vain pursuit,
 They follow'd the horn through wood and wold,
 And Wallace alone was mute.

Day rose ; but silent, sad, and pale,
 Stood the bravest of Scottish race ;
 And each warrior's heart began to quail,
 When he look'd in his leader's face.*

At Wallace with the head he swakked there.
 And he in haste soon hint it by the hair,
 Syne out again at him he could it cast,
 Into his heart he greatly was agast,
 Right well he trowed it was no sprit of man,
 It was some devil that sick malice began,
 He wist not wale there longer for to bide.
 Up thro' the hall thus Wight Wallace can glide
 To a close stair, the boards he rave in twin,
 Fifteen foot large he lap out of that inu.
 Up the water he suddenly could fare,
 Again he blink'd what pearance he saw there,
 He thought he saw Fawdon, that ugly Syre,
 That hall hall he had set into a fire ;
 A great rafter he had into his hand.
 Wallace as then no longer could he stand."

FUGITIVE VERSES.

TO
SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.,

THIS BOOK
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

BY
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I BELIEVE myself warranted in calling the contents of the following pages "Fugitive Verses," for by far the greatest portion has been in some way or other already before the public, though so scattered among various publications and collections, that it would be very difficult now for any one but myself to bring them together. Many of the Songs are to be found in Mr. George Thomson's Collection of Irish, Welsh, and Scotch Melodies, and other musical works, both selected and original; the Ballads, too, and many of the other occasional pieces, are dispersed in the same way. But it would be great vanity in me to suppose that any individual would take the trouble of drawing them from their different lurking-places for his own private reading. This book, then, does not hold out the allurements of novelty. As among an assembly of strangers, however, we sometimes look with more good will upon a few recognized faces that had been nearly lost or forgotten, though never much valued at any time, than upon those whom we have never before beheld; so I venture to hope, that upon the simple plea of old acquaintances, they may be received with some degree of favour. Be this as it may, I am unwilling to quit the world and leave them behind me in their unconnected state, or to leave the trouble of collecting and correcting them to another—the songs written in the Scotch dialect making it somewhat more difficult.

The occasional pieces for the first time offered

to the public, have another disadvantage to contend with. Modern Poetry, within these last thirty years, has become so imaginative, impassioned, and sentimental, that more homely subjects, in simple diction, are held in comparatively small estimation. This, however, is a natural progress of the art, and the obstacles it may cast in the way of a less gifted, or less aspiring genius, must be submitted to with a good grace. Nay, they may even sometimes be read with more relish from their very want of the more elevated flights of fancy, from our natural love of relaxation after having had our minds kept on the stretch, by following, or endeavouring to follow more sublime and obscure conceptions. He who has been coursing through the air in a balloon, or ploughing the boundless ocean in the bark of some dauntless discoverer, or careering over the field on a war-horse, may be very well pleased after all to seat himself on a bench by his neighbour's door, and look at the meadows around him, or country people passing along the common from their daily work. Let me then be encouraged to suppose that something of this nature may, with the courteous reader, operate in my behalf.

The early poems that stand first in the arrangement of this book, I now mention last. They are taken from a small volume, published by me anonymously many years ago, but not noticed by the public, or circulated in any considerable degree. Indeed, in the course of after years it became almost forgotten by myself, and the feelings of my mind in a good measure coincided with the neglect it had met with. A review, of those days, had spoken of it encouragingly, and the chief commendation bestowed was, that it contained true unsophisticated representations of nature. This cheered me at the time, and then gradually faded from my thoughts. But not very long since, when I learnt from different quarters, that some of the pieces from this little neglected book had found their way into collections of extracts made by those whose approbation implied some portion of real merit*, my little volume returned again to

* The first of those intimations was that the little piece on "A Mother to her Infant," was transcribed by Mrs. Barbauld, and had found a place in her book of extracts. An elegant

and distinguished poet herself, to whom the world is so much indebted for admirable productions, both verse and prose—could there be a more encouraging circumstance?

my own thoughts, and disposed me—on a warmly expressed opinion in its favour by a poet*, who, from his own refined genius, classical elegance, and high estimation with the public, is well qualified to judge—no longer to resist a latent inclination to add some of its verses to the present publication. I was the more encouraged to yield to the influence of this friend, from having formerly received unwittingly from his critical pen, very great and useful service—service that, at the beginning of my dramatic attempts, enabled me to make better head against criticism of a different character. This being decided, the difficulty was as to what pieces I ought to select; for I had a much clearer idea of those to be rejected than of those that deserved to be chosen. I hope the reader will not think with much chagrin or impatience, that admittance has been too easily granted. Those which regard the moods and passions of the human mind, and show any kindred to the works that with more success followed after, have, with a few exceptions, for this reason been preserved. When these poems were written, the author was young in years, and still younger in literary knowledge. Of all our eminent poets of modern times, not one was then known. Mr. Hayley and Miss Seward, and a few other cultivated poetical writers, were the poets spoken of in literary circles. Burns, read and appreciated as he deserved by his own countrymen, was known to few readers south of the Tweed, where I then resided. A poet (if I dare so style myself) of a simpler and more homely character, was either, among such contemporaries, placed in a favourable or unfavourable position, as the taste and fashion of the day might direct; and I have, perhaps, no great reason to regret that my vanity was not stirred up at that time to more active exertions. Permit me to add, that in preparing them for this collection, they have undergone very little more than verbal corrections, with the expunging or alteration of a line here and there, and have never (but on one occasion noticed in a short note,) received the addition of new thoughts. Some Scotch expressions, as might naturally be expected, interfered with clearness of meaning and harmony of sound to an English reader, and some of those I have changed; but I have not been willing, unless when it appeared necessary, entirely to remove this national mark; and I believe those whom I am most ambitious to please, will not like my early verses the worse for this defect, though the difference of pronunciation in the two countries not unfrequently injures the rhyme.

Having said all that I dare to procure a lenient

reception to the following pages, which contain nearly all the occasional lines, written under various circumstances and impressions, of a long life, I have nothing more to urge, as I will not, from feelings that may easily be imagined, make any remarks on the latter part of the volume, appropriated to devotional and sacred subjects. To avoid any imputation of forwardness or presumption, however, I think it right to mention that those Hymns marked "For the Kirk," were written at the request of an eminent member of the Scotch Church, at a time when it was in contemplation to compile by authority a new collection of hymns and sacred poetry for the general use of parochial congregations. It would have gratified me extremely to have been of the smallest service to the venerable church of my native land, which the conscientious zeal of the great majority of an intelligent and virtuous nation had founded; which their unconquerable courage, endurance of persecution, and unwearied perseverance, had reared into a church as effective for private virtue and ecclesiastical government, as any protestant establishment in Europe. I was proud to be so occupied; my heart and my duty went along with it; but the General Assembly, when afterwards applied to, refused their sanction to any new compilation, and what I had written, and many sacred verses from far better poets, proved abortive. That clergymen, who had been accustomed from their youth to hear the noble Psalms of David sung by the mingled voices of a large congregation, swelling often to a sublime volume of sound, elevating the mind and quickening the feelings beyond all studied excitements of art, should regard any additions or changes as presumptuous, is a circumstance at which we ought not to be surprised.

I will no longer trouble the reader with preliminary matters. I hope the book itself will be read with a disposition to be pleased, and that even in the absence of superior merit, the variety of its subjects alone will afford some amusement.

A WINTER'S DAY.

THE cock, warm roosting 'mid his feather'd mates,
Now lifts his beak and snuffs the morning air,
Stretches his neck and claps his heavy wings,
Gives three hoarse crows, and glad his task is done,
Low chuckling turns himself upon the roost,
Then nestles down again into his place.
The labouring hind*, who, on his bed of straw

* The author of the "Pleasures of Memory."

† Hind does not perfectly express the condition of the person here intended, who is somewhat above a common labourer,—the tenant of a very small farm, which he cul-

tivates with his own hands: a few cows, perhaps a horse, and some six or seven sheep, being all the wealth he possessed. A class of men very common in the west of Scotland, ere political economy was thought of.

Beneath his home-made coverings, coarse but warm,
 Lock'd in the kindly arms of her who spun them,
 Dreams of the gain that next year's crop should
 bring ;

Or at some fair, disposing of his wool,
 Or by some lucky and unlook'd-for bargain,
 Fills his skin purse with store of tempting gold ;
 Now wakes from sleep at the unwelcome call,
 And finds himself but just the same poor man
 As when he went to rest.
 He hears the blast against his window beat,
 And wishes to himself he were a laird,
 That he might lie a-bed. It may not be :
 He rubs his eyes and stretches out his arms ;
 Heigh oh ! heigh oh ! he drawls with gaping mouth,
 Then, most unwillingly creeps from his lair,
 And without looking-glass puts on his clothes.

With rueful face he blows the smother'd fire,
 And lights his candle at the reddening coal ;
 First sees that all be right among his cattle,
 Then hies him to the barn with heavy tread,
 Printing his footsteps on the new-fall'n snow.
 From out the heap'd-up mow he draws his sheaves,
 Dislodging the poor red-breast from his shelter
 Where all the live-long night he slept secure ;
 But now, affrighted, with uncertain flight,
 Flutters round walls, and roof, to find some hole
 Through which he may escape.
 Then whirling o'er his head, the heavy flail
 Descends with force upon the jumping sheaves,
 While every rugged wall and neighbouring cot
 The noise re-echoes of his sturdy strokes.

The family cares call next upon the wife
 To quit her mean but comfortable bed.
 And first she stirs the fire and fans the flame,
 Then from her heap of sticks for winter stored
 An armful brings ; loud crackling as they burn,
 Thick fly the red sparks upward to the roof,
 While slowly mounts the smoke in wreathy clouds.
 On goes the seething pot with morning cheer,
 For which some little wistful folk await,
 Who, peeping from the bed-clothes, spy well pleased
 The cheery light that blazes on the wall,
 And bawl for leave to rise.
 Their busy mother knows not where to turn,
 Her morning's work comes now so thick upon her.
 One she must help to tie his little coat,
 Unpin another's cap, or seek his shoe
 Or hosen lost, confusion soon o'er-master'd !
 When all is o'er, out to the door they run
 With new-comb'd sleeky hair and glistening
 faces,
 Each with some little project in his head.
 His new-soled shoes one on the ice must try ;
 To view his well-set trap another hies,
 In hopes to find some poor unwary bird
 (No worthless prize) entangled in his snare ;
 While one, less active, with round rosy cheeks,

Spreads out his purple fingers to the fire,
 And peeps most wistfully into the pot.

But let us leave the warm and cheerful house
 To view the bleak and dreary scene without,
 And mark the dawning of a Winter day.
 The morning vapour rests upon the heights,
 Lurid and red, while growing gradual shades
 Of pale and sickly light spread o'er the sky.
 Then slowly from behind the southern hills
 Enlarged and ruddy comes the rising sun,
 Shooting athwart the hoary waste his beams
 That gild the brow of every ridgy bank,
 And deepen every valley with a shade,
 The crusted window of each scatter'd eot,
 The icicles that fringe the thatched roof,
 The new-swept slide upon the frozen pool,
 All keenly glance, new kindled with his rays ;
 And e'en the rugged face of scowling Winter
 Looks somewhat gay. But only for a time
 He shows his glory to the brightening earth,
 Then hides his face behind a sullen cloud.

The birds now quit their holes and lurking sheds,
 Most mute and melancholy, where through night,
 All nestling close to keep each other warm,
 In downy sleep they had forgot their hardships ;
 But not to chant and carol in the air,
 Or lightly swing upon some waving bough,
 And merrily return each other's notes ;
 No ; silently they hop from bush to bush,
 Can find no seeds to stop their craving want,
 Then bend their flight to the low smoking eot,
 Chirp on the roof, or at the window peck,
 To tell their wants to those who lodge within.
 The poor lank hare flies homeward to his den,
 But little burthen'd with his nightly meal
 Of wither'd coleworts from the farmer's garden ;
 A wretched scanty portion, snatch'd in fear ;
 And fearful creatures, forced abroad by hunger,
 Are now to every enemy a prey.

The husbandman lays by his heavy flail,
 And to the house returns, where for him wait
 His smoking breakfast and impatient children,
 Who, spoon in hand, and ready to begin,
 Toward the door cast many an eager look
 To see their dad come in.
 Then round they sit, a cheerful company ;
 All quickly set to work, and with heap'd spoons
 From ear to ear besmear their rosy cheeks.
 The faithful dog stands by his master's side
 Wagging his tail and looking in his face ;
 While humble puss pays court to all around,
 And purs and rubs them with her furry sides,
 Nor goes this little flattery unrewarded.
 But the laborious sit not long at table ;
 The grateful father lifts his eyes to heaven
 To bless his God, whose ever bounteous hand

Him and his little ones doth daily feed,
Then rises satisfied to work again.

The varied rousing sounds of industry
Are heard through all the village.
The humming wheel, the thrifty housewife's tongue,
Who scolds to keep her maidens to their work,
The wool-card's grating, most unmusical !
Issue from every house.
But hark ! the sportsman from the neighbouring
hedge

His thunder sends ! loud bark the village curs ;
Up from her cards or wheel the maiden starts
And hastens to the door ; the housewife chides,
Yet runs herself to look, in spite of thrift,
And all the little town is in a stir.

Strutting before, the cock leads forth his train,
And chuckling near the barn-door 'mid the straw,
Reminds the farmer of his morning's service.
His grateful master throws a liberal handful ;
They flock about it, while the hungry sparrows
Perch'd on the roof, look down with envious eye,
Then, aiming well, amidst the feeders light,
And seize upon the feast with greedy bill,
Till angry partlets peck them off the field.
But at a distance, on the leafless tree,
All woe-begone, the lonely blackbird sits ;
The cold north wind ruffles his glossy feathers ;
Full off he looks, but dares not make approach,
Then turns his yellow beak to peck his side
And claps his wings close to his sharpen'd breast.
The wandering fowler from behind the hedge,
Fastens his eye upon him, points his gun,
And firing wantonly, as at a mark,
Of life bereaves him in the cheerful spot
That oft hath echo'd to his summer's song.

The mid-day hour is near, the pent-up kine
Are driven from their stalls to take the air.
How stupidly they stare ! and feel how strange !
They open wide their smoking mouths to low,
But scarcely can their feeble sound be heard,
Then turn and lick themselves, and step by step,
Move, dull and heavy, to their stalls again.

In scatter'd groups the little idle boys,
With purple fingers moulding in the snow
Their icy ammunition, pant for war ;
And drawing up in opposite array,
Send forth a mighty shower of well-aim'd balls,
Each tiny hero tries his growing strength,
And burns to beat the foe-men off the field.
Or on the well-worn ice in eager throngs,
After short race, shoot rapidly along,
Trip up each other's heels, and on the surface
With studded shoes draw many a chalky line.
Untired and glowing with the healthful sport
They cease not till the sun hath run his course,

And threatening clouds, slow rising from the north,
Spread leaden darkness o'er the face of heaven ;
Then by degrees they scatter to their homes,
Some with a broken head or bloody nose,
To claim their mother's pity, who, most skilful !
Cures all their troubles with a bit of bread.

The night comes on apace—
Chill blows the blast and drives the snow in
wreaths ;

Now every creature looks around for shelter,
And whether man or beast, all mov'g alike
Towards their homes, and happy they who have
A house to screen them from the piercing cold !
Lo, o'er the frost a reverend form advances !
His hair white as the snow on which he treads,
His forehead mark'd with many a care-worn furrow,
Whose feeble body bending o'er a staff,
Shows still that once it was the seat of strength,
Though now it shakes like some old ruin'd tower.
Clothed indeed, but not disgraced with rags,
He still maintains that decent dignity
Which well becomes those who have served their
country.

With tottering steps he gains the cottage door ;
The wife within, who hears his hollow cough,
And pattering of his stick upon the threshold,
Sends out her little boy to see who's there.
The child looks up to mark the stranger's face,
And, seeing it enlighten'd with a smile,
Holds out his tiny hand to lead him in.
Round from her work the mother turns her head,
And views them, not ill pleased.
The stranger whines not with a piteous tale,
But only asks a little to relieve
A poor old soldier's wants.
The gentle matron brings the ready chair
And bids him sit to rest his weary limbs,
And warm himself before her blazing fire.
The children, full of curiosity,
Flock round, and with their fingers in their mouths
Stand staring at him, while the stranger, pleas'd,
Takes up the youngest urchin on his knee.
Proud of its seat, it wags its little feet,
And prates and laughs and plays with his white
locks.

But soon a change comes o'er the soldier's face ;
His thoughtful mind is turn'd on other days,
When his own boys were wont to play around him,
Who now lie distant from their native land
In honourable but untimely graves :
He feels how helpless and forlorn he is,
And big, round tears course down his wither'd
cheeks.

His toilsome daily labour at an end,
In comes the wearied master of the house,
And marks with satisfaction his old guest,
In the chief seat, with all the children round him.
His honest heart is fill'd with manly kindness,

He bids him stay and share their homely meal,
 And take with them his quarters for the night.
 The aged wanderer thankfully accepts,
 And by the simple hospitable board,
 Forgets the by-past hardships of the day.

When all are satisfied, about the fire
 They draw their seats and form a cheerful ring.
 The thrifty housewife turns her spinning-wheel ;
 The husband, useful even in his hour
 Of ease and rest, a stocking knits, belike,
 Or plaits stored rushes, which with after skill
 Into a basket form'd may do good service,
 With eggs or butter fill'd at fair or market.

Some idle neighbours now come dropping in,
 Draw round their chairs and widen out the circle ;
 And every one in his own native way
 Does what he can to cheer the social group.
 Each tells some little story of himself,
 That constant subject upon which mankind,
 Whether in court or country, love to dwell.
 How at a fair he saved a simple clown
 From being trick'd in buying of a cow ;
 Or laid a bet on his own horse's head
 Against his neighbour's bought at twice his cost,
 Which fail'd not to repay his better skill ;
 Or on a harvest day bound in an hour
 More sheaves of corn than any of his fellows,
 Though ere so stark, could do in twice the time ;
 Or won the bridal race with savoury broose
 And first kiss of the bonny bride, though all
 The fleetest youngsters of the parish strove
 In rivalry against him.
 But chiefly the good man, by his own fire,
 Hath privilege of being listen'd to,
 Nor dares a little prattling tongue presume
 Though but in play, to break upon his story.
 The children sit and listen with the rest ;
 And should the youngest raise its lisping voice,
 The careful mother, ever on the watch,
 And ever pleased with what her husband says,
 Gives it a gentle tap upon the fingers,
 Or stops its ill-timed prattle with a kiss.
 The soldier next, but not unask'd, begins
 His tale of war and blood. They gaze upon him,
 And almost weep to see the man so poor,
 So bent and feeble, helpless and forlorn,
 Who has undaunted stood the battle's brunt
 While roaring cannons shook the quaking earth,
 And bullets hiss'd round his defenceless head.
 Thus passes quickly on the evening hour,
 Till sober folks must needs retire to rest ;
 Then all break up, and, by their several paths,
 Hie homeward, with the evening pastime cheer'd

Far more, belike, than those who issue forth
 From city theatre's gay scenic show,
 Or crowded ball-room's splendid moving maze.
 But where the song and story, joke and gibe,
 So lately circled, what a solemn change
 In little time takes place !
 The sound of psalms, by mingled voices rais'd
 Of young and old, upon the night air borne,
 Haply to some benighted traveller,
 Or the late parted neighbours on their way,
 A pleasing notice gives, that those whose sires
 In former days on the bare mountain's side,
 In deserts, heaths, and caverns, praise and prayer,
 At peril of their lives, in their own form
 Of covenanted worship offered up,
 In peace and safety in their own quiet home
 Are—(as in quaint and modest phrase is termed)
 Engaged now in *evening exercise*.*

But long accustom'd to observe the weather,
 The farmer cannot lay him down in peace
 Till he has look'd to mark what bodes the night.
 He lifts the latch, and moves the heavy door,
 Sees wreaths of snow heap'd up on every side,
 And black and dismal all above his head.
 Anon the northern blast begins to rise,
 He hears its hollow growling from afar,
 Which, gathering strength, rolls on with doubled
 night,
 And raves and bellows o'er his head. The trees
 Like pithless saplings bend. He shuts his door,
 And, thankful for the roof that covers him,
 Hies him to bed.

A SUMMER'S DAY.

THE dark-blue clouds of night, in dusky lines
 Drawn wide and streaky o'er the purer sky,
 Wear faintly morning purple on their skirts.
 The stars, that full and bright shone in the west,
 But dimly twinkle to the steadfast eye,
 And seen and vanishing and seen again,
 Like dying tapers winking in the socket,
 Are by degrees shut from the face of heaven ;
 The fitful lightning of the summer cloud,
 And every lesser flame that shone by night ;
 The wandering fire that seems, across the marsh,
 A beaming candle in a lonely cot,
 Cheering the hopes of the benighted hind,
 Till, swifter than the very change of thought,
 It shifts from place to place, eludes his sight,
 And makes him wondering rub his faithless eyes ;
 The humble glow-worm and the silver moth,

* In the first edition of the *Winter Day*, nothing regarding family worship was mentioned: a great omission, for which I justly take shame to myself. "The Evening exercise," as it was called, prevailed in every house over the simple country

parts of the West of Scotland, and I have often heard the sound of it passing through the twilight air, in returning from a late walk.

That cast a doubtful glimmering o'er the green, —
All die away.

For now the sun, slow moving in his glory,
Above the eastern mountains lifts his head ;
The webs of dew spread o'er the hoary lawn,
The smooth, clear bosom of the settled pool,
The polish'd ploughshare on the distant field,
Catch fire from him, and dart their new-gain'd
beams
Upon the gazing rustic's dazzled sight.

The waken'd birds upon the branches hop,
Peck their soft down, and bristle out their feathers,
Then stretch their throats and trill their morning
song ;

While dusky crows, high swinging over head,
Upon the topmost boughs, in lordly pride,
Mix their hoarse croaking with the linnet's note,
Till in a gather'd band of close array,
They take their flight to seek their daily food.
The villager wakes with the early light,
That through the window of his cot appears,
And quits his easy bed ; then o'er the fields
With lengthen'd active strides betakes his way,
Bearing his spade or hoe across his shoulder,
Seen glancing as he moves, and with good will
His daily work begins.

The sturdy sun-burnt boy drives forth the cattle,
And, pleased with power, draws to the lagging kine
With stern authority, who fain would stop
To crop the tempting bushes as they pass.

At every open door, in lawn or lane,
Half naked children half awake are seen,
Scratching their heads and blinking to the light,
Till, rousing by degrees, they run about,
Roll on the sward and in some sandy nook
Dig caves, and houses build, full oft defaced
And oft begun again, a daily pastime.
The housewife, up by times, her morning cares
Tends busily ; from tubs of curdled milk
With skilful patience draws the clear green whey
From the press'd bosom of the snowy curd,
While her brown comely maid, with tuck'd-up
sleeves

And swelling arm, assists her. Work proceeds,
Pots smoke, pails rattle, and the warm confusion
Still more confused becomes, till in the mould
With heavy hands the well-squeezed curd is placed.

So goes the morning till the powerful sun,
High in the heavens, sends down his strengthen'd
beams,

And all the freshness of the morn is fled.
The idle horse upon the grassy field
Rolls on his back ; the swain leaves off his toil,
And to his house with heavy steps returns,
Where on the board his ready breakfast placed
Looks most invitingly, and his good mate
Serves him with cheerful kindness.

Upon the grass no longer hangs the dew ;
Forth hies the mower with his glittering scythe,
In snowy shirt bedight and all unbraced.
He moves athwart the mead with sideling bend,
And lays the grass in many a swathe line ;
In every field, in every lawn and meadow
The rousing voice of industry is heard ;
The hay-cock rises, and the frequent rake
Sweeps on the fragrant hay in heavy wreaths.
The old and young, the weak and strong are there,
And, as they can, help on the cheerful work.
The father jeers his awkward half-grown lad,
Who trails his tawdry armful o'er the field,
Nor does he fear the jeering to repay.
The village oracle and simple maid
Jest in their turns and raise the ready laugh ;
All are companions in the general glee ;
Authority, hard favour'd, frowns not there.
Some, more advanced, raise up the lofty rick,
Whilst on its top doth stand the parish toast
In loose attire, with swelling ruddy cheek.
With taunts and harmless mockery she receives
The toss'd-up heaps from fork of simple youth,
Who, staring on her, takes his aim awry,
While half the load falls back upon himself.
Loud is her laugh, her voice is heard afar ;
The mower busied on the distant lawn,
The carter trudging on his dusty way,
The shrill sound know, their bonnets toss in the air,
And roar across the field to catch her notice :
She waves her arm to them, and shakes her head,
And then renews her work with double spirit.
Thus do they jest and laugh away their toil
Till the bright sun, now past his middle course,
Shoots down his fiercest beams which none may
brave.

The stoutest arm feels listless, and the swart
And bravny-shoulder'd clown begins to fail.
But to the weary, lo — there comes relief !
A troop of welcome children o'er the lawn
With slow and wary steps approach, some bear
In baskets oaten cakes or barley scones,
And gusty cheese and stoups of milk or whey.
Beneath the branches of a spreading tree,
Or by the shady side of the tall rick,
They spread their homely fare, and seated round,
Taste every pleasure that a feast can give.

A drowsy indolence now hangs on all ;
Each creature seeks some place of rest, some shelter
From the oppressive heat ; silence prevails ;
Nor low nor bark nor chirping bird are heard.
In shady nooks the sheep and kine convene ;
Within the narrow shadow of the cot
The sleepy dog lies stretch'd upon his side,
Nor heeds the footsteps of the passer-by,
Or at the sound but raises half an eye-lid,
Then gives a feeble growl and sleeps again ;
While puss composed and grave on threshold stone

Sits winking in the light.
No sound is heard but humming of the bee,
For she alone retires not from her labour,
Nor leaves a meadow flower unsought for gain.

Heavy and slow, so pass the sultry hours,
Till gently bending on the ridge's top
The drooping seedy grass begins to wave,
And the high branches of the aspen tree
Shiver the leaves and gentle rustling make.
Cool breathes the rising breeze, and with it wakes
The languid spirit from its state of stupor.
The lazy boy springs from his mossy lair
To chase the gaudy butterfly, which oft
Lights at his feet as if within his reach.
Spreading upon the ground its mealy wings,
Yet still eludes his grasp, and high in air
Takes many a circling flight, tempting his eye
And tiring his young limbs.
The drowsy dog, who feels the kindly air
That passing o'er him lifts his shaggy ear,
Begins to stretch him, on his legs half-raised,
Till fully waked, with bristling cock'd-up tail,
He makes the village echo to his bark.

But let us not forget the busy maid,
Who by the side of the clear pebbly stream
Spreads out her snowy linens to the sun,
And sheds with liberal hand the crystal shower
O'er many a favourite piece of fair attire,
Revolving in her mind her gay appearance,
So nicely trick'd, at some approaching fair.
The dimpling half-check'd smile and muttering lip
Her secret thoughts betray. With shiny feet,
There, little active bands of truant boys
Sport in the stream and dash the water round,
Or try with wily art to catch the trout,
Or with their fingers grasp the slippery eel.
The shepherd-lad sits singing on the bank
To while away the weary lonely hours,
Weaving with art his pointed crown of rushes,
A guiltless easy crown, which, having made,
He places on his head, and skips about,
A chaunted rhyme repeats, or calls full loud
To some companion lonely as himself,
Far on the distant bank ; or else delighted
To hear the echo'd sound of his own voice,
Returning answer from some neighbouring rock,
Or roofless barn, holds converse with himself.

Now weary labourers perceive well pleased
The shadows lengthen, and the oppressive day
With all its toil fast wearing to an end.
The sun, far in the west, with level beam
Gleams on the cocks of hay, on bush or ridge,
And fields are checker'd with fantastic shapes,
Or tree or shrub or gate or human form,
All lengthen'd out in antic disproportion
Upon the darken'd ground. Their task is finish'd,

Their rakes and scatter'd garments gather'd up,
And all right gladly to their homes return.

The village, lone and silent through the day,
Receiving from the fields its merry bands,
Sends forth its evening sound, confused but cheer-
ful ;

Yelping of curs, and voices stern and shrill,
And true-love ballads in no plaintive strain,
By household maid at open window sung ;
And loving of the home-returning kine,
And herd's dull droning trump and tinkling bell,
Tied to the collar of the master-sheep,
Make no contemptible variety
To ears not over nice.
With careless lounging gait the favour'd youth
Upon his sweetheart's open window leans,
Diverting her with joke and harmless taunt.
Close by the cottage door, with placid mien,
The old man sits upon his seat of turf,
His staff with crooked head laid by his side,
Which oft some tricky youngling steals away,
And straddling o'er it shows his horsemanship
By raising clouds of sand ; he smiles thereat,
But seems to chide him sharply :
His silver locks upon his shoulders fall,
And not ungraceful is his stoop of age.
No stranger passes him without regard,
And neighbours stop to wish him a good e'en,
And ask him his opinion of the weather.
They fret not at the length of his remarks
Upon the various seasons he remembers ;
For well he knows the many divers signs
That do foretell high winds, or rain, or drought,
Or aught that may affect the rising crops.
The silken-clad, who courtly breeding boast,
Their own discourse still sweetest to their ear,
May at the old man's lengthen'd story fret,
Impatiently, but here it is not so.

From every chimney mounts the curling smoke,
Muddy and grey, of the new evening fire ;
On every window smokes the family supper,
Set out to cool by the attentive housewife,
While cheerful groups, at every door convened,
Bawl 'cross the narrow lane the parish news,
And oft the bursting laugh disturbs the air.
But see who comes to set them all agape ;
The weary-footed pedlar with his pack ;
Stiffly he bends beneath his bulky load,
Cover'd with dust, slip-shod and out at elbows ;
His greasy hat set backwards on his head ;
His thin straight hair, divided on his brow,
Hangs lank on either side his glist'ning cheeks,
And woe-begone yet vacant is his face.
His box he opens and displays his ware.
Full many a varied row of precious stones
Cast forth their dazzling lustre to the light,
And ruby rings and china buttons, stamp'd

With love devices, the desiring maid
 And simple youth attract ; while streaming garters,
 Of many colours, fasten'd to a pole,
 Aloft in air their gaudy stripes display,
 And from afar the distant stragglers lure.
 The children leave their play and round him flock ;
 Even sober, aged grandame quits her seat,
 Where by the door she twines her lengthen'd threads,
 Her spindle stops, and lays her distaff by,
 Then joins with step sedate the curious throng.
 She praises much the fashions of her youth,
 And scorns each useless nonsense of the day ;
 Yet not ill-pleas'd the glossy riband views,
 Unroll'd and changing hues with every fold,
 Just measured out to deck her grandchild's head.

Now red but languid the last beams appear
 Of the departed sun, across the lawn,
 Gilding each sweepy ridge on many a field,
 And from the openings of the distant hills
 A level brightness pouring, sad though bright ;
 Like farewells smiles from some dear friend they
 seem,

And only serve to deepen the low vale,
 And make the shadows of the night more gloomy.
 The varied noises of the cheerful village
 By slow degrees now faintly die away,
 And more distinctly distant sounds are heard
 That gently steal adown the river's bed,
 Or through the wood come on the ruffling breeze.
 The white mist rises from the meads, and from
 The dappled skirting of the sober sky
 Looks out with steady gleam the evening star.
 The lover, skulking in some neighbouring copse,
 (Whose half-seen form, shown through the dusky
 air

Large and majestic, makes the traveller start,
 And spreads the story of a haunted grove,) Curses the owl, whose loud ill-omen'd hoot
 With ceaseless spite takes from his listening ear
 The well-known footsteps of his darling maid,
 And fretful chases from his face the night-fly,
 That, buzzing round his head, doth often skim
 With fluttering wings across his glowing cheek
 For all but him in quiet balmy sleep
 Forget the toils of the oppressive day ;
 Shut is the door of every scatter'd cot.
 And silence dwells within.

NIGHT SCENES OF OTHER TIMES.

A POEM, IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

" THE night winds bellow o'er my head,
 Dim grows the fading light ;
 Where shall I find some friendly shed
 To screen me from the night ?

" Ah ! round me lies a desert vast,
 No habitation near ;
 And dark and pathless is the waste,
 And fills my mind with fear.

" Thou distant tree, whose lonely top
 Has bent to many a storm,
 No more canst thou deceive my hope
 And take my lover's form ;

" For o'er thy head the dark cloud rolls,
 Dark as thy blasted pride ;
 How deep the angry tempest growls
 Along the mountain's side !

" Safely within the shaggy brake
 Are crouch'd the mountain deer ;
 A sound unbroken sleep they take ;
 No haunts of men are near.

" Beneath the fern the moorcock sleeps
 And twisted adders lie ;
 Back to his rock the night-bird creeps,
 Nor gives his wonted cry.

" For angry spirits of the night
 Ride on the troubled air,
 And to their dens in strange affright
 The beasts of prey repair.

" But thou, my love ! where dost thou rest ?
 What shelter covers thee ?
 O may this cold and wintry blast
 But only beat on me !

" Some friendly dwelling mayst thou find,
 Where sleep may banish care,
 And thou feel not the chilly wind
 That scatters Margaret's hair.

" Ah no ! for thou didst give thy word
 To meet me on the way :
 Nor friendly roof nor social board
 Will tempt a lover's stay.

" O raise thy voice if thou art near !
 Its weakest sound were bliss ;
 What other sound my heart can cheer
 In such a gloom as this ?

" But from the hills with deafening roar
 The dashing torrents fall,
 And heavy beats the drifted shower,
 And mocks a lover's call.

" Ha ! see across the dreary waste,
 A moving form appears,
 It is my love, my cares are past ;
 How vain were all my fears !"

The form advanced, but sad and slow,
Not with a lover's tread ;
And from his cheek the youthful glow
And greeting smile were fled.

Dim sadness sat upon his brow ;
Fix'd was his beamless eye ;
His face was like a moonlight bow
Upon a wintry sky.

And fix'd and ghastly to the sight
His strengthen'd features rose,
And bended was his graceful height,
And bloody were his clothes.

" My Margaret, calm thy troubled breast ;
Thy sorrow now is vain !
Thy Edward from his peaceful rest
Shall ne'er return again.

" A treacherous friend has laid me low,
Has fix'd my early doom,
And laid my corse with feigned woe
Beneath a vaulted tomb.

" To take thee to my home I swear,
And here we were to meet ;
Wilt thou a narrow coffin share,
And part my winding-sheet ?

" But late the lord of many lands.
And now a grave is all :
My blood is warm upon his hands
Who revels in my hall.

" Yet think, thy father's hoary hair
Is water'd with his tears ;
He has but thee to soothe his care,
And drop his load of years.

" Remember Edward when he's gone !
He only lived for thee ;
And when thou art pensive and alone,
Dear Margaret, call on me !

" Though deep beneath the mouldering clod
I rest my wounded head,
And terrible that call and loud
Which shall awake the dead !"

" No, Edward ; I will follow thee,
And share thy hapless doom ;
Companions shall our spirits be,
Though distant is thy tomb.

" Oh ! never to my father's tower
Will I return again ;
A bleeding heart has little power
To ease another's pain.

" Upon the wing my spirit flies,
I feel my course is run ;
Nor shall these dim and weary eyes
Behold to-morrow's sun."

Like early dew, or hoary frost
Spent with the beaming day,
So shrunk the pale and watery ghost,
And dimly wore away.

No longer Margaret felt the storm,
She bow'd her lovely head,
And, with her lover's fleeting form,
Her gentle spirit fled.

PART II.

" Loud roars the wind that shakes the wall,
It is no common blast :
Deep hollow sounds pass through my hall :
O would the night were past !

" Methinks the demons of the air
Upon the turrets growl,
While down the empty winding stair
Their deep'n'g murmurs roll.

" The glimmering fire cheers not the gloom,
Blue burns the quivering ray,
And, like a taper in a tomb,
But spreads the more dismay.

" Athwart its melancholy light
The lengthen'd shadow falls ;
My grandsires to my troubled sight
Lower on me from these walls.

" Methinks yon angry warrior's head
Doth in its panel frown,
And dart a look, as if it said,
' Where hast thou laid my son ?'

" But will these fancies never cease ?
O would the night were run !
My troubled soul can find no peace
But with the morning sun.

" Vain hope ! the guilty never rest :
Dismay is always near ;
There is a midnight in the breast
No morn shall ever cheer.

" Now soundly sleeps the weary hind,
Though lowly lies his head ;
An easy lair the guiltless find
Upon the hardest bed.

"The beggar, in his wretched haunt,
 May now a monarch be ;
 Forget his woe, forget his want,
 For all can sleep but me.

"I've dared whate'er the boldest can,
 Then why this childish dread ?
 I never fear'd a living man,
 And shall I fear the dead ?

"No ; whistling blasts may shake my tower,
 And passing spirits scream :
 Their shadowy arms are void of power,
 And but a gloomy dream.

"But lo ! a form advancing slow
 Across the dusky hall,
 Art thou a friend ? — art thou a foe ?
 O answer to my call !"

Still nearer to the glimmering light
 The stately figure strode,
 Till full, and horrid to the sight,
 The murder'd Edward stood.

A broken shaft his right hand sway'd,
 Like Time's dark threat'ning dart,
 And pointed to a rugged blade
 That quiver'd in his heart.

The blood still trickled from his head,
 And clotted was his hair :
 His severed vesture stain'd and red ;
 His mangled breast was bare.

His face was like a muddy sky
 Before the coming snow ;
 And dark and dreadful was his eye,
 And cloudy was his brow.

Pale Conrad shrank, but drew his sword —
 Fear thrill'd in every vein ;
 His quivering lips gave out no word ;
 He paused, and shrank again.

Then utterance came — "At this dread hour
 Why dost thou haunt the night ?
 Has the deep gloomy vault no power
 To keep thee from my sight ?

"Why dost thou glare and slowly wave
 That fatal shaft of strife ?
 The deed is done, and from the grave
 Who can recall to life ?

"Why roll thine eyes beneath thy brow
 Dark as the midnight storm ?
 What dost thou want ? O let me know,
 But hide thy dreadful form.

"I'd give the life-blood from my heart
 To wash my crime away :
 If thou a spirit be, depart,
 Nor haunt a wretch of clay !

"Say, dost thou with the blessed dwell ? —
 Return and blessed be !
 Or com'st thou from the lowest hell ? —
 I am more cursed than thee."

The form advanced with solemn steps
 As if it meant to speak,
 And seem'd to move its pallid lips,
 But silence did not break.

Then sternly stalk'd with heavy pace
 Which shook the floor and wall,
 And turn'd away its fearful face,
 And vanish'd from the hall.

Transfix'd and powerless, Conrad stood ;
 Ears ring, and eyeballs swell ;
 Back to his heart runs the cold blood ;
 Into a trance he fell.

Night fled, and through the windows 'gan
 The early light to play ;
 But on a more unhappy man
 Ne'er shone the dawning day.

The gladsome sun all nature cheers,
 But cannot charm his cares ;
 Still dwells his mind with gloomy fears,
 And murder'd Edward glares.

PART III.

"No rest nor comfort can I find :
 I watch the midnight hour ;
 I sit and listen to the wind
 That beats upon my tower.

"Methinks low voices from the ground
 Break mournful on my ear,
 And through these empty chambers sound,
 So dismal and so drear !

"The ghost of some departed friend
 Doth in my sorrows share ;
 Or is it but the rushing wind
 That mocketh my despair ?

"Sad through the hall the pale lamp gleams
 Upon my father's arms ;
 My soul is filled with gloomy dreams,
 I fear unknown alarms.

“ O, I have known this lonely place
With every blessing stor'd,
And many a friend with cheerful face
Sit smiling at my board !

“ While round the hearth, in early bloom,
My harmless children play'd,
Who now within the narrow tomb
Are with their mother laid.

“ Now sadly bends my wretched head,
And those I loved are gone :
My friends, my family, all are fled,
And I am left alone.

“ Oft as the cheerless fire declines,
In it I sadly trace,
As lone I sit, the half-form'd lines
Of many a much-loved face.

“ But chiefly, Margaret, to my mind,
Thy lovely features rise ;
I strive to think thee less unkind,
And wipe my streaming eyes.

“ For only thee I had to vaunt,
Thou wast thy mother's pride ;
She left thee like a shooting plant,
To screen my widow'd side.

“ But thou forsakest me, weak, forlorn,
And chill'd with age's frost,
To count my weary days and mourn
The comforts I have lost.

“ Unkindly child ! why didst thou go ?
O, had I known the truth !
Though Edward's father was my foe,
I would have bless'd the youth.

“ Could I but see that face again,
Whose smile calm'd every strife,
And hear that voice which soothed my pain
And made me wish for life !

“ Thy harp hangs silent by the wall :
My nights are sad and long,
And thou art in a distant hall,
Where strangers raise the song.

“ Ha ! some delusion of the mind
My senses doth confound !
It was the harp, and not the wind,
That did so sweetly sound.”

Old Arno rose all wan as death,
And turn'd his eager ear,
And check'd the while his quicken'd breath
The sound again to hear.

When, like a full, but distant choir,
The swelling notes return'd ;
And with the softly trembling wire
Surrounding echoes mourn'd ;

Then softly whisper'd o'er the song
That Margaret loved to play ;
Its well-known measure linger'd long,
And faintly died away.

His dim-worn eyes to heaven he cast,
Where all his griefs were known,
And smote upon his troubled breast,
And heaved a heavy groan.

“ I know it is my daughter's hand,
But 'tis no hand of clay ;
And here a lonely wretch I stand,
All childless, bent, and gray.

“ And art thou low, my lovely child,
And hast thou met thy doom,
And has thy flattering morning smiled
To lead but to the tomb ?

“ O let me see thee ere we part,
For souls like thine are blest ;
O let me fold thee to my heart,
If aught of form thou hast !

“ This passing mist conceals thy shape,
But it is shrunk or flown ;
Why dost thou from mine arms escape,
Art thou not still mine own ?

“ Thou'rt fled like the low evening breath,
That sighs upon the hill :
O stay ! though in thy weeds of death, —
Thou art my daughter still.”

Loud waked the sound, then fainter grew,
And long and sadly mourn'd,
And softly sigh'd a long adieu,
And never more return'd.

Old Arno stretch'd him on the ground ;
Thick as the gloom of night,
Death's misty shadows gather'd round,
And swam before his sight.

He heaved a deep and deadly groan,
That rent his labouring breast,
And long before the morning shone,
His spirit was at rest.

ADDRESS TO THE MUSES.

Ye tuneful sisters of the lyre,
 Who dreams and fantasies inspire,
 Who over poesy preside,
 And on a lofty hill abide
 Above the ken of mortal sight,
 Fain would I sing of you, could I address you right.

Thus known, your power of old was sung.
 And temples with your praises rung ;
 And when the song of battle rose,
 Or kindling wine or lover's woes,
 The Poet's spirit inly burn'd,
 And still to you his upcast eyes were turn'd.

The youth, all wrapp'd in vision bright,
 Beheld your robes of flowing white ;
 And knew your forms benignly grand, —
 An awful but a lovely band ;
 And felt your inspiration strong,
 And warmly pour'd his rapid lay along.

The aged bard all heavenward glow'd,
 And hail'd you daughters of a God.
 Though by his dimmer eyes were seen
 Nor graceful form nor heavenly mien,
 Full well he felt that ye were near,
 And heard you in the breeze that raised his hoary
 hair.

Ye lighten'd up the valley's bloom,
 And gave the forest deeper gloom ;
 The mountain peak sublimer stood,
 And grander rose the mighty flood ;
 For then Religion lent her aid,
 And o'er the mind of man your sacred empire spread.

Though rolling ages now are past,
 And altars low and temples waste ;
 Though rites and oracles are o'er,
 And Gods and heroes rule no more,
 Your fading honours still remain,
 And still your votaries call, a long and motley train.

They seek you not on hill or plain,
 Nor court you in the sacred fane ;
 Nor meet you in the mid-day dream,
 Upon the bank of hallow'd stream ;
 Yet still for inspiration sue,
 And still each lifts his fervent prayer to you.

He woos you not in woodland gloom,
 But in the close and shelded room,
 And seeks you in the dusty nook,
 And meets you in the letter'd book :
 Full well he knows you by your names,
 And still with poet's faith your presence claims.

Now youthful Poet, pen in hand,
 All by the side of blotted stand,
 In reverie deep which none may break,
 Sits rubbing of his beardless cheek,
 And well his inspiration knows,
 E'en by the dewy drops that trickle o'er his nose.

The tuneful sage, of riper fame,
 Perceives you not in heated frame ;
 But at conclusion of his verse,
 Which still his muttering lips rehearse,
 Oft waves his hand in grateful pride,
 And owns the heavenly power that did his fancy
 guide.

O lovely Sisters ! is it true
 That they are all inspired by you,
 And write by inward magic charm'd,
 And high enthusiasm warm'd ?
 We dare not question heavenly lays,
 And well, I wot, they give you all the praise.

O lovely Sisters ! well it shows
 How wide and far your bounty flows.
 Then why from me withhold your beams ?
 Unvisited of vision'd dreams,
 Whene'er I aim at heights sublime,
 Still downward am I call'd to seek some stubborn
 rhyme.

No hasty lightning breaks my gloom,
 Nor flashing thoughts unsought for come,
 Nor fancies wake in time of need :
 I labour much with little speed,
 And when my studied task is done,
 Too well, alas ! I mark it for my own.

Yet should you never smile on me,
 And rugged still my verses be,
 Unpleasing to the tuneful train,
 Who only prize a flowing strain,
 And still the learned scorn my lays,
 I'll lift my heart to you and sing your praise.

Your varied ministry of grace,
 Your honour'd names and godlike race,
 Your sacred caves where fountains flow
 They will rehearse, who better know ;
 I praise you not with Grecian lyre,
 Nor hail you daughters of a heathen sire.

Ye are the spirits who preside
 In earth and air and ocean wide,
 In rushing flood and crackling fire,
 In horror dread and tumult dire,
 In stilly calm and stormy wind,
 And rule the answering changes in the human
 mind !

High on the tempest-beaten hill,
Your misty shapes ye shift at will ;
The wild fantastic clouds ye form ;
Your voice is in the midnight storm ;
While in the dark and lonely hour
Oft starts the boldest heart, and owns your secret
power.

When lightning ceases on the waste,
And when the battle's broil is past,
When scenes of strife and blood are o'er,
And groans of death are heard no more.
Ye then renew each sound and form,
Like after echoing of the o'erpassed storm.

The shining day and nightly shade,
The cheerful plain and sunny glade ;
The homeward kine, the children's play,
The busy hamlet's closing day,
Give pleasure to the peasant's heart,
Who lacks the gift his feelings to impart.

Oft when the moon looks from on high,
And black around the shadows lie,
And bright the sparkling waters gleam,
And rushes rustle by the stream,
Voices and fairy forms are known
By simple folk who wander late alone.

Ye kindle up the inward glow,
Ye strengthen every outward show,
Ye overleap the strongest bar
And join what nature sunders far,
And visit oft, in fancies wild,
The breast of learned sage and simple child.

From him who wears a monarch's crown
To the unletter'd simple clown,
All in some fitful, lonely hour
Have felt, unsought, your secret power,
And loved your inward visions well ;
You add but to the bard the art to tell.

Ye mighty spirits of the song,
To whom the poet's prayers belong,
My lowly bosom to inspire
And kindle with your sacred fire,
Your wild and dizzy heights to brave,
Is boon, alas ! too great for me to crave.

But O, such sense of nature bring !
As they who feel, and never sing,
Wear on their hearts ; it will avail
With simple words to tell my tale ;
And still contented will I be,
Though greater inspiration never fall to me.

A MELANCHOLY LOVER'S FAREWELL TO HIS MISTRESS.

DEAR Phillis, all my hopes are o'er,
And I shall see thy face no more.
Since every secret wish is vain,
I will not stay to give thee pain.
Then do not drop thy lowering brow,
But let me bless thee ere I go ;
Oh ! do not scorn my last adieu !
I've loved thee long, and loved thee true

The prospects of my youth are crost,
My health is flown, my vigour lost ;
My soothing friends augment my pain,
And cheerless is my native plain ;
Dark o'er my spirit hangs the gloom,
And thy disdain has fix'd my doom.
But light waves ripple o'er the sea
That soon shall bear me far from thee ;
And, wheresoe'er our course be cast,
I know 'twill bear me to my rest.
Full deep beneath the briny wave,
Where lie the venturous and brave,
A place may be for me decreed ;
But, should the winds my passage speed,
Far hence upon a foreign land,
Whose sons perhaps with friendly hand
The stranger's lowly tomb may raise,
A broken heart will end my days.

But heaven's blessing on thee rest !
And may no troubles vex thy breast !
Perhaps, when pensive and alone,
You'll think of me when I am gone,
And gentle tears of pity shed,
When I am in my narrow bed.
But softly will thy sorrows flow,
And greater mayst thou never know !
Free from all worldly care and strife,
Long mayst thou live a happy life !
And every earthly blessing find,
Thou loveliest of woman kind :
Yea, blest thy secret wishes be,
Though cruel thou hast proved to me !

And dost thou then thine arm extend ?
And may I take thy lovely hand ?
And do thine eyes thus gently look,
As though some kindly wish they spoke ?
My gentle Phillis, though severe,
I do not grudge the ills I bear ;
But still my greatest grief will be
To think my love has troubled thee.
Oh do not scorn this swelling grief !
The laden bosom seeks relief ;
Nor yet this infant weakness blame,
For thou hast made me what I am.

Hark now ! the sailors call away,
 No longer may I lingering stay.
 May peace within thy mansion dwell !
 O gentle Phillis, fare thee well !

A CHEERFUL-TEMPERED LOVER'S
 FAREWELL TO HIS MISTRESS

THE light winds on the streamers play
 That soon shall bear me far away ;
 My comrades give the parting cheer,
 And I alone have linger'd here.
 Now, dearest Phill, since it will be,
 And I must bid farewell to thee —
 Since every cherish'd hope is flown,
 Send me not from thee with a frown,
 But kindly let me take thy hand,
 And bid God bless me in a foreign land.
 No more I'll loiter by thy side,
 Well pleased thy gamesome taunts to bide ;
 Nor lover's gambols lightly try
 To make me graceful in thine eye ;
 Nor sing a merry roundelay
 To cheer thee at the close of day.
 Yet ne'ertheless, though we must part,
 I'll have thee still within my heart ;
 Still to thy health my glass I'll fill,
 And drink it with a right good-will.
 Far hence upon a foreign shore,
 There will I keep an open door,
 And there my little fortune share
 With all who ever breathed my native air.
 And he who once thy face hath seen,
 Or ever near thy dwelling been,
 Shall freely push the flowing bowl
 And be the master of the whole.
 And every woman, for thy sake,
 Shall of my slender store partake,
 Shall in my home protection find,
 Thou fairest of a fickle kind !
 O dearly, dearly have I paid,
 Thou little, haughty, cruel maid !
 To give that inward peace to thee,
 Which thou hast ta'en away from me.
 Soft hast thou slept with bosom light,
 While I have watch'd the weary night ;
 And now I cross the surgy deep
 That thou mayst still untroubled sleep.
 But in thine eyes what do I see
 That looks as though they pitied me ?
 I thank thee, Phillis ; be not sad,
 I leave no blame upon thy head.
 To gain thy gentle heart I strove,
 But ne'er was worthy of thy love.
 And yet, perhaps, when I shall dwell
 Far hence, thou'lt sometimes think how well—

I dare not stay, since we must part,
 To expose a fond and foolish heart ;
 Where'er it goes, it beats for you,
 God bless you, Phill, adieu ! adieu !

A PROUD LOVER'S FAREWELL TO
 HIS MISTRESS.

FAREWELL, thou haughty, cruel fair !
 Upon thy brow no longer wear
 That sombre look of cold disdain ;
 I ne'er shall see thy face again.
 Now every foolish wish is o'er,
 And fears and doubtings are no more.

All cruel as thou art to me,
 Long has my heart been fix'd on thee.
 I've track'd thy footsteps o'er the green,
 And shared thy rambles oft unseen ;
 I've linger'd near thee night and day,
 When thou hast thought me far away !
 I've watch'd the changes of thy face,
 And fondly mark'd thy moving grace ;
 I've wept with joy thy smiles to see ;
 I've been a fool for love of thee.
 Yet do not think I stay the while
 Thy feeble pity to beguile :
 Let favour forced still fruitless prove !
 The pity cursed that brings not love !

No woman e'er shall give me pain,
 Or ever break my rest again :
 Nor aught that comes of womankind
 Again have power to move my mind.
 Far on a foreign shore I'll seek
 Some lonely island bare and bleak ;
 There find some wild and rocky cell,
 And with the untamed creatures dwell.
 To hear their cries is now my choice,
 Rather than man's deceitful voice ;
 To hear the tempest's boisterous song,
 Than woman's softly witching tongue ;
 They wear no guise, nor promise good,
 But rugged seem as they are rude.

O Phillis ! thou hast wreck'd a heart
 That proudly bears, but feels the smart.
 Adieu, adieu ! shouldst thou e'er prove
 The pangs of ill requited love,
 Thou'lt know what I have borne for thee,
 And then thou wilt remember me.

A POETICAL OR SOUND-HEARTED
LOVER'S FAREWELL TO HIS MISTRESS.

FAIR Nymph, who dost my fate controul,
And reignest Mistress of my soul,
Where thou all bright in beauty's ray
Hast held a long tyrannic sway !
They who the hardest rule maintain,
In their commands do still refrain
From what impossible must prove,
Yet thou hast bid me cease to love.
Ah ! when the magnet's power is o'er,
The needle then will point no more,
And when no verdure clothes the spring,
The tuneful birds forget to sing ;
But thou, all sweet and heavenly fair,
Wouldest have thy swain from love forbear.
In pity let thine own dear hand
A death's-wound to this bosom send :
This tender heart of purest faith
May then resign thee with its breath ;
And in the sun-beam of thine eye
A proud and willing victim die.

But since thou wilt not have it so,
Far from thy presence will I go ;
Far from my heart's dear bliss I'll stray,
Since I no longer can obey.
In foreign climes I'll henceforth roam,
No more to hail my native home :
To foreign swains I'll pour my woe,
In foreign plains my tears shall flow ;
By murmuring stream and shady grove
Shall other echoes tell my love ;
And richer flowers of vivid hue
Upon my grave shall other maidens strew.

Adieu, dear Phillis ! shouldst thou e'er
Some soft and plaintive story hear
Of hapless youth who vainly strove
With wayward fate, and died for love,
O think of me ! nor then deny
The gentle tribute of a sigh !

A REVERIE.

BESIDE a spreading elm, from whose high boughs
Like knotted tufts the crow's light dwelling shows,
Screen'd from the northern blast and winter-proof,
Snug stands the parson's barn with thatched roof.
At chaff-strew'd door where in the morning ray
The gilded notes in mazy circles play,
And sleepy Comrade in the sun is laid,
More grateful to the cur than neighb'ring shade :
In snowy shirt, unbraced, brown Robin stood,
And leant upon his flail in thoughtful mood.

His ruddy cheeks that wear their deepest hue,
His forehead brown that glist'ning drops bedew,
His neck-band loose and hosen rumpled low,
A careful lad, nor slack at labour, show.
Nor scraping chickens chirping in the straw,
Nor croaking rook o'er-head, nor chattering daw,
Loud-breathing cow among the juicy weeds,
Nor grunting sow that in the furrow feeds,
Nor sudden breeze that stirs the quaking leaves
And makes disturbance 'mong the scatter'd sheaves,
Nor floating straw that skims athwart his nose,
The deeply musing youth may discompose.
For Nelly fair, and blithest village maid,
Whose tuneful voice beneath the hedge-row shade,
At early milking o'er the meadow borne,
E'er cheer'd the ploughman's toil at rising morn ;
The neatest maid that e'er in linen gown
Bore cream and butter to the market town ;
The tightest lass that e'er at wake or fair
Footed the ale-house floor with lightsome air,
Since Easter last had Robin's heart possess'd,
And many a time disturb'd his nightly rest.
Full oft returning from the loosen'd plough,
He slack'd his pace, and knit his careful brow ;
And oft, ere half his thresher's task was o'er,
Would muse with arms across at cooling door.
His mind thus bent, with downcast eyes he stood,
And leant upon his flail in thoughtful mood.
His soul o'er many a soft remembrance ran,
And muttering to himself the youth began.

" Ah ! happy is the man whose early lot
Hath made him master of a furnish'd cot ;
Who trains the vine that round his window grows,
And after setting sun his garden hoes ;
Whose wattled pales his own enclosure shield,
Who toils not daily in another's field.
Where'er he goes, to church or market town,
With more respect he and his dog are known,
With brisker face at pedlar's booth he stands,
And takes each tempting gew-gaw in his hands,
And buys at will or ribands, gloves, or beads,
And willing partners to the green he leads :
And oh ! secure from toils that cumber life,
He makes the maid he loves an easy wife.
Ah ! Nelly ! canst thou with contented mind
Become the help-mate of a labouring hind,
And share his lot, whate'er the chances be,
Who hath no dower but love to fix on thee ?
Yes ; gayest maid may meekest matron prove,
And things of little note betoken love.
When from the church thou cam'st at eventide,
And I and red-hair'd Susan by thy side,
I pull'd the blossoms from the bending tree,
And some to Susan gave and some to thee ;
Thine were the fairest, and thy smiling eye
The difference mark'd, and guess'd the reason
why.

When on that holiday we rambling stray'd,
 And pass'd Old Hodge's cottage in the glade ;
 Neat was the garden dress'd, sweet humm'd the bee,
 I wish'd the Cot and Nelly made for me ;
 And well, methought, thy very eyes reveal'd
 The self-same wish within thy breast conceal'd ;
 When artful, once, I sought my love to tell,
 And spok'd to thee of one who lov'd thee well,
 You saw the cheat, and jeering homeward hied,
 Yet secret pleasure in thy looks I spied.
 Ay, gayest maid may meekest matron prove,
 And smaller signs than these betoken love."

Now at a distance on the neighb'ring plain,
 With creaking wheels slow comes the harvest wain,
 High on its shaking load a maid appears,
 And Nelly's voice sounds shrill in Robin's ears.
 Quick from his hand he throws the cumbrous flail,
 And leaps with lightsome limbs the enclosing pale.
 O'er field and fence he scours, and furrow wide,
 With waken'd Comrade barking by his side ;
 While tracks of trodden grain and tangled hay,
 And broken hedge-flowers sweet, mark his impetuous way.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

On village green whose smooth and well-worn sod,
 Cross path'd, with many a gossip's foot is trod ;
 By cottage door where playful children run,
 And cats and curs sit basking in the sun ;
 Where o'er an earthen seat the thorn is bent,
 Cross-arm'd and back to wall poor William leant.
 His bonnet all awry, his gather'd brow,
 His hanging lip and lengthen'd visage show
 A mind but ill at ease. With motions strange
 His listless limbs their wayward postures change ;
 While many a crooked line and curious maze
 With clouted shoon he on the sand pourtrays.
 At length the half-chew'd straw fell from his mouth,
 And to himself low spok'd the moody youth.

" How simple is the lad, and reft of skill,
 Who thinks with love to fix a woman's will !
 Who every Sunday morn to please her sight,
 Knots up his neckcloth gay and hosen white ;
 Who for her pleasure keeps his pockets bare,
 And half his wages spends on pedlar's ware ;
 When every niggard clown or dotard old,
 Who hides in secret nooks his oft-told gold,
 Whose field or orchard tempts, with all her pride,
 At little cost may win her for his bride !
 While all the meed her silly lover gains,
 Is but the neighbours' jeering for his pains.
 On Sunday last, when Susan's banns were read,
 And I astonish'd sat with hanging head,

Cold grew my shrinking frame, and loose my knee,
 While every neighbour's eye was fix'd on me.
 Ah Sue ! when last we work'd at Hodge's hay,
 And still at me you mock'd in wanton play —
 When last at fair, well pleas'd by chapman's stand,
 You took the new-bought fairing from my hand —
 When at old Hobb's you sang that song so gay,
 ' Sweet William ; still the burthen of the lay, —
 I little thought, alas ! the lots were cast,
 That thou shouldst be another's bride at last :
 And had, when last we tripp'd it on the green,
 And laugh'd at stiff-back'd Rob, small thoughts I
 ween,

Ere yet another scanty month was flown
 To see thee wedded to the hateful clown ;
 Ay, lucky churl ! more gold thy pockets line ;
 But did these shapely limbs resemble thine,
 I'd stay at home and tend the household gear,
 Nor on the green with other lads appear.
 Ay, lucky churl ! no store thy cottage lacks,
 And round thy barn thick stand the shelter'd stacks,
 But did such features coarse my visage grace,
 I'd never budge the bonnet from my face.
 Yet let it be ; it shall not break my ease ;
 He best deserves who doth the maiden please.
 Such silly cause no more shall give me pain,
 Nor ever maiden cross my rest again.
 Such grizzled suitors with their taste agree,
 And the black fiend may have them all for me !"

Now through the village rise confused sounds,
 Hoarse lads, and children shrill, and yelping hounds.
 Straight every housewife at her door is seen,
 And pausing hedgers on their mattocks lean.
 At every narrow lane and alley's mouth,
 Loud-laughing lasses stand, and joking youth.
 A bridal band trick'd out in colours gay,
 With minstrels blithe before to cheer the way,
 From clouds of curling dust that onward fly,
 In rural splendour breaks upon the eye.
 As in their way they hold so gaily on,
 Caps, beads, and buttons, glancing to the sun,
 Each village wag with eye of roguish cast
 Some maiden jogs, and vents the ready jest ;
 While village toasts the passing belles deride,
 And sober matrons marvel at their pride.
 But William, head erect with settled brow,
 In sullen silence view'd the passing show ;
 And oft he scratch'd his pate with careless grace,
 And scorn'd to pull the bonnet o'er his face ;
 But did with steady look unalter'd wait,
 Till hindmost man had pass'd the churchyard gate,
 Then turn'd him to his cot with visage flat,
 Where honest Lightfoot on the threshold sat,
 Up leap'd the kindly beast his hand to lick,
 And for his pains received an angry kick.
 Loud shuts the door with harsh and thundering
 din ;
 The echoes round their circling course begin.

From cot to cot, church tower, and rocky dell,
It grows amain with wide progressive swell,
And Lightfoot joins the coil with loud and piteous yell.

A LAMENTATION.

WHERE ancient broken wall encloses round,
From tread of lawless feet, the hallow'd ground,
And sombre yews their dewy branches wave,
O'er many a graven stone and mounded grave;
Where parish church, confusedly to the sight,
With deeper darkness prints the shades of night,
In garb deranged and loose, with scatter'd hair,
His bosom open to the nightly air,
Lone, o'er a new-heap'd grave poor Basil bent,
And to himself began his simple plaint.

"Alas, how cold thy home, how low thou art,
Who wast the pride and mistress of my heart!
The fallen leaves now rustling o'er thee pass,
And o'er thee waves the dank and dewy grass,
The new laid sods and twisted osier tell,
How narrow is the space where thou must dwell.
Now rough and wintry winds may on thee beat,
Chill rain, and drifting snow, and summer's heat;
Each passing season's rub, for woe is me!
Or gloom or sunshine is the same to thee.
Ah Mary! lovely was thy slender form,
And bright thy cheerful brow that knew no storm.
Thy steps were graceful on the village green,
As though thou hadst some courtly lady been.
At church or market still the gayest lass,
Each youngster slack'd his speed to see thee pass.

At early milking tuneful was thy lay,
And sweet thy homeward song at close of day;
But sweeter far, and every youth's desire,
Thy cheerful converse by the evening fire.
Alas! no more thou'lt foot the village sward,
No song of thine shall ever more be heard,
And they full soon will trip it on the green,
As blithe and gay as thou hadst never been.
Around the evening fire with little care
Will neighbours sit, and scarcely miss thee there;
And when the sober parting hour comes round,
Will to their rest retire, and slumber sound,
But Basil cannot rest; his days are sad,
And long his nights upon the weary bed.
Yet still in broken dreams thy form appears,
And still my bosom proves a lover's fears.
I guide thy footsteps through the tangled wood;
I catch thee sinking in the boisterous flood;
I shield thy bosom from the threaten'd stroke;
I clasp thee falling from the headlong rock;
But ere we reach the dark and dreadful deep,
High heaves my troubled breast, I wake and weep.

At every wailing of the midnight wind,
Thy lowly dwelling comes into my mind.
When rain beats on my roof, wild storms abroad,
I think upon thy bare and beaten sods;
I hate the comfort of a shelter'd home,
And hie me forth, o'er pathless fields to roam.

"O Mary! loss of thee hath fix'd my doom,
This world around me is a weary gloom,
Dull heavy musings lead my mind astray,
I cannot sleep by night nor work by day.
Or wealth or pleasure dullest hinds inspire,
But cheerless is their toil who nought desire;
Let happier friends divide my farmer's stock,
Cut down my grain, and shear my little flock;
For now my only care on earth will be
Here every Sunday morn to visit thee,
And in the holy church with heart sincere
And humble mind our worthy curate hear;
He best can tell, when earthly woes are past,
The surest way to meet with thee at last.
I'll thus awhile a weary life abide,
Till wasting time hath laid me by thy side;
For now on earth there is no place for me,
Nor peace nor slumber till I rest with thee."

Loud from the lofty spire, with piercing knell,
Solemn and awful, toll'd the parish bell,
A later hour than rustics deem it meet
That churchyard ground be trod by mortal feet.
The wailing lover started at the sound,
And raised his head and cast his eyes around.
The gloomy pile in strengthen'd horror lower'd,
Large and majestic every object tower'd;
Dun through the gloom, they show'd like forms
unknown,
And tall and ghastly rose each whiten'd stone;
Aloft the dismal screech-owl 'gan to sing,
And past him skimm'd the bat with flapping wing.
The fears of nature woke within his breast,
He left the hallow'd spot of Mary's rest,
And sped his way the churchyard wall to gain,
Then check'd his fear and stopp'd and would re-
main.

But shadows round a deeper horror wear;
A deeper silence falls upon his ear;
An awful stillness broods upon the scene,
His fluttering heart recoils, he turns again.
With hasty steps he measures back the ground,
And leaps with summon'd force the churchyard
bound;
Then home, with shaking limbs and quicken'd
breath,
His footsteps urges from the place of death.

A MOTHER TO HER WAKING INFANT.

Now in thy dazzled half-oped eye,
Thy curled nose and lip awry,
Up-hoisted arms and noddling head,
And little chin with crystal spread,
Poor helpless thing! what do I see,
That I should sing of thee?

From thy poor tongue no accents come,
Which can but rub thy toothless gum:
Small understanding boasts thy face,
Thy shapeless limbs nor step nor grace:
A few short words thy feats may tell,
And yet I love thee well.

When wakes the sudden bitter shriek,
And redder swells thy little cheek;
When rattled keys thy woes beguile,
And through thine eyelids gleams the smile,
Still for thy weakly self is spent
Thy little silly plaint.

But when thy friends are in distress,
Thou'lt laugh and chuckle ne'ertheless,
Nor with kind sympathy be smitten,
Though all are sad but thee and kitten;
Yet puny varlet that thou art,
Thou twitchest at the heart.

Thy smooth round cheek so soft and warm;
Thy pinky hand and dimpled arm;
Thy silken locks that scantily peep,
With gold tipp'd ends, where circles deep,
Around thy neck in harmless grace,
So soft and sleekly hold their place,
Might harder hearts with kindness fill,
And gain our right goodwill.

Each passing clown bestows his blessing,
Thy mouth is worn with old wives' kissing;
E'en lighter looks the gloomy eye
Of surly sense when thou art by;
And yet, I think, who'er they be,
They love thee not like me.

Perhaps when time shall add a few
Short months to thee, thou'lt love me too;
And after that, through life's long way,
Become my sure and cheering stay;
Wilt care for me and be my hold,
When I am weak and old.

Thou'lt listen to my lengthen'd tale,
And pity me when I am frail*—
But see, the sweepy spinning fly
Upon the window takes thine eye.
Go to thy little senseless play;
Thou dost not heed my lay.

* *Feeble*. In this sense the word is often applied in Scotland.

A CHILD TO HIS SICK GRANDFATHER.

GRAND-DAD, they say you're old and frail,
Your stiffen'd legs begin to fail:
Your staff, no more my pony now,
Supports your body bending low,
While back to wall you lean so sad,
I'm vex'd to see you, Dad.

You used to smile and stroke my head,
And tell me how good children did;
But now, I wot not how it be,
You take me seldom on your knee:
Yet ne'ertheless I am right glad,
To sit beside you, Dad.

How lank and thin your beard hangs down!
Scant are the white hairs on your crown:
How wan and hollow are your cheeks!
Your brow is cross'd with many streaks;
But yet although his strength be fled,
I love my own old Dad.

The housewives round their potions brew,
And gossips come to ask for you;
And for your weal each neighbour cares;
And good men kneel and say their prayers;
And every body looks so sad,
When you are ailing, Dad.

You will not die and leave us, then?
Rouse up and be our Dad again.
When you are quiet and laid in bed,
We'll doff our shoes and softly tread;
And when you wake we'll still be near,
To fill old Dad his cheer.

When through the house you change your stand,
I'll lead you kindly by the hand:
When dinner's set I'll with you bide,
And aye be serving by your side;
And when the weary fire burns blue,
I'll sit and talk with you.

I have a tale both long and good,
About a partlet and her brood,
And greedy cunning fox that stole
By dead of midnight through a hole,
Which slyly to the hen-roost led,—
You love a story, Dad?

And then I have a wondrous tale
Of men all clad in coats of mail,
With glittering swords,—you nod,—I think
Your heavy eyes begin to wink;—
Down on your bosom sinks your head:—
You do not hear me, Dad.

THUNDER.

SPIRIT of strength ! to whom in wrath 'tis given,
To mar the earth and shake its vasty dome,
Behold the sombre robes whose gathering folds
Thy secret majesty conceal. Their skirts
Spread on mid air move slow and silently,
O'er noon-day's beam thy sultry shroud is cast,
Advancing clouds from every point of heaven,
Like hosts of gathering foes in pitchy volumes,
Grandly dilated, clothe the fields of air,
And brood aloft o'er the empurpled earth.
Spirit of strength ! it is thy awful hour ;
The wind of every hill is laid to rest,
And far o'er sea and land deep silence reigns.

Wild creatures of the forest homeward hie,
And in their dens with fear unwonted cower ;
Pride in the lordly palace is put down,
While in his humble cot the poor man sits
With all his family round him hush'd and still,
In awful expectation. On his way
The traveller stands aghast and looks to heaven.
On the horizon's verge thy lightning gleams,
And the first utterance of thy deep voice
Is heard in reverence and holy fear.

From nearer clouds bright burst more vivid
gleams,

As instantly in closing darkness lost ;
Pale sheeted flashes cross the wide expanse,
While over boggy moor, or swampy plain,
A streaming cataract of flame appears,
To meet a nether fire from earth cast up,
Commingleing terribly ; appalling gloom
Succeeds, and lo ! the rifted centre pours
A general blaze, and from the war of clouds,
Red, writhing, falls the embodied bolt of heaven.
Then swells the rolling peal, full, deep'n'g,
grand,

And in its strength lifts the tremendous roar,
With mingled discord, rattling, hissing, growling :
Crashing like rocky fragments downward hurl'd,
Like the upbreaking of a ruin'd world,
In awful majesty the explosion bursts
Wide and astounding o'er the trembling land.
Mountain, and cliff, repeat the dread turmoil,
And all, to man's distinctive senses known,
Is lost in the immensity of sound.
Peal after peal succeeds with waning strength,
And hush'd and deep each solemn pause between.

Upon the lofty mountain's side
The kindled forest blazes wide ;
Huge fragments of the rugged steep
Are tumbled to the lashing deep ;
Firm rooted in his cloven rock,
Crashing falls the stubborn oak.

The lightning keen in wasteful ire
Darts fiercely on the pointed spire,
Rending in twain the iron-knit stone,
And stately towers to earth are thrown.
No human strength may brave the storm,
Nor shelter screen the shrinking form,
Nor castle wall its fury stay,
Nor massy gate impede its way :
It visits those of low estate,
It shakes the dwellings of the great,
It looks athwart the vaulted tomb,
And glares upon the prison's gloom.
Then dungeons black in unknown light
Flash hideous on the wretches' sight,
And strangely groans the downward cell,
Where silence deep is wont to dwell.

Now eyes, to heaven up-cast, adore,
Knees bend that never bent before,
The stoutest hearts begin to fail,
And many a manly face is pale ;
Benumbing fear awhile up-binds
The palsied action of their minds,
Till waked to dreadful sense they lift their eyes,
And round the stricken corpse shrill shrieks of horror
rise.

Now rattling hailstones, bounding as they fall
To earth, spread motley winter o'er the plain ;
Receding peals sound fainter on the ear,
And roll their distant grumbling far away :
The lightning doth in paler flashes gleam,
And through the rent cloud, silver'd with his rays,
The sun on all this wild affray looks down,
As, high enthroned above all mortal ken,
A higher Power beholds the strife of men.

THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER.

BRACED in the sinewy vigour of thy breed,
In pride of generous strength, thou stately steed ;
Thy broad chest to the battle's front is given,
Thy mane fair floating to the winds of heaven ;
Thy stamping hoofs the flinty pebbles break ;
Graceful the rising of thine arched neck ;
Thy bridle-bits white flakes of foam enlock ;
From thy moved nostrils bursts the curling smoke ;
Thy kindling eye-balls brave the glaring south,
And dreadful is the thunder of thy mouth :
Whilst low to earth thy curving haunches bend,
Thy sweepy tail involved in clouds of sand,
Erect in air thou rearest thy front of pride,
And ringst the plated harness on thy side !

But lo ! what creature, goodly to the sight,
Dares thus bestride thee, chafing in thy might ;

Of portly stature and determined mien,
Whose dark eye dwells beneath a brow serene,
And forward looks unmoved to scenes of death,
Who smiling, gently strokes thee in thy wrath :
Whose right hand doth its flashing falchion wield ?
A British soldier girded for the field !

FRAGMENT OF A POEM.

GLOOMY and still was the broad solemn deep,
Whose rolling tides for twice a hundred years
Had lash'd the rugged walls of Tora's Towers,
The strong abode of Curdmore's haughty kings.
Its frowning battlements o'erhung the sea,
Where in the fair serene of summer days,
Each answering Tower a nether heaven did meet,
And cast its pictured shadow on the waves.
But now, no mild blue sky in gentle grandeur
Did lend its azure covering to the main,
Softening the most majestic work of nature,
Nor even a sunbeam through the rifted cloud
Glanced on the distant wave.
Dull heavy clouds hung in the lower air,
Misty and shapeless, like the humid chaos,
Ere God divided it, and called it water.
The creatures of the deep forgot their prey,
Leaving the upper waves to seek the bottom ;
The flocking sea-fowl homeward bent their flight,
In dusky bands, to cavern'd rock or cliff.
A deadly calm reign'd in the stately woods,
That hung aloft upon the hardy shore ;
The mingled music of the forest ceased
Before the day had run its wonted term,
Yet birds of night forgot their twilight song,
And every creature, whether fierce or tame,
Skulk'd in its hole, seized with unwonted fear.

Nor was that creature styled the lord of earth
Without his fear ; that secret worst of fears,
The mind unknowing what it has to dread.
Fenced in the seeming safety of his home,
Man's sometime-haughty spirit sank within him,
And dark uncertainty of ill unseen
Increased the sombre gloom of Tora's Halls.
The sullen watch did lean upon their arms,
With quicken'd breath half-check'd and listening
ear,

In expectation of some unknown thing.
Each smother'd in his breast his untold fears
And wish'd within himself the hours might speed,
But that the night with tenfold horror came,
To close the frightful day.
No cheerful converse graced the evening board,
Slow went the goblet round, each face was grave :
And ere the first dark watch fulfill'd its term,
All were retired to rest in Tora's Halls.

Sleep came, and closed full many a weary eye,
But not that gentle kindly visitor,
That oftentimes bringeth to the poor man's cot
More wealth than e'er enjoy'd his haughty lord ;
Or to the couch of the dejected lover
Brings true love-knots, and kind remembrances,
And cheering glances, making him by night
The favour'd man he fain would be by day ;
Nor yet that haggard tyrant of the night,
Who comes oftentimes to shake the ill man's bed,
Tearing him from his heaps of silk and down
To hang his quivering carcass o'er the gulf,
Or through the air by foul fiends goaded on
Bears him with dizzy, furious speed along ;
But she, stiff shrouded in her blackest weed,
And swathed with leaden bands, awful and still,
Who by the couch of the condemned wretch,
Harass'd and spent, before the morning breaks,
Whose setting sun he never shall behold,
Oft takes her stand, and scarce is known from
death.

But still the red lamp, pendent from the roof,
Did cast its trembling and unjoyous light
Athwart the lofty chamber of the king ;
For he alone felt not her weighty power.
A load of cares lay heavy at his heart ;
His thoughtful eyes were bent upon the ground ;
And the unsuiting gravity of age
Had sadly sober'd o'er his cheek of youth,
That newly blush'd beneath a galling crown.

Long had his warlike father ruled the land,
Whose vengeful bloody sword no scabbard knew.
Wild was his fury in the field of battle,
And dreadful was his wrath to nations round,
But kind and glowing yearn'd his manly heart
To the brave hardy sons of his blue hills.
He own'd a friend and brother of the field
In each broad-chested brawny warrior,
Who follow'd to the fight his daring steps.
One deed of fame, done by a son of Curdmore,
He prized more than the wealth of peaceful realms,
And dealt them death and ruin in his love.
Unshaped and rude the state, and knew no law,
Save that plain sense, which nature gives to all,
Of right and wrong within the monarch's breast ;
And when no storm of passion shook his soul,
It was a court of mildest equity.

One distant nation only in the field
Could meet his boasted arms with equal strength.
Impetuous, rushing from their mountains rude,
Oft had they striven like two adverse winds,
That bursting from their pent and narrow glens,
On the wide desert meet, — in wild contention
Tossing aloft in air dun clouds of sand,
Tearing the blasted herbage from its bed,
And bloating the clear face of beauteous heaven

With the dissever'd fragments of the earth,
Till spent their force, low growling they retire,
And for a time within their caverns keep,
Gathering new force with which they issue forth
To rage and roar again. — So held they strife.
But e'en while Corvan gloried in his might,
Death came and laid him low.

His spear was hung high in the sombre hall,
Whose lofty walls with darkening armour clad
Spoke to the valiant of departed heroes,
A fellow now to those which rest ungrasp'd,
Unburnished, and know no master's hand.
A hardy people, scatter'd o'er the hills,
And wild uncultivated plains of Curdmore,
Depending more upon to-morrow's chace,
Than on the scanty produce of their fields,
Where the proud warrior, as debased by toil,
Throws down unwillingly his boasted weapons,
To mar the mossy earth with his rude tillage,
Bedding his dwarfish grain in tracks less deep
Than he would plough the bosom of a foe ;
A people rude but generous now look'd up,
With wistful and expecting eyes, to Allener,
The son of their beloved, their only hope.
The general burthen, though but new to care,
Was laid on him. His heart within him whisper'd
That he was left in rough and perilous times,
Like elder brother of a needy race,
To watch and care for all, and it was thoughtful ;
Sombre and thoughtful as unjoyous age.
But never had he felt his mind so dark,
As in this heavy and mysterious hour.

With drooping head and arms cross'd o'er his
breast,
His spirit all collected in itself,
As it had ceased to animate the body,
He sat, when, like pent air from a dank cave,
He felt a cold and shivering wind pass o'er him,
And from his sinking bosom raised his head.
A thick and mazy mist had fill'd the chamber,
Through which the feeble lamp its blue flame show'd
With a pale moony circlet compass'd round,
As when the stars through dank unwholesome air
Show through the night their blunted heads,
enlarged,
Foretelling plagues to some affrighted land.
When, lo ! a strange light, breaking through the
gloom,
Struck his astonish'd mind with awe and wonder.
It rose before him in a streamy column,
As, seen upon the dim benighted ocean,
By partial moon-beams through some sever'd cloud,
The towering, wan, majestic waterspout
Delights and awes the wondering mariner.

Soul-awed within himself shrank Curdmore's king ;
Thick beat his fluttering heart against his breast,

As towards him the moving light approach'd,
While opening by degrees its beamy sides
A mighty phantom show'd his awful form,
Gigantic, far above the sons of men.
A robe of watery blue in wreathy folds
Did lightly float o'er his majestic limbs :
Firm in their strength more than was ever pictured
Of fabled heroes in their fields of war.
One hand was wide outstretch'd in threaten'd act,
As if to draw down vengeance from the skies ;
The other, spread upon his ample breast,
Seem'd to betoken what restrain'd its fellow.
Thus far to mortal eye he stood reveal'd,
But misty vapour shrouded all above,
Save that a ruddy glow did oft break through
With hasty flash, according with the vehemence
And agitation of the form beneath,
Speaking the terrors of that countenance
The friendly darkness veil'd.
Commotions strange disturb'd the heaving earth.
A hollow muffled rumbling from beneath
Roll'd deeply in its dark and secret course.
The castle trembled on its rocky base ;
And loosen'd fragments from the nodding towers
Fell on the flinty ground with hideous crash.
The bursting gates against the portal rang,
And windows clatter'd in their trembling walls ;
While as the phantom trode, far echoing loud,
The smitten pavement gave a fearful sound.
He stopp'd, the trembling walls their motions ceased,
The earth was still ; he raised his awful voice.

“ Thou creature, set o'er creatures like thyself,
To bear the rule for an appointed season,
Bethink thee well, and commune with thy heart.
If one man's blood can mark the unblest front,
And visit with extreme of inward pangs
The dark breast of the secret murderer,
Canst thou have strength all singly in thyself
To bear the blood of thousands on thy head,
And wrongs which cry to heaven and shall be
heard ?

Kings to the slaughter lead their people forth,
And home return again with thinned bands,
Bearing to every house its share of mourning,
Whilst high in air they hang their trophied spoils,
And call themselves the heroes of the earth.

“ Thy race is stain'd with blood : such were thy
fathers :

But they are pass'd away and have their place,
And thou still breathest in thy weeds of clay ;
Therefore to thee their doom is veil'd in night.
Yet mayst thou be assured, that mighty Power
Who gave to thee thy form of breathing flesh,
Of such like creatures as thyself endow'd,
Although innumerable on this earth,
Doth knowledge take, and careth for the least,
And will prepare His vengeance for the man

Whose wasteful pride uproots what he hath sown,
 And now he sets two paths before thy choice,
 Which are permitted thee : even thou thyself
 Mayst fix thy doom,—a doom which cannot change.
 Wilt thou draw out securely on thy throne
 A life of such content and happiness
 As thy wild country and rude people yield,
 Laying thee late to rest in peaceful age,
 Where thy forefathers sleep ; thy name respected,
 Thy children after thee to fill thy seat ?
 Or wilt thou, as thy secret thoughts incline,
 Across the untried deep conduct thy bands,
 Attack the foe on their unguarded coast,
 O'ercome their strength at little cost of blood,
 And raise thy trophies on a distant shore,
 Where none of all thy race have footing gain'd,—
 Gaining for Curdmore wealth, and power, and fame,
 But not that better gain, content and happiness ?
 Wealth, power, renown, thou mayst for Curdmore
 earn,

But mayst not live to see her rising state :
 For far from hence, upon that hostile shore,
 A sepulchre which owns no kindred bone,
 Gapes to receive thee in the pride of youth.
 This is the will of heaven : then choose thy fate ;
 Weak son of earth, I leave thee to thy troubles ;
 A little while shall make us more alike,
 A spirit shalt thou be when next we meet."

It vanish'd. Black mist thicken'd where it stood,
 A hollow sounding wind rush'd through the
 chamber,
 And rent in twain the deep embodied darkness
 Which, curling round in many a pitchy volume,
 On either side, did slowly roll away,
 Like two huge waves of death.

And now the waving banners of the castle
 In early breath of morn began to play,

And faintly through the lofty windows look'd
 The doubtful grey-light on the silent chambers.
 Sleep's deadly heaviness fled with the night,
 And lighter airy fancies of the dawn
 Confusedly floated in the half-waked mind,
 Till roused with fuller beams of powerful light,
 Up sprang the dreamers from their easy beds,
 And saw with a relieved and thankful heart
 The fair blue sky, the uncapp'd distant hills,
 The woods, and streams, and valleys brightening
 gladly
 In the blest light of heaven.

But neither hill, nor vale, nor wood, nor stream,
 Nor yet the sun high riding in his strength,
 That beauty gave to all, cheer'd Allener,
 Who wist not when it rose, nor when it set.
 Silent but troubled in his lofty chamber
 Two days he sat and shunn'd the searching eyes,
 The sidelong looks of many a friendly chief.
 Oft in his downcast eye the round tear hung,
 Whilst by his side he clench'd his trembling hand,
 As if to rouse the ardour of his soul.
 His seat beneath him shook,—high heaved his
 breast,

And burst the bracings of its tighten'd vestment.
 The changing passions of his troubled soul
 Pass'd with dark speed across his varied face ;
 Each passing shadow follow'd by a brother,
 Like clouds across the moon in a wild storm :
 So warr'd his doubtful mind, till by degrees
 The storm subsided, calmer thoughts prevail'd ;
 Slow wore the gloom away like morning mist ;
 A gleam of joy spread o'er his lighten'd visage,
 And from his eye-balls shot that vivid fire
 Which kindles in the bosoms of the brave,
 When the loud trumpet calls them forth to battle.
 " Gird on mine armour," said the rising youth,
 " I am the son of Corvan !"

MISCELLANEOUS POETRY

WRITTEN SINCE THE YEAR 1790.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Thou pleasant noble Bard, of fame far spread,
 Now art thou gather'd to the mighty dead,
 And the dark coffin and the girdling mould
 All that of thee is perishable, hold.
 Mourners and mutes and weeping friends are gone ;
 The pageant's closed, and thou art left alone ;

The cover'd treasure of a sacred spot,
 That in the course of time shall never be forgot.

Soon those who loved, admired, and honoured thee,
 In death's still garner-house will gathered be ;
 And great their number is, who have with pride
 Look'd in thy manly face, sat by thy side,
 And heard thy social converse,— words of cheer,
 And words of power to charm the listening ear !

At death's despotic summons will they come,
 Each in his turn from many a different home :
 From town and muirland, cot and mansion warm,
 The regal palace, and the homely farm.
 Soldier and lawyer, merchant, priest and peer,
 The squire, the laird of forty pounds a-year,
 The crowned monarch and the simple hind,
 Did all in thee a meet companion find.

For thee the peasant's wife her elbow chair,
 Smiling a welcome, kindly set, and there
 With fair exchange of story, saw and jest,
 Thou wast to her a free and pleasant guest ;
 While nature, undisguised, repaid thee well
 For time so spent. She and her mate could tell
 Unawed, to such a man, their inmost mind ;
 They claim'd thee as their own, their kin, their kind.
 From nature's book thou couldst extract a store,
 More precious than the scholar's classic lore.

And how felt he, whose early rhymes had been
 To perilous inspection given, and seen
 By one whose brows were graced from every land,
 With chaplets twined by many a skilful hand ?
 How beat his heart, as with the morning ray,
 To Abbotsford he took his anxious way,
 Imagining what shortly he must see,
 Him in whose presence he so soon will be ?
 And how felt he, thy study's threshold pass'd,
 When on thy real face his eyes were cast ?
 Thine open brow with glow of fancy heated ;
 Thy puring cat upon the table seated ;
 Thy sleeping hound that hath his easy lair
 Close on the precincts of his master's chair ;
 The honest welcome of that sudden smile,
 And outstretch'd hand, misgiving thoughts beguile.
 But when thy cheerful greeting met his ear,
 "Fie on thee! foolish heart, a man like this to fear!"
 Thou wast to him, when blush'd the eastern sky,
 A sage of awful mien and lofty eye ;
 When noon-day heat called forth th' industrious bee,
 Thou wast the monitor both kind and free ;
 But when the changeful day was at an end,
 Thou wast his easy cheerful host, — his friend.

When all whose eyes have e'er beheld thy face,
 Departed are to their long resting-place,
 Thou wilt exist in all thy magic then,
 The cherish'd, speaking friend of living men.
 In torrid climes, in regions cold and bleak,
 In every land and language wilt thou speak.
 Within the sick man's curtain'd couch thou'lt dwell ;
 Within the languid prisoner's cheerless cell ;
 Within the seaman's cabin, where the sound
 Of many leagues of water murmurs round.
 The buoyant school-boy will forego his play,
 In secret nook alone with thee to stray ;
 The sober sage wise tomes will cast aside,
 An hour with thee — a pleasant hour to bide.

Men of all nations, of all creeds, all ranks,
 Will owe to thee an endless meed of thanks,
 Which more than in thy passing, checker'd day
 Of mortal life, they will delight to pay.
 For who shall virtuous sympathies resign,
 Or feed foul fancies from a page of thine ?
 No, none! thy writings as thy life are pure,
 And their fair fame and influence will endure.

Not so with those whose perverse skill portrays
 Distorted, blighting passions ; and displays,
 Wild, maniac, selfish fiends to be admired,
 As heroes with sublimest ardour fired.
 Such are, to what thy faithful pen hath traced,
 With all the shades of varied nature graced,
 Like grim cartoons, for Flemish looms prepared,
 To Titian's or Murillo's forms compared ;
 Stately or mean, theirs still are forms of truth,
 Charming unlearn'd and learned — age and youth :
 Not ecstasies express'd in critic phrase,
 But silent smiles of pleasure speak their praise.

When those, who now thy recent death deplore,
 Lie in the dust, thought of and known no more,
 As poet and romancer, thy great name
 Will brightly shine with undiminish'd fame ;
 And future sons of fancy fondly strive
 To their compatriots works like thine to give.
 But of the many who on her wide sea
 Shall boldly spread their sails to follow thee,
 More as romancers on thy track will gain,
 Than those who emulate the poet's strain.
 A tale like Waverley we yet may con,
 But shall we read a lay like Marmion ?
 And fearlessly I say it, though I know
 The voice of public favour says not so :
 For story-telling is an art, I ween,
 Which hath of old most fascinating been,
 And will be ever, — strong in ready power,
 To combat languor and the present hour ;
 And o'er these common foes will oft prevail,
 When Homer's theme and Milton's song would fail.
 But strong in both, there is in sooth no need
 Against thy left hand for thy right to plead :
 Think as we list, one truth, alas! is plain,
 We ne'er shall look upon thy like again.

Thy country, bounded by her subject sea,
 Adds to her fame by giving birth to thee ;
 In distant lands yon fancied group behold,
 Where busy traders meet in quest of gold ;
 Motley and keen, all gather'd round a youth,
 Who simply stands unconscious of the truth,
 Look at him wistfully, and hark, they speak —
 The Turk and Jew, Armenian and Greek,
 Their rapid lips the whisper'd words betraying —
 "He's from the land of Walter Scott," they're
 saying.
 That Caledonian, too, with more good will
 They greet as of thy closer kindred still :

But who is he, who, standing by their side,
Raises his head with quickly-kindled pride,
As if he meant to look the others down ?
Ay ; he is from thine own romantic town.

Thou art in time's long course a land-mark high,
A beacon blazing to the nether sky,
To which, as far and wide it shoots its rays,
Landsmen and mariners, with wistful gaze,
From ship, and shore, and mountain turn their
sight,
And hail the glorious signal of the night.

Oh Dryburgh ! often trod by pilgrim feet
Shall be thy hallow'd turf ; solemn and sweet,
Will be the gentle sorrow utter'd there,
The whisper'd blessing and the quiet prayer.
Flower, herb, or leaf by children yet unborn
Will often from thy verdant turf be torn,
And kept in dear memorial of the place
Where thou art laid with a departed race ;
Where every thing around, tower, turret, tree,
River, and glen, and mountain, wood and lea,
And ancient ruin, by the moonlight made
More stately with alternate light and shade,
Thy once beloved Melrose, — all speak of thee,
With mingled voices through the gale of morn,
Of evening, noon, and night, most sadly borne,
A dirge-like wailing, a mysterious moan,
That sadly seems to utter " He is gone ! "

To God's forgiving mercy and his love —
To fellowship with blessed souls above —
Bright hosts redeem'd by Him whose voice of hope
Revealed th' immortal spirit's boundless scope —
We leave thee, though within its narrow cell,
Thy honour'd dust must for a season dwell —
Our friend, our bard, our brother, — fare thee well !

Hampstead, November, 1832.

EPILOGUE

TO THE THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION AT
STRAWBERRY HILL.

WRITTEN BY JOANNA BAILLIE, AND SPOKEN BY THE
HON. ANNE S. DAMER, NOVEMBER, 1800.

WHILE fogs along the Thames' damp margin creep,
And cold winds through his leafless willows sweep ;
While fairy elves, whose summer sport had been
To foot it lightly on the moonlight green,
Now, hooded close, in many a covering form,
Troop with the surly spirits of the storm ;
While by the blazing fire, with saddled nose,
The sage turns o'er his leaves of tedious prose,
And o'er their new-dealt cards, with eager eye,
Good dowagers exult, or inly sigh,

And blooming maids from silken work-bags pour
(Like tangled sea-weed on the vexed shore)
Of patchwork, netting, fringe, a strange and motley
store ;

While all, attempting many a different mode,
Would from their shoulders hitch time's heavy load,
This is our choice, in comic sock bedight,
To wrestle with a long November night. —
" In comic sock ! " methinks indignant cries
Some grave fastidious friend with angry eyes,
Scowling severe, " No more the phrase abuse ;
So shod, indeed there had been some excuse ;
But in these walls, a once well-known retreat,
Where taste and learning kept a favourite seat,
Where Gothic arches with a solemn shade
Should o'er the thoughtful mind their influence
spread ;

Where pictures, vases, busts, and precious things
Still speak of sages, poets, heroes, kings,
On which the stranger looks with pensive gaze,
And thinks upon the worth of other days :
Like foolish children, in their mimic play,
Confined at grandame's in a rainy day,
With paltry farce and all its bastard train,
Grotesque and broad, such precincts to profane !
It is a shame ! — But no, I will not speak,
I feel the blood rise mantling to my cheek."

Indeed, wise sir ! —
But he who o'er our heads those arches bent,
And stored these relics dear to sentiment,
More mild than you with grave pedantic pride,
Would not have ranged him on your surly side.

But now to you, who on our frolic scene,
Have look'd well pleased, and gentle critics been ;
Nor would our homely humour proudly spurn,
To you the good, the gay, the fair, I turn,
And thank you all. If here our feeble powers
Have lightly wing'd for you some wintry hours ;
Should these remember'd scenes in fancy live,
And to some future minutes pleasure give,
To right good end we've worn our mummung guise,
And we're repaid and happy — ay, and wise.
Who says we are not, on his sombre birth
Gay fancy smiled not, nor heart-light'ning mirth :
Home let him hie to his unsocial rest,
And happy sit the nightmare on his breast !

THE BANISHED MAN.

ON A DISTANT VIEW OF HIS COUNTRY, WHICH HE
IS QUITTING FOR EVER.

DEAR distant land, whose mountains blue
Still bound this wild and watery view, —
Dear distant land, where fate has thrown
All that my heart delights to own !

Blest be yon gleam of partial light,
Which gives thee to my parting sight !

Those well-known cliffs, whose shadows throw
Soft coolness o'er the beach below,
Where I so oft, a happy child,
Picking or shell or weed, beguiled
Light reckless hours, that pass'd away,
Like night-sparks on the briny spray,—
Dear pleasant shore, thy sandy bed,
These feet unblest no more shall tread !

Still thy rich vales with autumn's store,
And cheerful hamlets mottled o'er ;
Thy up-land peaks whose stately forms
Are mantled oft in gathering storms ;
Thy blue streams widening on their way,
Thy broad lakes gleaming to the day ;
Thy smoking towns, whose towers of war
And dusky spires are seen afar,
Thy children's boastful pride will raise,
And fix the admiring stranger's gaze,—
But now, for ever lost to me,
These eyes unblest no more shall see.

Thy wild pipe, touch'd with rustic hands,
Thy reapers' song from merry bands,
Thy boatman's call and dashing oar,
Thy falling torrent's deafening roar,
Thy busy city's humming sound,
With all its sweet bells chiming round,
Far, on a strange and cheerless shore,
These ears unblest shall hear no more.

Happy is he, beyond all gain,
Who holds in thee his free domain,
And roves with careless feet at will
O'er his paternal mead and hill,
And stores the fruit his harvests yield
From his own orchard and his field !
Happy is he who leads at dawn
His harness'd steers across thy lawn !
Yea, happy he, bent down with toil,
Whose glistening brow bedews thy soil !

How gently heaves the evening sea,
As all things homeward tend to thee !
Borne lightly on the gentle gale,
Now homeward points each little sail ;
Far, screaming from their airy height,
The sea-fowl homeward take their flight ;
The floating plank and spreading weed.
Upon the setting current speed ;
The light cloud passes on the wind,
While I alone am left behind.

Ah, woe is me ! where shall I stray,
And whither bend my reckless way ?

A waste of world before me lies,
But in the thought my spirit dies.
There is no home nor joy for me,
My native land, removed from thee.
For me the sun of heaven doth shine
Upon no hills, no plains, but thine ;
For me the voice of kindness sounds
Only within thy cheerful bounds.

Rise, surgy deep ; ye wild winds, blow,
And whelm my bark these waves below !
Then bear me to my native land,
A breathless corse upon her strand :
Some hand, in pity of the dead,
Will lay her greensward on my head,
And there for ever let me rest,
As sleeps the froward child, still'd on his mother's
breast !

TO A CHILD.

WHOSE imp art thou, with dimpled cheek,
And curly pate, and merry eye,
And arm and shoulder round and sleek,
And soft and fair ? — thou urchin sly !

What boots it who with sweet caresses
First call'd thee his, — or squire or hind ?
Since thou in every wight that passes,
Dost now a friendly play-mate find.

Thy downcast glances, grave, but cunning,
As fringed eye-lids rise and fall ;
Thy shyness, swiftly from me running,
Is infantine coquetry all.

But far a-field thou hast not flown ;
With-mocks and threats, half-lisp'd, half-spoken,
I feel thee pulling at my gown,
Of right good will thy simple token.

And thou must laugh and wrestle too,
A mimic warfare with me waging ;
To make, as wily lovers do,
Thy after-kindness more engaging.

The wilding rose, sweet as thyself,
And new-cropt daisies are thy treasure :
I'd gladly part with worldly pelf
To taste again thy youthful pleasure.

But yet, for all thy merry look,
Thy frisks and wiles, the time is coming,
When thou shalt sit in cheerless nook,
The weary spell or horn-book thumbing.

Well; let it be!—through weal and wo,
 Thou knowst not now thy future range;
 Life is a motley, shifting show,
 And thou a thing of hope and change!

SONG

(TO THE SCOTCH AIR OF "MY NANNY O.")

Wi' lang-legg'd Tam the broose I tried,
 Though best o' foot, what wan he O?
 The first kiss of the blowzy bride,
 But I the heart of Nanny O.

Like swallow wheeling round her tower,
 Like rock-bird round her cranny O,
 Sinsyne I hover near her bower,
 And list and look for Nanny O.

I'm nearly wild, I'm nearly daft,
 Wad fain be douce, but canna' O;
 There's ne'er a laird of muir or craft,
 Sae blithe as I wi' Nanny O.

She's sweet, she's young, she's fair, she's good,
 The brightest maid of many O,
 Though a' the world our love withstood,
 I'd woo and win my Nanny O.

Her angry mither scaulds sae loud,
 And darkly glooms her granny O;
 But think they he can e'er be cow'd,
 Wha loves and lives for Nanny O?

The spae-wife on my loof that blink't
 Is but a leeing ranny O,
 For weel kens she my fate is link't
 In spite of a' to Nanny O.

LONDON.

It is a goodly sight through the clear air,
 From Hampstead's heathy height to see at once
 England's vast capital in fair expanse,
 Towers, belfrics, lengthen'd streets, and structures
 fair.

St. Paul's high dome amidst the vassal bands
 Of neighb'ring spires, a regal chieftain stands,
 And over fields of ridgy roofs appear,
 With distance softly tinted, side by side,
 In kindred grace, like twain of sisters dear,
 The Towers of Westminster, her Abbey's pride;
 While, far beyond, the hills of Surrey shine
 Through thin soft haze, and show their wavy line.

View'd thus, a goodly sight! but when survey'd
 Through denser air when moisten'd winds prevail,
 In her grand panoply of smoke array'd,
 While clouds aloft in heavy volumes sail,
 She is sublime.—She seems a curtain'd gloom
 Connecting heaven and earth,—a threaten'g sign
 of doom.

With more than natural height, rear'd in the sky
 'Tis then St. Paul's arrests the wondering eye;
 The lower parts in swathing mist conceal'd,
 The higher through some half spent shower reveal'd,
 So far from earth removed, that well, I trow,
 Did not its form man's artful structure show,
 It might some lofty alpine peak be deem'd,
 The eagle's haunt, with cave and crevice seam'd.
 Stretch'd wide on either hand, a rugged screen,
 In lurid dimness, nearer streets are seen
 Like shoreward billows of a troubled main,
 Arrested in their rage. Through drizzly rain,
 Cataracts of tawny sheen pour from the skies,
 Of furnace smoke black curling columns rise,
 And many tinted vapours, slowly pass
 O'er the wide draping of that pictured mass.

So shows by day this grand imperial town,
 And, when o'er all the night's black stole is thrown,
 The distant traveller doth with wonder mark
 Her luminous canopy athwart the dark,
 Cast up, from myriads of lamps that shine
 Along her streets in many a starry line:—
 He wondering looks from his yet distant road,
 And thinks the northern streamers are abroad.
 "What hollow sound is that?" approaching near,
 The roar of many wheels breaks on his ear.
 It is the flood of human life in motion!
 It is the voice of a tempestuous ocean!
 With sad but pleasing awe his soul is fill'd,
 Scarce heaves his breast, and all within is still'd,
 As many thoughts and feelings cross his mind,—
 Thoughts, mingled, melancholy, undefined,
 Of restless, reckless man, and years gone by,
 And Time fast wending to Eternity.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF WILLIAM
 SOTHEY, ESQ.

LEARNING and fancy were combined
 To stimulate his manly mind;
 Open, generous, and acute,
 Steady of purpose, in pursuit
 Ardent and hopeful; all the while
 In child-like ignorance of guile.
 There are who say that envy lurks conceal'd
 Where genius strives, by slightest traits reveal'd,
 A truth, if truth it be, by him forgot,
 He turn'd his eyes away and saw it not.

Success in others, frank and free,
 He hail'd with words of friendly glee.
 Praise given to them he could not feel
 Did aught from his own portion steal ;
 And when offence, design'd and rude,
 Did on his peaceful path obtrude,
 He soon forgave the paltry pain,
 Nor could resentment in his breast retain.

His was the charity of right goodwill,
 That loves, confides, believes and thinks no ill.
 He, by his Saviour's noble precepts led,
 Still follow'd what was right with heart and head.
 Religion did with lofty honour dwell
 Within his bosom's sacred cell.

But said I learning did in him agree
 With fancy, union rare ! how could it be ?
 His eighteenth year beheld him fondly cheering
 His warlike steed and on its back careering ;

A gay dragon with spur on heel,
 And brandish'd blade of flashing steel ;
 With wealth at will, the world before him,
 To go where whim or fashion bore him ;
 No friendly tutor by his side,
 His academic course to guide ;
 No classic honours to invite,
 No emulation to excite.

But, in default of these, his soul
 With native fire supplied the whole ;
 And neither Hall nor College claim
 Honour from him, whose honour'd name
 Shall henceforth with the highest stand,
 The most efficient scholars of our land.
 To him what meed of thanks th' unlearned owe !
 And e'en the learned, who best his merits know.
 With Homer, Virgil, Wieland, all converse
 Like true compatriots in his pliant verse.
 Pliant, but elevated, graceful, bold,
 And worthy of the Bards of old.

Nor will we thanklessly peruse
 The beauties of his native muse,
 Where lofty thoughts and feelings sweet,
 And moral truths commingling meet,
 Where fancy spreads her absent scene,
 The flowery mead, the forest green ;
 The plains, the mountain peaks, the fanes sublime,
 The ruins long revered of Italy's fair clime.
 Yea, thanks be his, heart-given and kind,
 For all his pen has left behind !

Though bitters in his cup were mix'd,
 And in his heart sharp arrows fix'd,
 The current of his life ran clear ;
 With virtuous love and duteous children blest,
 He journey'd onward to the Christian's rest,
 And happy was his long career.
 Social and joyous to the end,
 Around him gather'd many a friend,

Whose minds his dear remembrance hold,
 Though seventy years and more
 His head had silver'd o'er,
 As one who ne'er was old.
 Rejoicing in his well-earn'd fame,
 They oft repeat his honour'd name,
 And as their thoughts on all his virtues dwell,
 With sorrow, cheer'd and sweet, bid him a last
 farewell.

VERSES TO OUR OWN FLOWERY KIRTLED SPRING.

WELCOME, sweet time of buds and bloom, renewing
 The earliest objects of delight, and wooing
 The notice of the grateful heart ! for then
 Long hidden, beauteous friends are seen again ;
 From the cleft soil, like babes from cradle peeping,
 At the glad light, where soundly they've been
 sleeping ;
 Like chickens in their downy coats, just freeing
 From the chipp'd shell, their new-found active
 being ;
 Like spotted butterfly, its wings up-rearing,
 Half from the bursting chrysalis appearing.
 Sweet season, so bedight, so gay, so kind,
 Right welcome to the sight and to the mind !

Now many a "thing that pretty is" delays
 The wanderer's steps beneath the sun's soft rays ;
 Gay daffodils, bent o'er the watery gleam,
 Doubling their flicker'd image in the stream ;
 The woody nook where bells of brighter blue
 Have clothed the ground in heaven's ethereal hue ;
 The lane's high sloping bank, where pale primrose
 With hundreds of its gentle kindred blows ;
 And speckled daisies that on uplands bare
 Their round eyes opening, scatter gladness there.
 Man looks on Nature with a grateful smile,
 And thinks of Nature's bounteous Lord the while.

Now urchins range the brake in joyous bands,
 With new-cull'd nosebags in their dimpled hands.
 The cottage maid her household task-work cheats
 In mead or glen to pick the choicest sweets,
 With skilful care preserved for Sunday morn,
 Her bosom's simple kerchief to adorn.
 And e'en the beldame, as with sober tread,
 She takes her sunning in the grassy mead,
 Stoops down with eager look and finds, well
 pleased,
 Such herbs, as in a chest or Bible squeezed,
 In former days were deem'd, by folks of sense,
 A fragrant wholesome virtue to dispense,
 And oft on rafter'd roof, in bunches strung,
 With other winter stores were duly hung.

But not alone in simple scenes like these,
 Thy beauteous offspring our soothed senses please ;
 I' the city's busy streets, by rich men's doors,
 On whose white steps the flower-girl sets her stores,
 In wicker basket group'd to lure the sight,
 They stop and tempt full many a wistful wight,
 Flowers though they be by artful culture bred,
 Upon the suburb seedsman's crowded bed,
 By fetid manure cherish'd, gorgeous, bright,
 Like civic madams dress'd for festive night,
 Anemonies of crimson, purple, yellow,
 And tulips streak'd with colours rich and mellow,
 Brown wallflowers and jonquils of golden glare,
 In dapper posies tied like shop-man's ware,
 Yet still they whisper something to the heart,
 Which feelings kind and gentle thoughts impart.

Gay sight ! that oft a touch of pleasure gives
 E'en to the saddest, rudest soul that lives —
 Gay sight ! the passing carman grins thereat,
 And sticks a purchased posie in his hat,
 And cracks his whip and treads the rugged streets
 With waggish air, and jokes with all he meets :
 The sickly child from nursery window spies
 The tempting show and for a nosegay cries,
 Which placed in china mug, by linnet's cage,
 Will for a time his listless mind engage :
 The dame precise moves at the flower-girl's cry,
 Laying her patch-work or her netting by,
 And from the parlour window casts her eye,
 Then sends across the way her tiny maid ;
 And presently on mantelpiece display'd,
 Between fair ornaments of china ware,
 Small busts and lacker'd parrots station'd there,
 Tulips, anemonies, and wallflowers shine,
 And strangely with their new compeers combine
 Each visitor with wonder to excite,
 Who looks and smiles and lauds the motley sight :
 That even to the prison's wretched thrall,
 Those simple gems of nature will recall.
 What soothes the sadness of his dreary state,
 Yon narrow windows, through whose iron grate
 A squalid countenance is dimly traced,
 Gazing on flowers in broken pitcher placed
 Upon the sooty sill, and withering there,
 Sad emblems of himself ! most piteously declare.

Of what in gentle lady's curtain'd room,
 On storied stands and gilded tripods bloom,
 The richest, rarest flowers of every clime,
 Whose learned names suit not my simple rhyme,
 I speak not ! lovely as they are, we find
 They visit more the senses than the mind.
 Their nurture comes not from the clouds of heaven,
 But from a painted watering-pot is given ;
 And, in return for daily care, with faint
 And sickly sweetness hall and chamber taint.
 I will not speak of those ; we feel and see
 They have no kindred, our own Spring, with thee !

Welcome, sweet season ! though with rapid pace
 Thy course is run, and we can scarcely grace
 Thy joyous coming with a grateful cheer,
 Ere loose-leaved flowers and leaflets shrunk and
 sere,
 And flaccid bending stems, sad bodings ! tell
 We soon must bid our fleeting friend farewell.

LINES TO A PARROT.

In these our days of sentiment
 When youthful poets all lament
 Some dear lost joy, some cruel maid ;
 Old friendship changed and faith betray'd ;
 The world's cold frown and every ill
 That tender hearts with anguish fill ;
 Loathing this world and all its folly,
 In lays most musical and melancholy, —
 Touching a low and homely string,
 May poet of a Parrot sing
 With dignity uninjured ? say ! —
 No ; but a simple rhymester may.
 Well then, I see thee calm and sage,
 Perch'd on the summit of thy cage,
 With broad, hook'd beak, and plumage green,
 Changing to azure in the light,
 Gay pinions tipp'd with scarlet bright,
 And, strong for mischief, use or play,
 Thick talons, crisp'd with silver gray, —
 A gallant bird, I ween !

What courtly dame, for ball-room drest —
 What garter'd lord in silken vest —
 On wedding morn what country bride
 With groom bedizen'd by her side —
 What youngsters in their fair-day gear,
 Did ever half so fine appear ?
 Alas ! at ball, or church, or fair,
 Were ne'er assembled visions rare
 Of moving creatures all so gay
 As in thy native woods, where day
 In blazing torrid brightness play'd
 Through checker'd boughs, and gently made
 A ceaseless morris-dance of sheen and shade !
 In those blest woods, removed from man,
 Thy early being first began,
 'Mid gay compeers, who, blest as thou,
 Hopp'd busily from bough to bough,
 Robbing each loaded branch at pleasure
 Of berries, buds, and kernel'd treasure.
 Then rose aloft with outspread wing,
 Then stoop'd on flexile twig to swing,
 Then coursed and circled through the air,
 Mate chasing mate, full many a pair.
 It would have set one's heart a-dancing
 To've seen their varied feathers glancing,

And thought how many happy things
Creative Goodness into being brings.

But now how changed ! it is thy doom
Within a wall'd and window'd room
To hold thy home, and (all forgot
The traces of thy former lot),
Clutching the wires with progress slow,
Still round and round thy cage to go ;
Or cross the carpet :—alter'd case !
This now is all thy daily travel's space.

Yet here thou art a cherish'd droll,
Known by the name of Pretty Poll ;
Oft fed by lady's gentle hand
With sops and sugar at command,
And sometimes too a nut or cherry,
Which in thy claws to beak and eye
Thou seemst to raise right daintily,
Turning it oft, as if thou still
Wert scanning it with cautious skill,
Provoking urchins near to laughter loud and merry.
See, gather'd round, a rosy band,
With eager upcast eyes they stand,
Marking thy motions and withal
Delighting on thy name to call ;
And hear, like human speech, reply
Come from thy beak most curiously.
They shout, they mow, they grin, they giggle,
Clap hands, hoist arms, and shoulders wriggle ;
O here, well may we say or sing,
That learning is a charming thing !

For thou, 'neath thy wire-woven dome,
A learned creature hast become ;
And hast, by dint of oft repeating,
Got words by rote, the vulgar cheating,
Which, once in ten times well applied,
Are to the skies with praises cried.
So letter'd dunces oft impose
On simple fools their studied prose.
Ay ; o'er thy round though unwigg'd head,
Full many a circling year has sped,
Since thou kept terms within thy college,
From many tutors, short and tall,
In braid or bonnet, cap or caul,
Imbibing wondrous stores of seeming knowledge.
And rarely Bachelor of Arts
Or Master (dare we say it ?) imparts
To others such undoubted pleasure
From all his stores of classic treasure :
And ladies sage, whose learned saws
To cognoscenti friends give laws,
Rarely, I trow, can so excite
A listening circle with delight,
And rarely their acquirements shine
Through such a lengthen'd course as thine.

The grannams of this group so gay,
Who round thee now their homage pay,

Belike have in such youthful glee
With admiration gazed on thee ;
And yet no wrinkled line betrays
The long course of thy lengthen'd days.
Thy bark of life has kept afloat
As on a shoreless sea, where not
Or change or progress may be traced ;
Time hath with thee been leaden-paced.

But ah ! proud beauty, on whose head
Some three-score years no blight have shed,
Untoward days will come at length,
When thou, of spirit reft and strength,
Wilt mope and pine, year after year,
Which all one moulting-time appear,
And this bright plumage, dull and rusty,
Will seem neglected, shrunk and dusty,
And scarce a feather's rugged stump
Be left to grace thy fretted rump.
Mew'd in a corner of thy home,
Having but little heart to roam,
Thou'lt wink and peer—a wayward elf,
And croon and clutter to thyself,
Screaming at visitors with spite,
And opening wide thy beak to bite.

Yet in old age still wilt thou find
Some constant friend thy wants to mind,
Whose voice thou'lt know, whose hand thou'lt
see,
Turning to it thy feather'd cheek ;
Grateful to her, though cross and froward
To all beside, and it will go hard
But she will love thee, e'en when life's last goal
Thou'st reach'd, and call thee still her Pretty Poll.

Now from these lines, young friends*, I know
A lesson might be drawn to show,
How, like our bird, on life's vain stage,
Pass human childhood, prime, and age :
But conn'd comparisons, I doubt,
Might put your patience to the rout,
And all my pains small thanks receive ;
So this to wiser folks I leave.

LINES TO A TEAPOT.

On thy carved sides, where many a vivid dye
In easy progress leads the wandering eye,
A distant nation's manners we behold,
To the quick fancy whimsically told.

The small-eyed beauty and her Mandarin,
Who o'er the rail of garden arbour lean,

* The above was written at the desire of a friend, to be inserted in a collection of Pieces for Children or Young People.

In listless ease ; and rocks of arid brown,
 On whose sharp crags, in gay profusion blown,
 The ample loose-leaved rose appears to grace
 The skilful culture of the wondrous place ;
 The little verdant plat, where with his mate
 The golden pheasant holds his gorgeous state,
 With gaily crested pate and twisted neck,
 Turn'd jauntily his glossy wings to peck ;
 The smooth-streak'd water of a paly grate,
 O'er which the checkerd bridge lends ready way,
 While, by its margin moor'd, the little boat
 Doth with its oars and netted awning float ;
 A scene present all soft delights to take in,
 A paradise for grave Grandee of Pekin.
 With straight small spout, that from thy body fair
 Diverges with a smart vivacious air,
 And round, arch'd handle with gold tracery bound,
 And dome-shaped lid with bud or button crown'd,
 Thou standst complete, fair subject of my rhymes,
 A goodly vessel of the olden times !

But far less pleasure yields this fair display
 Than that enjoy'd upon thy natal day,
 When round the potter's wheel their chins up-
 raising,

An urchin group in silent wonder gazing,
 Stood and beheld, as, touch'd with magic skill,
 The whirling clay was fashion'd to his will,—
 Saw mazy motion stopp'd, and then the toy
 Complete before their eyes, and grin'd for joy ;
 Clapping their naked sides with blythe halloo,
 And curtail'd words of praise, like *ting, tung, too!*
 The brown-skinn'd artist, with his unclothed waist
 And girded loins, who, slow and patient, traced,
 Beneath his humble shed, this fair array
 Of pictured forms upon thy surface gay,
 I will not stop in fancy's sight to place,
 But speed me on my way with quicken'd pace.
 Pack'd in a chest with others of thy kind,
 The sport of waves and every shifting wind,
 The Ocean thou hast cross'd, and thou mayst
 claim

The passing of the Line to swell thy fame,
 With as good observation of the thing
 As some of those who in a hammock swing.

And now thou'rt seen in Britain's polish'd land,
 Held up to public view in waving hand
 Of boastful auctioneer, whilst dames of pride
 In morning farthingals, scarce two yards wide,
 With collar'd lap-dogs snarling in their arms,
 Contend in rival keenness for thy charms.
 And certes well they might, for there they found
 thee

With all thy train of vassal cups around thee,
 A prize which thoughts by day, and dreams by
 night,
 Could dwell on for a week with fresh delight.

Our pleased imagination now pourtrays
 The glory of thy high official days,
 When thou on board of rich japan wast set,
 Round whose supporting table gaily met
 At close of eve, the young, the learn'd, the fair,
 And e'en philosophy and wit were there.
 'Midst basons, cream-pots, cups and saucers small,
 Thou stoodst the ruling chieftain of them all ;
 And e'en the kettle of Potosi's ore,
 Whose ample cell supplied thy liquid store,
 Beneath whose base the sapphire flame was burning,
 Above whose lid the wreathy smoke was turning,
 Though richly chased and burnish'd it might be,
 Was yet, confess'd, subordinate to thee.
 But O ! when beauty's hand thy weight sustain'd,
 The climax of thy glory was attain'd !
 Back from her elevated elbow fell
 Its three-tired ruffle, and display'd the swell
 And gentle rounding of her lily arm,
 The eyes of wistful sage or beau to charm—
 A sight at other times but dimly seen
 Through veiling folds of point or colberteen.
 With pleasing toil, red glow'd her dimpled cheek,
 Bright glanced her eyes beneath her forehead sleek,
 And as she pour'd the beverage, through the room
 Was spread its fleeting, delicate perfume.
 Then did bright wit and cheerful fancy play
 With all the passing topics of the day.
 So delicate, so varied, and so free
 Was the heart's pastime, then inspired by thee,
 That goblet, bowl, or flask could boast no power
 Of high excitement, in their reigning hour,
 Compared to thine ;—red wildfire of the fen,
 To summer moonshine of some fairy glen.

But now the honours of thy course are past,
 For what of earthly happiness may last !
 Although in modern drawing-room, a board
 May fragrant tea from menial hands afford,
 Which, pour'd in dull obscurity hath been,
 From pot of vulgar ware, in nook unseen,
 And pass'd in hasty rounds our eyes before,
 Thou in thy graceful state art seen no more.
 And what the changeful fleeting crowd, who sip
 The unhonour'd beverage with contemptuous lip,
 Enjoy amidst the tangled, giddy maze,
 Their languid eye—their listless air betrays.
 What though at times we see a youthful fair
 By white clothed board her watery drug prepare,
 At further corner of a noisy room,
 Where only casual stragglers deign to come,
 Like tavern's busy bar-maid ; still I say,
 The honours of thy course are pass'd away.

Again hath auctioneer thy value praised,
 Again have rival bidders on thee gazed,
 But not the gay, the young, the frank, I trow !
 No ; sober connoisseurs, with wrinkled brow

And spectacles on nose, thy parts inspect,
 And by grave rules approve thee or reject.
 For all the bliss which china charms afford,
 My lady now has ceded to her lord.
 And wisely too does she forego the prize,
 Since modern pin-money will scarce suffice
 For all the trimmings, flounces, beads and lace,
 The thousand needful things that needs must grace
 Her daily changed attire. — And now on shelf
 Of china closet placed, a chcerless elf,
 Like moody statesman in his rural den,
 From power dismiss'd — like prosperous citizen,
 From shop or change set free — untoward bliss!
 Thou rest'st in most ignoble uselessness.

THE MOODY SEER :

A BALLAD.

“THE sun shines in a cloudless sky,
 The lake is blue and still;
 Up, Flora! on thine errand hie,
 And climb the eyrie hill;

“And tell my ancient kinsman there
 To leave his lonely tower,
 And at our yearly feast to share
 The merry social hour.”

“Oh mother! do not bid me go;
 I scarce can draw my breath,
 When I see his eyes move to and fro,
 His lowering brows beneath;

“His moving lips, that give no sound,
 My very spirits quell,
 When he stares upon the harmless ground
 As 'twere the mouth of hell.”

“Fy, foolish child! — on such a day
 Aught ill thou needst not fear,
 And thy cousin Malcolm will the way
 With tale or ballad cheer.”

The maiden blush'd and turn'd her head,
 And saw young Malcolm near,
 And she thought no more of seath or dread,
 Or the looks of the moody Seer.

And now, bound for the mountain hold,
 The youthful pair are seen,
 He like a stripling frank and bold,
 She like a fairy queen.

With merry songs and merry talk
 The long way cheated he,
 And pluck'd her blue-bells from the stalk,
 And blossoms from the tree.

Time (how they wist not) swiftly ran,
 Till scarcely half a rood
 From the opening gate of the gifted man,
 With beating hearts they stood.

Then issued from that creaking gate
 A figure bent and spare,
 In checker'd garb of ancient state,
 With grizzled, shaggy hair.

By motion, look, and mien, he seem'd
 Of gentle pedigree,
 Well struck with years, you might have deem'd,
 But more with misery.

He raised his face to the youthful pair,
 Gramercy! can it be?
 There passeth a glance of pleasure there,
 And a smile of courtesy.

“My cousin's daughter near my hold!
 Some message kind, I row.
 But no, fair maid, I am too old
 To mix in revels now.

“And who is this so gay and young? —
 No, no! thou needst not tell;
 His mother is from Garelace sprung,
 His sire from bold Glenfell.

“His mother's smile is on his face,
 His father's form I see,
 Those well-knit limbs of active grace,
 Those feet — it cannot be!

“Out, out! mine eyes see falsely! toss'd
 And drifted by the wind,
 Some beldame's kerchief hath been lost,
 And round his brogues hath twined.”

Thus muttering low, with voice unsweet,
 He turn'd his face aside,
 And hastily snatch'd at Malcolm's feet,
 But the close-clutch'd palm was void.*

“Why gropest thou with thy trembling hand?
 Thinkst thou my feet are bound?
 Let loose thy house-guard, famous Brand,
 And I'll out-run the hound.”

* When a person, gifted with the second sight, sees a person who is to die within a year, he perceives the shroud covering his feet; as the time becomes less distant, it appears to cover his body higher, and if the death is close at hand, it

covers his shoulders or his head. In short, the shroud rises gradually higher upon the body as the time for death approaches.

"Ah! swiftest race is soonest o'er,
Like stream of the mountain brook:
Go home, and con some sober lore,
Betake thee to bead and book."

"Yes, I will pray to Mary mild,
And my first request shall be,
That from all fancies grim and wild,
Thou mayst deliver'd be."

Then anger tinged the maid's round cheek—
"Come, Malcolm, come away!
When Hallow-e'en blows chill and bleak,
Macvorely will join our play."

"When Hallow-e'en blows bleak and chill
An old man's seat prepare,
For if life and strength be in him still,
Macvorely will be there."

The old man sigh'd, as down the hill
They took their homeward way,
And he heard afar so loud and shrill
Young Malcolm's joyous lay.

'Tis Hallow-e'en in Flora's home,
Bright shines the fir-wood flame;
From distant halls and holds are come
Maid, youngster, laird, and dame.

Their friets* are tried true love to prove—
Friets taugt by warlock lore,
And mingled lovers gladly move
Upon the crowded floor.

And flaming nuts are keenly watch'd
By many a youthful eye,
And coleworts, from the dark mould snatch'd,
Are borne triumphantly.

Then gay strathspeys are featly danced
To the pibroch's gallant sound,
While the sighted man like one intranced,
In the honour'd chair is found.

But who comes now so buoyantly,
In flaunting kirtle dress'd,
Who snaps her fingers, capers high,
And foots it with the best?

She leaps and crosses, wheels and turns,
Like mawkin on the lea,
Till every kindred bosom burns
Such joyous sight to see.

* Friets, superstitious spells.

Her dark eyes gleam'd, and her ribands stream'd,
And bells and bracelets rung,
And the charm'd rout raised a joyous shout
As her arms aloft she flung.

Out spoke a bachelor, Glenore,
Of threescore years and ten,
And well respected heretofore
By prudent, wary men:

"O were I now as I have been
(Vain wish! alas how vain!)
I would plight my faith to that winsome queen,
And with my freedom twain."

But nought cared she for laugh, or shout,
Or cheers from every tongue;
She circled in, and she circled out,
Through all the yielding throng,

Until before the honour'd chair
With sliding step she came,
And dropp'd a sober curtsy there
To the Seer of elrich fame.

But ah! how different is his face
From those so blithe and boon!
Tears down his cheeks the big tears chase,
Like thunder-drops in June.

"Nay, weep not, kind though hapless Seer;
Forgive my foolish glee,
That, flaunting thus in woman's gear,
Thought to deceive e'en thee.

"I've danced before thee, vain and proud,
In crimson kirtle drest."
"Thou'st danced before me in a shroud,
Raised mid-way to thy breast."

Dull grew the sound of the crowded hall,
Yet Malcolm danced again,
And did for rousing pibrochs call,
But pipers piped in vain.

Before the early cock had crow'd,
Withdrawn was every guest;
Ere on high Ben a sun-beam glow'd,
All were retired to rest.

A goodly ship at anchor rides,
With freight of British store,
And a little boat from her shadow glides,
Swift nearing to the shore.

And, on that shore, kind hearts and true,
Small groups of kinsfolk stand,
To bid a much-loved youth adieu,
Who quits his native land.

There Flora and her mother dear
Heave many a heavy sigh,
And by them is the moody Seer,
With red and lowering eye.

"Weep not, dear aunt!" says the parting wight,
"Weep not, my play-mate sweet!
Hope beckons me to fortune bright,
And we again shall meet.

"And, good Macvorely, send me hence
With thy blessing; on me pour
Some mutter'd spell of sure defence,
When wild waves round me roar.

"This band that round my neck is tied,
Is the gift of a maiden dear,
Fenced with thy potent spell beside,
What danger need I fear?"

"I see no band around thy neck,
But the white shroud gather'd high:
Yon breakers rage, and a stranded wreck
Doth on the dark rocks lie.

"A solemn requiem for the dead
Is the gift I will give to thee;
O that, to save thee, in thy stead,
The same were sung for me!"

Yet still the youth, with parting cheer,
Extends to all his hand;
Embraces those who are most dear,
And hastens from the land.

His form reflected on the wave,
As the lessening boat withdrew,
Of that joyous youth, so boon and brave,
Was their last heart-moving view.

In Flora's home the midnight blast
Rose with a wailing moan,
And all had to their chambers past,
And the maiden sat alone.

She thought of the seaman's perilous case
As the loud gust went and came,
And she gazed on the fire with a woeful face,
And watch'd the flickering flame.

The flickering flame burnt dull and blue,
And the icy chill of fear
Pass'd o'er her head; then well she knew
Some ghastly thing was near.

She turn'd her head the room to scan,
To wot if aught was there;
And she saw a figure wet and wan
Three paces from her chair.

Fix'd were the eyes of its pallid face,
Like those who walk in sleep,
And she started up and pray'd for grace
With a voice suppress'd and deep.

Then gazing on that face, at length,
She knew the features dear;
She spoke,—affection lent her strength,
"Malcolm, how cam'st thou here?"

"How spirits travel, dear, dear maid!
No living wight may know,
But far from hence my corse is laid,
The deep green waves below."

"O Malcolm say, in this world of care
Is there aught I can do for thee?"
"When thou bendest thy knees in humble prayer,
My Flora, pray for me;

"And let my kinsfolk know the fate
Of one so young and vain.
And now farewell, till time's last date,
When we shall meet again."

The figure faded from her sight,
And the angry tempest fell,
And she heard through the stilly air of night
A distant passing bell.

THE MERRY BACHELOR.

(FOUNDED ON THE OLD SCOTCH SONG OF "WILLIE WAS A WANTON WAG.")

WILLIE was a wanton wag,
The blithest lad that e'er I saw;
Of field and floor he was the brag,
And carried a' the gree* awa'.

And was na' Willie stark and keen,
When he gued to the wappen-schaw;
He won the prizes on the green,
And cheer'd the feasters in the ha'.

His head was wise, his heart was leal,
His truth was fair without a flaw;
And aye by every honest chiel
His word was holden as a law.

And was na' Willie still our pride
When, in his gallant gear array'd,
He wan the broose* and kiss'd the bride,
While pipes the wedding welcome play'd.

* Gree, honour or preference.

† Broose, a race at a wedding, the winner being rewarded

with the first kiss of the Bride, and the first ladle-pot of broth.

And aye he led the foremost dance,
Wi' winsome maidens buskit bang,
And gave to each a merry glance
That stole, awhile, her heart awa'.

The bride forgot her simple groom,
And every lass her trysted* Jo;
Yet nae man's brow on Will could gloom,
They liked his rousing blitheness so.

Our good Mess John laugh'd wi' the lave;
The dominie for a' his lere
Could scarcely like himsell behave,
While a' was glee and revel there.

A joyous sight was Willie's face,
Baith far and near in ilka spot;
In ha' received wi' kindly grace,
And welcomed to the lowly cot.

The carline left her housewife's wark,
The bairnies shouted Willie's name;
The colley too would fidge and bark
And wag his tail when Willie came.

But Willie now has cross'd the main,
And he has been sae lang awa'!
Oh! would he were return'd again
To drive the dowfiness† frae us a'!

TWO SONGS. ‡

I.

Come rouse thee, lady fair,
The sun is shining brightly,
High through the cloudless air
The sea-bird roving lightly.

Come, from thy lattice look;
With many an oar in motion,
Boats have the creek forsook,
And course the azure ocean.

See on the dim waves borne,
White distant sails are gliding;
Good, on so fair a morn,
Is every heart abiding.

II.

(FOR FISHERMEN.)

The waves are rippling on the sand,
The winds are still, the air is clear;
Then gather round, my merry band,
We'll hold on shore an hour of cheer!

The lord keeps vigil in his hall,
The dame in bower or turret high;
But meet the merriest mates of all
Beneath the summer's starlight sky!

SONG

WRITTEN FOR THE STRAWBERRY HILL FOUNDLING
PLAY, AND SUNG BY MRS. JORDAN.

WITH the rough blast heaves the billow,
In the light air waves the willow,
Every thing of moving kind
Varies with the veering wind;
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constaney?

After fretted, pouting sorrow,
Sweet will be thy smile to-morrow
Changing still, each passing thing
Fairest is upon the wing:
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constaney?

Song of love and satire witty,
Sprightly glee and doleful ditty;
Every mood and every lay,
Welcome all, but do not stay;
For what have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constaney?

TO SOPHIA J. BAILLIE,

AN INFANT.

SWEET bud of promise, fresh and fair,
Just moving in the morning air.
The morn of life but just begun,
The sands of time just set to run!
Sweet babe with cheek of pinky hue,
With eyes of soft ethereal blue,
With raven hair like finest down
Of unfledged bird, and scantily shown
Beneath the cap of cumbrous lace,
That circles round thy placid face!
Ah, baby! little dost thou know
How many yearning bosoms glow,
How many lips in blessings move,
How many eyes beam looks of love
At sight of thee!

Some future day,
And grant it, Heaven! thou wilt repay

* Trysted, met by appointment.

† Dowfiness, dullness.

‡ Written for Mr. H. Siddons, when he wished two of those in the Beacon to be altered, at the time he was pre-

paring it for representation. That amiable and accomplished man, then Manager of the Edinburgh Theatre, died soon after, and the Drama was never produced.

The early love of loving friends
 With oft renew'd and dear amends.
 Affection true, as with a spell,
 Hath many ways her tale to tell :
 And thou, with lightsome laughing eye,
 Thy artless love wilt testify
 By proffer'd kisses oft repeated,
 And words at will, when thou art seated
 On the paternal knee, in glory,
 Rehearsing there thy mimic story —
 By little errands, run so fleetly
 For dear mamma ; and when so featly
 Thou dost for her the Dunsbourne heather,
 The primrose and the daisy gather,
 The daisy fresh with unbruised stem,
 Like thee a "bright and bonny gem" —
 All this, and more than I can say,
 Will show thy love some future day ;
 Sweet bud of hope, beloved, carest,
 Upon thy head heaven's blessing rest !

THE KITTEN.

WANTON droll, whose harmless play
 Beguiles the rustic's closing day,
 When, drawn the evening fire about,
 Sit aged crone and thoughtless lout,
 And child upon his three-foot stool,
 Waiting until his supper cool,
 And maid, whose cheek outblossoms the rose,
 As bright the blazing fagot glows,
 Who, bending to the friendly light,
 Plies her task with busy sleight ;
 Come, show thy tricks and sportive graces,
 Thus circled round with merry faces !

Backward coil'd and crouching low,
 With glaring eyeballs watch thy foe,
 The housewife's spindle whirling round,
 Or thread or straw that on the ground
 Its shadow throws, by urchin sly
 Held out to lure thy roving eye ;
 Then stealing onward, fiercely spring
 Upon the tempting faithless thing.
 Now, wheeling round with bootless skill,
 Thy bo-peep tail provokes thee still,
 As still beyond thy curving side
 Its jetty tip is seen to glide ;
 Till from thy centre starting far,
 Thou sidelong veerst with rump in air
 Erected stiff, and gait awry,
 Like madam in her tantrums high ;
 Though ne'er a madam of them all,
 Whose silken kirtle sweeps the hall,
 More varied trick and whim displays
 To catch the admiring stranger's gaze.

Doth power in measured verses dwell,
 All thy vagaries wild to tell ?
 Ah no ! the start, the jet, the bound,
 The giddy scamper round and round,
 With leap and toss and high curvet,
 And many a whirling somerset,
 (Permitted by the modern muse
 Expression technical to use)
 These mock the deftest rhymester's skill,
 But poor in art, though rich in will.

The featest tumbler, stage bedight,
 To thee is but a clumsy wight,
 Who every limb and sinew strains
 To do what costs thee little pains ;
 For which, I trow, the gaping crowd
 Requite him oft with plaudits loud.

But, stopp'd the while thy wanton play,
 Applauses too thy pains repay :
 For then, beneath some urchin's hand
 With modest pride thou tak'st thy stand,
 While many a stroke of kindness glides
 Along thy back and tabby sides.
 Dilated swells thy glossy fur,
 And loudly croons thy busy purr,
 As, timing well the equal sound,
 Thy clutching feet bepat the ground,
 And all their harmless claws disclose
 Like prickles of an early rose,
 While softly from thy whisker'd cheek
 Thy half-closed eyes peer, mild and meek.

But not alone by cottage fire
 Do rustics rude thy feats admire.
 The learned sage, whose thoughts explore
 The widest range of human lore,
 Or with unfetter'd fancy fly
 Through airy heights of poesy,
 Pausing smiles with alter'd air
 To see thee climb his elbow-chair,
 Or, struggling on the mat below,
 Hold warfare with his slipper'd toe.
 The widow'd dame or lonely maid,
 Who, in the still but cheerless shade
 Of home unsocial, spends her age,
 And rarely turns a letter'd page,
 Upon her hearth for thee lets fall
 The rounded cork or paper ball,
 Nor chides thee on thy wicked watch,
 The ends of ravell'd skein to catch,
 But lets thee have thy wayward will,
 Perplexing oft her better skill.

E'en he, whose mind of gloomy bent,
 In lonely tower or prison pent,
 Reviews the coil of former days,
 And loathes the world and all its ways,

What time the lamp's unsteady gleam
Hath roused him from his moody dream,
Feels, as thou gambol'st round his seat,
His heart of pride less fiercely beat,
And smiles, a link in thee to find,
That joins it still to living kind.

Whence hast thou then, thou witless puss !
The magic power to charm us thus ?
Is it that in thy glaring eye
And rapid movements, we descry —
Whilst we at ease, secure from ill,
The chimney corner snugly fill —
A lion darting on his prey,
A tiger at his ruthless play ?
Or is it that in thee we trace,
With all thy varied wanton grace,
An emblem, view'd with kindred eye,
Of tricky, restless infancy ?
Ah ! many a lightly sportive child,
Who hath like thee our wits beguiled,
To dull and sober manhood grown,
With strange recoil our hearts disown.

And so, poor kit ! must thou endure,
When thou becom'st a cat demure,
Full many a cuff and angry word,
Chased roughly from the tempting board.
But yet, for that thou hast, I ween,
So oft our favour'd play-mate been,
Soft be the change which thou shalt prove !
When time hath spoil'd thee of our love,
Still be thou deem'd by housewife fat
A comely, careful, mousing cat,
Whose dish is, for the public good,
Replenish'd oft with savoury food,
Nor, when thy span of life is past,
Be thou to pond or dung-hill cast,
But, gently borne on goodman's spade,
Beneath the decent sod be laid ;
And children show with glistening eyes
The place where poor old pussy lies.

SCHOOL RHYMES FOR NEGRO CHILDREN.

How happy are we in that hour we love,
When shadows grow longer and branches move ;
Blithe urchins then we be !
From the school's low porch, with a joyous shout,
We rush and we run and we gambol about,
So careless, light, and free !

And the good child merrily plays his part,
For all is well in his guileless heart,
The glance of his eye is bright.
We hop and we leap and we toss the ball ;
Some dance to their shadows upon the wall,
And spread out their hands with delight.

The parrot that sits on her bough a-swinging,
The bird and the butterfly, light air winging,
Are scarcely more happy, I trow.
Then hey for the meadow, the glade, and the grove,
For evening is coming and branches move,
We'll have merry pastime now !

RHYMES.

Busy work brings after ease ;
Ease brings sport and sport brings rest ;
For young and old, of all degrees,
The mingled lot is best.

And pain brings pity ; then I hear
My mother's sweet and gentle voice,
She strokes my cheek, the touch is dear,
And makes my heart rejoice.

Then welcome work and pain and play ;
When all is o'er, like bird in nest
We soundly sleep ; — well says our lay
The mingled lot is best.

RHYMES FOR CHANTING.

BUTTERFLY, butterfly, speed through the air,
The ring-bird follows thee fast,
And the monkey looks up with a greedy stare ;
Speed on till the peril be past !

O, wert thou but safe in my garden bower,
And wouldst thou no further stray,
Thou shouldst feed on the rose and the gilliflower,
And be my play-mate gay.

DEVOTIONAL SONG FOR A NEGRO CHILD.

WHEN at rising morn we lave
Our dark limbs in the shiny wave,
When beneath the palm-tree shade
We rest awhile in freshness laid,
And, when our early task is done,
Whom should we love to think upon ?

When we noonday slumber take,
In grassy glade or bowery brake,
Where humming birds come glancing by,
And stingless snakes untwisted lie,

And quietly sounds the beetle's drone,
Whom should we love to think upon ?

When, all awake, we shout and sing,
And dance and gambol in a ring,
Or, healthful hunger to relieve,
Our stated wholesome meals receive, —
When this is past and day is done,
Whom should we love to think upon ?

On God, the giver of all good,
Who gives us life, and rest, and food,
And cheerful pastime, late and early,
And parents kind who love us dearly ; —
God hath our hearts with goodness won,
Him will we love to think upon !

SECOND DEVOTIONAL SONG.

OUR heavenly Father sent His Son
From hateful sin to save us,
And precious blessings many a one,
Health, friends, and freedom gave us.

And all we see, each beauteous sight,
The woods, the fields, the ocean,
The sun by day, the moon by night,
Should fill us with devotion.

Then let our praises be express'd
In light and lively measure,
He loves the grateful homage best
That is bestow'd with pleasure !

THIRD DEVOTIONAL SONG.

OUR Father and Almighty Lord,
By angels and by saints ador'd,
With starry brightness circled round,
Gleam beyond gleam, which hath no bound,
Though He is high and we are low,
Accepts the grateful thanks that flow
From infant lips, and to the skies,
Like morning's early vapour rise : —
The simplest child who lisps a prayer
His mercy and His love will share.

A NURSERY LESSON (DEVOTIONAL).

SAY, little child, who gives to thee
Thy life and limbs, so light and free ?

Thy moving eyes to look around,
Thy ears to catch the softest sound ?
Thy food and clothing, friends and home ?
'Tis God from whom those blessings come ;
And what shouldst thou do ? canst thou guess ?
To prove to Him thy thankfulness
For life and friends, for clothes and food ? —
"Be good."

And tell me, little-one, I pray,
Who gives thee pleasure in thy play ?
Who makes the happy girl and boy
To run, and leap, and shout for joy,
When looking on the clear blue sky ;
The clouds that float, the birds that fly ;
Trees, flowers, and every pretty thing ?
'Tis God from whom those blessings spring ;
And in return what shouldst thou do ?
"Be good, and love Him too."

SECOND NURSERY LESSON (ADMONITORY).

FAT Tommy on the carpet lay,
And held with sprightly kit his play.
To her the twisted cord he flung,
At which with teeth and claws she sprung ;
His worsted ball then past her roll'd,
Which soon within her clutching hold
She whirl'd, and check'd, and tugg'd, and tore,
Then sent it rolling as before.
Tommy — his blue eyes glancing bright,
View'd all these antics with delight ;
Then fondly stroked her tabby fur,
And smiled to see her wink and purr ;
And then her ears began to touch,
Which she endured, but liked not much ;
Then did her hinder parts assail,
And pinch'd and pull'd her by the tail.
On this her sudden anger rose,
She turn'd and growl'd, and scratch'd his nose.
Then Tommy roar'd like any bull
And said — his eyes with tears brim full —
"Mamma, beat kit." — "And why ?" quoth she.
"Beat naughty kit for scratching me,
And teach her not to scratch again."
"No child, such teaching were in vain.
She can feel pain, but lacks the wit
To learn a lesson ; but we'll hit
Upon a plan more plain and easy.
Tommy has sense to learn, so, please ye,
Let him be taught this simple lore,
To pull his play-mate's tail no more."

HYMN.

FATHER and Lord ! Almighty and all-wise !
 How ardently devout affections rise,
 When rushing thoughts, unsought for, swift and free,
 Crowd on th' expanded heart, and speak of Thee !
 All mingling, soaring, brightening, how they shine
 In truth's strong light, and say that we are Thine !

This world a temple is, where man descries
 Signs visible, where'er he turns his eyes,
 That Thou art good as wise and mighty ; love
 The active power that doth through all things
 move.

A vasty temple, paved with sea and land,
 Adorn'd with forests, hills and mountains grand,
 And coped aloft with beauty, ever changing
 As white clouds o'er cerulean blue are ranging,
 As rosy splendour glows, line after line,
 At day's glad waking, or at day's decline ;
 As full or crescent moons shine softly bright
 Through the air-floated awnings of the night ;
 As stars from deepen'd darkness, fiercely burning,
 Keep round their northern guide for ever turning !

Such thoughts do visit us like friends indeed,
 Who help and comfort in the hour of need ;
 And sacred lore repeat, e'en that bless'd line,
 " Living and dying, we are Thine."

The dying soldier stretch'd on battle ground,
 While swells amain the deep and ghastly wound,
 Amidst his fallen comrades laid,

The maim'd, the dying, and the dead ;
 Thinks of his home, the distant and the dear,
 Then in his heart repeats these words of cheer.
 She, too, whose little flock of love are led
 To stand once more around her dying bed,
 Blesses them one by one, and when the last
 Hath from her fondly lingering vision past,
 Raises her eyes to worship and adore,
 And feels the bitterness of death is o'er ;
 Casting behind her mortal love and fear,
 She feels that she is Thine, and Thou art near.

The man who in this mingled world of woe,
 Dire warfare holds with many a galling foe ;
 With poverty, disgrace, disease, and pain,
 And bravely fronting all, can still maintain,
 Like gallant liegeman, his appointed post,
 Hath succour still at hand when wanted most. —
 " Let all these foes to work my woe combine,
 Living and dying, Father, I am Thine."

But oh ! to trace what forms of mortal ill
 This thought hath conquer'd, baffles human skill.
 Yes, we are Thine, Almighty Lord and Sire,
 With souls endow'd to reason and aspire :

Reason, Thy gifted spark of heavenly flame,
 The noblest inmate of the human frame ;
 By which, in all Thy works, Thyself we see,
 And love, obey, adore, and worship Thee !

RECOLLECTIONS OF A DEAR AND
STEADY FRIEND.*

WHEN life's long pilgrimage draws to a close,
 A backward glance the weary traveller throws
 On many a league traversed, and views the road,
 Distant and near, in long perspective trod
 By him and by companions on his way,
 Who still hold onward, whether grave or gay,
 Through gloom and gleam ; a checker'd path, I
 ween,
 Where forms within the memory's ken are seen,
 Forms faint or vivid, varying oft, that seem
 Like moving objects in a seried dream :
 Till one right dearly on the mind impress'd
 Bears for a time his thoughts from all the rest,
 And, undisturb'd upon his peaceful station,
 His busy mind enjoys its mournful occupation.

There she appears, as when in virgin grace
 I first beheld her laughing, lovely face,
 Intelligent withal, in which combined
 Seem'd every hopeful quality of mind,
 Solace, and cheer, and counsel, to impart,
 All that should win and hold a manly, generous
 heart.

I see her mated with a moody lord,
 Whose fame she prized, whose genius she adored.
 There by his side she stands, pale, grave, and sad ;
 The brightness of her greeting smile is fled.
 Like some fair flower ta'en from its genial mould
 To deck a garden-border, loose and cold,
 Its former kindred fences all destroy'd,
 Shook by the breeze and by the rake annoy'd,
 She seem'd, alas ! — I look'd, and look'd again,
 Tracing the sweet but alter'd face in vain.

I see her next in agony of soul :
 Her surcharged feelings broke from all control :
 The hand upon her forehead closely press'd,
 The trembling frame and quivering lips express'd,
 Though scarcely audible the feeble mutter,
 Far more than full articulate sounds could utter.

I see her when by pure religion taught
 Her heart is lighten'd of its heavy freight.
 Her canopy of murky clouds hath pass'd,
 In air dissolv'd, and sunshine gleams at last.

* The Lady Noel Byron.

Her heart, with Christian charity imbued,
Hath every hard vindictive thought subdued.
Oh, then how fair a sight it was to trace
That blessed state upon her placid face !
And yet, when weary of the gossip sound
From morning visitors convening round,
She would at times unusual silence hold,
Some, ah how erringly ! believed her stiff and cold.

I see her from the world retired caressing
Her infant daughter, her assured blessing ;
Teaching the comely creature, in despite
Of froward freaks, to feel and act aright ;
Well suiting to the task her voice and look
With fondling playfulness or grave rebuke.
Now, with expression changed, but sweet, she cheers
Her widow'd father's weary weight of years.
How slyly does her gentle him recall
Some half forgotten tale of cot or hall,
To raise his hearty laugh, as by the fire
In easy chair he sits ! old tales that never tire.

To early friends her love was firm and fast ;
Beneath her roof they gather'd oft and cast
A faint reflected gleam of days gone by,
And kindly smiled on them her soft blue eye.
One dearly prized may special notice claim,
Mary Montgomery ! nobly sounding name,
And worthy she to bear it. Oft would come
Their youthful kindred ; to an easy home,
Where they might still their fairy gambols hold,
Nor in her presence fear to be too bold.
Though tired and languid, laid awhile to rest,
Around her still the active urchins press'd,
Would o'er the tumbled covering strive and wrestle,
And e'en at times behind her snugly nestle.
At hide and seek where did they lurk and crouch ?
Ay, where forsooth but in my lady's couch !
Mock frowns from her but small impression made,
They gambol'd on, and would not be afraid.

Books were her solace, whether grave or gay,
But most she loved the poet's plaintive lay ;
And e'en at times with knit considerate brow
Would with her pen a native talent show.
When fancy, link'd with feelings kind and dear,
Was found in lines that did not please the ear,
Oh then, with what a countenance she met
Her certain fate, by critics sore beset !
She met it all with simple kindly air,
The first to own and then the fault repair.

Mistress at length of wealth and large domain,
Behold her now a modest state maintain,
With generous heart and liberal hand bestowing,—
A spring of friendly kindness, ever flowing.
She did with such a gentle ease relieve,
From her it was a pleasure to receive.
With the consideration of a friend,
All was arranged to serve a useful end,

And no humiliation could ensue
To make the wounded heart her bounty rue.
Nay, rather its condition seem'd to rise,
Knit to her then as if by kindred ties.
For worth distress'd there was in sooth no need
In earnest piteous words with her to plead,
Nor feel, because of some slight boons obtain'd,
But recently perhaps, shy and restrain'd :
Her cheerful eye gave answer short and plain,
“ Think not of that, but come and come again.”

The humming of her school, its morning sound,
With all her youthful scholars gather'd round ;
Their shout, when issuing forth at mid-day hour,
Each active lad exerting all his pow'r
To do the sturdy labour of a man,
As through the groups quick emulation ran,
Was music to her ear ; warm thrill'd her blood ;
She felt she was promoting public good.
And have I seen her proud or heard her boast ?
Yes, once I did ; when, counting use and cost,
She gravely added, that her boys thus train'd,
Employment afterwards more surely gain'd
From farmer, or from village artisan,
Who trusted each would prove a steady man.
In truth, her school had in its humble station
Acquired an honest fame and reputation.

I've seen, when in a daughter's happy lot
Her own was brighten'd, woes and cares forgot.
While with a roguish grandchild few could quell,
A sturdy imp that loved his grandame well,
She lowly sate upon the carpet playing,
The former frolics of her youth betraying,—
A pleasing sight, that led to deep reflection ;
To pain and pleasure link'd in close connection.

And now within her chamber-walls confined
She sadly dwells and strives to be resign'd.
Her span of life, yet short, though rough the past,
May still through further years of languor last,
Or health to other years may yet be given
To do her Master's will—the will of heaven.
But should her lot be pain and sickness still,
She hath her task of duty to fulfill—
Her task of love, cheer'd by her noble trust,
The Christian's lofty faith, that from the dust
Lifts up the Christian's head, gleams in his eye,
Bracing his wasted strength to live or die.
Ay, 'tis a noble faith, not fenced and bound
By orthodoxy's narrow plot of ground.
The Bible, not the Church, directs her way,
Nor does she through entangled labyrinths stray.
Before her stands a prospect fair and wide,
To endless distance stretch'd on either side ;
A gen'rous Saviour, beckoning us to come
Where mercy has prepared our peaceful home ;
Where God, His God, supreme all powers above,
Receives us in the realms of sanctity and love.

If late or early from her house of clay,
The lease expired, her soul be turn'd away,
What boots it ? ready for her Master's call,
Death's gloomy pass no longer can appal.
The covering o'er a pallid face is thrown,
The coffin closed, and all the rest unknown —
"No, not unknown," a conscious spirit cries,
Stirring within us quickly ; we shall rise
To nobler being waked ; heaven's glorious show,
The varied wonders of the earth below,
And He who spake as never man did speak,
All tell of future happiness to break
On the departed just, whilst Nature's voice
Of many tones doth in that mighty sound rejoice.

But in what order we shall leave this scene,
Where all our joys, affections, cares have been,
Ah ! who can say ? the young and strong may stand
Close to the hidden confines of that land
From which no traveller returns again,
Whose sights and sounds in mystery remain :
But there full surely do the aged wait
An hourly summons to the unknown state.
Report perhaps of my decease may find
Her on a weary couch of pain reclined,
And some dear silent watcher then may see
Her soft eye glistening with a tear for me —
But cease we here — o'er fancy's sight is thrown
A closing veil — my vision'd thoughts are gone.

TWO BROTHERS.

Who presses on my knee this kindly pat,
And with a merry archness in my face
Looks up ? — a youngling of my own leal race :
Com'st thou to woo my notice, little Matt ?
I think thou dost, and thou shalt have it too,
For, whatso'er thou dost or dost not do,
Thou hast upon my heart a potent claim, —
Matthew Baillie is thy name ;
And worn by thee, O never may
The light transmitted fade away !
The virtues of thy grandsire's manly breast,
May they within thy bosom ever rest !
Far be from thee, dear child, e'en in thy play,
A crooked cunning trick or selfish way, —
All greedy grasping, or of cake or toy !
Thou must be generous, kind, and true, my boy !
And if, in after days, thou needst must fight
With angry schoolmates, wrestle for the right.
Whate'er the poor or wealthy do, thou must
Frank and straightforward be, faithful and just.
No seeking favour with fair glozing words !
No dangling after little patron lords !
In thee, or man or boy, still let us see
Traces of him whose name now honours thee.

He pass'd through life with conscience for his
guide,
Nor hesitated, winc'd, nor turn'd aside.
He lived in courts, all courtly failings near,
And knew not feigning, flattery, or fear.
Be thou a Matthew then from right unswerving,
And of thy name deserving.

Ah, little man ! thy roguish eye
When those thou lov'st are standing by,
Thy scowling brow and stormy voice,
When thwarted of thy will or choice,
Show thou wilt have no easy play
Old aunty's precepts to obey.
Ay ! and wee Willie too is near,
His gladsome, cooing voice, I hear ;
And there he comes in all his charms,
Set perching in his nurse's arms.
In his sweet face beam smiles of love
That o'er cheeks, chin, and forehead move ;
Fat dimpled arms, and shoulders bare,
The same emotion seem to share ;
Yea, could we see thee all, we should discover
Thou art *one* living smile all over.
Thy small foot too, tinged like the rose,
With all its spread and stirring toes,
Its tiny heel and ankle stout,
From muslin coaties peeping out —
What part of thee can we behold
That is not worth a mine of gold ?
Thy open mouth that offers kisses
So winningly, and seldom misses
A kind return, full twenty-fold,
From stern or gentle, young or old ;
Come sweet temptation ! near — more near,
And let me feel its pressure dear !

Thou little, loving, harmless baby,
Ah ! what progressive changes may be ;
When, with thy youth and manhood, future years
Have dealt, and on thy countenance appears
The mark'd expression of thy inward worth,
By joy, and grief, and love, and generous ire drawn
forth !

Could we e'en now thy future fortunes know,
Thy character and thy endowments ! — No ;
Why look through onward time to see
What thou, dear baby, then mayst be ?
I will not from the present part,
Loving so dearly what thou art.

Matthew and William, brothers twain,
God's blessing on your heads remain !
Soft pretty signs and tokens tell
That now ye love each other well,
And nature's self and parents kind
Will round your hearts this blessing bind.
In sacred words to each dear brother,
A grand-aunt's say concludes, — "love one another."

LINES TO AGNES BAILLIE ON HER
BIRTHDAY.

DEAR Agnes, gleam'd with joy and dash'd with tears,
O'er us have glided almost sixty years
Since we on Bothwell's bonny braes were seen,
By those whose eyes long closed in death have been,
Two tiny imps, who scarcely stoop'd to gather
The slender harebell, or the purple heather ;
No taller than the foxglove's spiky stem,
That dew of morning studs with silvery gem.
Then every butterfly that cross'd our view
With joyful shout was greeted as it flew,
And moth and lady-bird and beetle bright
In sheeny gold were each a wondrous sight.
Then as we paddled barefoot, side by side,
Among the sunny shallows of the Clyde*,
Minnows or spotted par with twinkling fin,
Swimming in mazy rings the pool within,
A thrill of gladness through our bosoms sent,
Seen in the power of early wonderment.

A long perspective to my mind appears,
Looking behind me to that line of years,
And yet through every stage I still can trace
Thy vision'd form, from childhood's morning grace
To woman's early bloom, changing how soon !
To the expressive glow of woman's noon ;
And now to what thou art, in comely age,
Active and ardent. Let what will engage
Thy present moment, whether hopeful seeds
In garden-plat thou sow, or noxious weeds
From the fair flower remove, or ancient lore
In chronicle or legend rare explore,
Or on the parlour hearth with kitten play,
Stroking its tabby sides, or take thy way
To gain with hasty steps some cottage door,
On helpful errand to the neighbouring poor,
Active and ardent, to my fancy's eye
Thou still art young in spite of time gone by.
Though oft of patience brief and temper keen,
Well may it please me, in life's latter scene,
To think what now thou art, and long to me hast
been.

'Twas thou who woo'dst me first to look
Upon the page of printed book,
That thing by me abhorr'd, and with address
Didst win me from my thoughtless idleness,
When all too old become with bootless haste
In fitful sports the precious time to waste.
Thy love of tale and story was the stroke
At which my dormant fancy first awoke,
And ghosts and witches in my busy brain
Arose in sombre show, a motley train.

* The Manse of Bothwell was at some considerable distance from the Clyde, but the two little girls were sometimes sent there in summer to bathe and wade about.

This new-found path attempting, proud was I,
Lurking approval on thy face to spy,
Or hear thee say, as grew thy roused attention,
"What ! is this story all thine own invention ?"

Then, as advancing through this mortal span,
Our intercourse with the mix'd world began,
Thy fairer face and sprightlier courtesy
(A truth that from my youthful vanity
Lay not conceal'd) did for the sisters twain,
Where'er we went, the greater favour gain ;
While, but for thee, vex'd with its tossing tide,
I from the busy world had shrunk aside.
And now in later years, with better grace
Thou helpst me still to hold a welcome place
With those, whom nearer neighbourhood has made
The friendly cheerers of our evening shade.

With thee my humours, whether grave or gay,
Or gracious or untoward, have their way.
Silent if dull — O precious privilege !
I sit by thee ; or if, cull'd from the page
Of some huge, ponderous tome, which, but thyself,
None e'er had taken from its dusty shelf,
Thou read me curious passages to speed
The winter night, I take but little heed
And thankless say "I cannot listen now,"
'Tis no offence ; albeit, much do I owe
To these, thy nightly offerings of affection,
Drawn from thy ready talent for selection ;
For still it seem'd in thee a natural gift
The letter'd grain from letter'd chaff to sift.

By daily use and circumstance endear'd,
Things are of value now that once appear'd
Of no account, and without notice past,
Which o'er dull life a simple cheering cast ;
To hear thy morning steps the stair descending,
Thy voice with other sounds domestic blending ;
After each stated nightly absence, met
To see thee by the morning table set,
Pouring from smoky spout the amber stream
Which sends from saucer'd cup its fragrant steam ;
To see thee cheerly on the threshold stand,
On summer morn, with trowel in thy hand
For garden-work prepared ; in winter's gloom
From thy cold noonday walk to see thee come,
In furry garment lapp'd, with spatter'd feet,
And by the fire resume thy wonted seat ;
Ay, e'en o'er things like these, soothed age has
thrown

A sober charm they did not always own :
As winter-hoar-frost makes minutest spray
Of bush or hedge-weed sparkle to the day,
In magnitude and beauty, which bereaved
Of such investment, eye had ne'er perceived.

The change of good and evil to abide,
As partners link'd, long have we side by side

Our earthly journey held, and who can say
 How near the end of our united way ?
 By nature's course not distant ; sad and 'reft
 Will she remain, — the lonely pilgrim left.
 If thou be taken first, who can to me
 Like sister, friend, and home-companion be ?
 Or who, of wonted daily kindness shorn,
 Shall feel such loss, or mourn as I shall mourn ?
 And if I should be fated first to leave
 This earthly house, though gentle friends may grieve,
 And he above them all, so truly proved
 A friend and brother, long and justly loved,
 There is no living wight, of woman born,
 Who then shall mourn for me as thou wilt mourn.

Thou ardent, liberal spirit ! quickly feeling
 The touch of sympathy and kindly dealing
 With sorrow or distress, for ever sharing
 The unhoarded mite, nor for to-morrow caring,—
 Accept, dear Agnes, on thy natal day,
 An unadorn'd but not a careless lay.
 Nor think this tribute to thy virtues paid
 From tardy love proceeds, though long delay'd.
 Words of affection, howsoever express'd,
 The latest spoken still are deem'd the best :
 Few are the measured rhymes I now may write ;
 These are, perhaps, the last I shall endite.

VERSES SENT TO MRS. BAILLIE ON HER
 BIRTHDAY, 1813.

A JUDGMENT clear, a pensive mind
 With feelings tender and refined ;
 A generous heart in kindness glowing,
 An open hand on all bestowing ;
 A temper sweet, and calm, and even
 Through petty provocations given ;
 A soul benign, whose cheerful leisure
 Considers still of others' pleasure,
 Or, in its lonely, graver mood,
 Considers still of others' good ;
 And join'd to these the vision'd eye,
 And tuneful ear of poesy ;
 Blest wight, in whom those gifts combine,
 Our dear Sophia, sister mine !
 How comes it that, from year to year,
 This day hath pass'd without its cheer, —
 No token passing time to trace,
 No rhymester's lay to do it grace ?

Love was not wanting, but the muse,
 Reserved, unpliant, and recluse,
 Sat in her unreal kingdom, dreaming
 Through baseless scenes of airy seeming,
 And could not turn her 'wilder'd eye
 On plain, unfancied verity.

Yet be it so ! once in my life
 I'll hold with her a generous strife ;
 With or without her aid, my lay
 Shall hail with grateful lines this happy day :
 The day when first thy infant heart
 Did from inactive being start,
 And in thy baby bosom beat,
 Its doubtful, dangerous, fragile seat, —
 A heavenly spark that downward came
 To mount again a brighter flame.
 Meantime, a warm and fostering blessing,
 More precious felt in long possessing,
 'Tis lent to those who daily prove
 Its gentle offices of love.
 Ah ! for their sake, long be the date
 Of this its more ignoble state !
 I who, so near its influence set,
 Owe it a long and pleasing debt,
 In course of being launch'd before
 From mortal nature's foggy shore,
 Would fain behind me leave some token
 Of friendly kindred love unbroken,
 Which in some hour, retired and lone,
 Thine eyes may sometimes look upon,
 While in thy sadden'd tender breast, —
 Ah, no ! I may not think the rest,
 Lest, both bereft of words and strain
 My silent thoughts alone remain :
 This token then do thou receive.
 I will not tell thee to believe
 How in my heart its spirit glows,
 How soothingly from my pen it flows.

Through years unmark'd by woe or pain,
 Oft may this day return again,
 Blessed by him whose rough career
 Of toil and care thy love doth cheer,
 Whose manly worth by heaven was fated
 To be through life thus fitly mated ;
 Blessed by those thy youthful twain,
 Who by thy side their place maintain,
 Still nestling closer to thy bosom
 As the fair flowers of reason blossom ;
 By all who thy dear kindred claim,
 And love to see thy face, and love to hear thy name.

And so I end my simple writing,
 The muse in fault, but love enditing
 That which, but for this love alone,
 I thought not ever to have done, —
 A birth-day lay. Then sister mine,
 Keep thou in kindness this propine,
 And through life's yet untrodden scene
 Still be to me what thou hast been !

VERSES WRITTEN IN FEBRUARY, 1827.

LIKE gleam of sunshine on the mountain's side,
Fair, bright, and beautiful, while all beside,
Slope, cliff, and pinnacle, in shadow lie
Beneath the awning of a wintry sky,
Through loop-hole in its cloudy texture beaming
A cataract of light so softly streaming,—
Shines one blest deed of ruth when war's grim form
O'er a scourged nation guides his passing storm.

Like verdant islet-spots, that softly peer
Through the dull mist, as morning breezes clear
The brooding vapour from the wide-stretch'd vale,
So in a land where Mammon's cares prevail,
Do frequent deeds of gentle charity
Refresh the moral gazer's mental eye.

Britain, thou art in arms and commerce graced
With many generous acts, that, fairly traced
On thy long annals, give a lustre far
Exceeding those of wealth or trophied war ;
And may we not say truthfully of thee,
Thou art a land of mercy ? — May it be !

What forms are those with lean gall'd sides ? In
vain
Their lax'd and ropy sinews sorely strain
Heap'd loads to draw, with lash and goad urged on.
They were in other days, but lately gone,
The useful servants, dearly prized, of those
Who to their failing age give no repose, —
Of thankless, heartless owners. Then full oft
Their arched graceful necks so sleek and soft
Beneath a master's stroking hand would rear
Right proudly, as they neigh'd his well-known voice
to hear.

But now how changed ! — And what marr'd things
are these,
Starved, hooted, scarr'd, denied or food or ease ;
Whose humbled looks their bitter thraldom show,
Familiar with the kick, the pinch, the blow ?
Alas ! in this sad fellowship are found
The playful kitten and the faithful hound,
The gallant cock that hailed the morning light,
All now hard-fated mates in woeful plight.

Ah no ! a land of mercy is a name
Which thou in all thy glory mayst not claim !

But yet there dwell in thee the good, the bold,
Who in thy streets, courts, senates, bravely hold
Contention with thy wayward cruelty,
And shall subdue it ere this age glide by.
Meantime, as they their manly power exert,
" God speed you well ! " bursts from each kindly heart.
And they *will* speed ; for this foul blot of shame
Must be wash'd out from Britain's honour'd name,

And she among enlighten'd nations stand,
A brave, a merciful, and generous land.

THE TRAVELLER BY NIGHT IN
NOVEMBER.

HE, who with journey well begun,
Beneath the morning's cheerful sun
Stretches his view o'er hill and dale,
And distant city, (through its veil
Of smoke, dark spires and chimneys seen,)
O'er harvest-lands and meadows green,
What time the roused and busy, meeting
On king's high-way exchange their greeting,
Feels his cheer'd heart with pleasure beat,
As on his way he holds. And great
Delight hath he who travels late
When the fair moon doth hold her state
In the clear sky, while down and dale
Repose in light so pure and pale !
While lake and pool and stream are seen
Weaving their maze of silvery sheen,
And cot and mansion, rock and glade,
And tower and street in light and shade
Strongly contrasted are. I trow,
Better than noonday seems his show,
Soothing the pensive mind.

And yet,
When moon is dark and sun is set,
Not rest of pleasure is the wight,
Who, in snug chaise, at close of night,
Begins his journey in the dark,
With crack of whip and ban-dogs' bark,
And jarring wheels and children bawling,
And voice of surly ostler, calling
To post-boy, through the mingled din,
Some message to a neighbouring inn.
All sounds confusedly in his ear ;
The lonely way's commencing cheer.

With dull November's starless sky
O'er head, his fancy soars not high.
The carriage lamps a white light throw
Along the road, and strangely show
Familiar things that cheat the eyes,
Like friends in motley masker's guise.
" What's that ? or dame, or mantled maid,
Or herd-boy gather'd in his plaid,
Who leans against yon wall his back ? "
" No 'tis in sooth a tiny stack
Of peat, or turf, or cloven wood —
For cottage fire the winter's food. "
" Ha ! yonder shady nook discovers
A gentle pair of rustic lovers. "
" Out on't ! a pair of harmless calves,
Through ragged bushes seen by halves. "

"What thing of strange, unshapely height,
 Approaches slowly on the light,
 That like a hunch-back'd giant seems,
 And now is whitening in its beams?"
 "'Tis but a hind, whose burly back
 Is bearing home a well-fill'd sack."
 "What's that like spots of flecker'd snow
 On the road's margin cluster'd so?"
 "'Tis linen left to bleach by night." —
 "Gramercy on us! see I right?
 Some witch is casting cantraps there,
 The linen hovers in the air!"
 "Pooh! soon or late all wonders cease
 We have but scared a flock of geese."

Thus oft through life we do misdeem
 Of things that are not what they seem.
 Ah! could we there with as slight scath
 Divest us of our cheated faith!

And then, belike, when chiming bells
 The near approach of waggon tells,
 He wistful looks to see it come,
 Its bulk emerging from the gloom,
 With dun tarpauling o'er it thrown,
 Like a huge Mammoth moving on.

But still more pleased, through murky air
 He spies the distant bonfire's glare;
 And, nearer to the spot advancing,
 Black imps and goblins round it dancing;
 And nearer still, distinctly traces
 The featured disks of happy faces,
 Grinning and roaring in their glory,
 Like Bacchants wild of ancient story,
 Making wild gestures to the flame
 As it were play-mate in the game.
 Full well, I trow, could modern stage
 Such acting for the nonce engage,
 A crowded audience, every night,
 Would press to see the jovial sight;
 And this, from cost and squeezing free,
 November's nightly travellers see.

Through village, lane, or hamlet going,
 The light from cottage window, showing
 Its inmates at their evening fare,
 By rousing fire, where earthenware
 With pewter trenchers, on the shelf,
 Give some display of worldly pelf,
 Is transient vision to the eye
 Of him our hasty passer by;
 Yet much of pleasing import tells,
 And cherish'd in his fancy dwells,
 Where simple innocence and mirth
 Encircle still the cottage hearth.
 Across the road a fiery glare
 Doth now the blacksmith's forge declare,

Where furnace-blast, and measured din
 Of heavy hammers, and within
 The brawny mates their labour plying,
 From heated bar the red sparks flying,
 Some idle neighbours standing by
 With open mouth and dazzled eye;
 The rough and sooty walls with store
 Of chains and horse-shoes studded o'er,
 And rusty blades and bars between,
 All momentarily are heard and seen.

Nor does he often fail to meet,
 In market town's dark, narrow street,
 (E'en when the night with onward wings
 The sober hour of bed-time brings,)
 Amusement. From the alehouse door,
 Having full bravely paid his score,
 Issues the tippy artizan,
 With some sworn brother of the can,
 While each to keep his footing tries,
 And utters words solemn and wise.

The dame demure, from visit late,
 Her lantern borne before in state
 By sloven footboy, paces slow
 With patten'd feet and hooded brow.

Where the seam'd window-board betrays
 Interior light, right closely lays
 The eaves-dropper his curious ear,
 Some neighbour's fire-side talk to hear;
 While, from an upper casement bending,
 A household maid, perhaps, is sending
 From jug or pot, a sloppy shower
 That makes him homeward fleetly scour.
 From lower rooms few gleams are sent
 Through shorten'd shutter-hole or rent;
 But from the loftier chambers peer
 (Where damsels doff their gentle gear
 For rest preparing) tapers bright,
 That give a momentary sight
 Of some fair form with visage glowing,
 With loosen'd braids and tresses flowing,
 Which busied by the mirror stands
 With bending head and upraised hands,
 Whose moving shadow strangely falls
 With size enlarged on roof and walls.
 Ah! lovely are the things, I ween,
 By speed's light passing glam'rie seen!
 Fancy so touch'd will oft restore
 Things once beheld and seen no more.

But now he spies the flaring door
 Of bridled Swan or gilded Boar,
 At which the bowing waiter stands
 To know the alighting guest's commands.
 A place of bustle, dirt and din,
 Swearing without, scolding within;

Of narrow means and ample boast,
The traveller's stated halting post,
Where trunks are missing or deranged,
And parcels lost and horses changed.

Yet this short scene of noisy coil
But serves our traveller as a foil,
Enhancing what succeeds, and lending
A charm to pensive quiet, sending
To home and friends, left far behind,
The kindest musings of his mind ;
Or, should they stray to thoughts of pain,
A dimness o'er the haggard train
A mood and hour like this will throw,
As vex'd and burthen'd spirits know.
Night, loneliness, and motion are
Agents of power to distance care ;
To distance, not discard ; for then,
Withdrawn from busy haunts of men,
Necessity to act suspended,
The present, past, and future blended,
Like figures of a mazy dance,
Weave round the soul a dreamy trance,
Till jolting stone or turnpike gate
Arouse him from the soothing state.

And when the midnight hour is past,
If through the night his journey last,
When still and lonely is the road,
Nor living creature moves abroad,
Then most of all, like fabled wizard,
Night slyly dons her cloak and vizard,
His eyes at every corner meeting
With some new sleight of dexterous cheating,
And cunningly his sight betrays
E'en with his own lamp's partial rays.

The road, that in fair, honest day,
Through pasture-land or corn-fields lay,
A broken hedge-row's ragged screen
Skirting its margin rank and green,
With boughs projecting, interlaced
With thorn and briar, distinctly traced
On the deep shadows at their back,
That deeper sink to pitchy black,
Appearing soothingly to the eye
Like woven boughs of tapestry, —
Seems now to wind through tangled wood,
Or forest wild, where Robin Hood
With all his outlaws stout and bold
In olden days his reign might hold.
Yea, roofless barn and ruin'd walls,
As passing light upon them falls,
When favour'd by surrounding gloom,
The castle's stately form assume.

The steaming vapour that proceeds
From moisten'd hide of weary steeds,
And high on either side will rise,

Like clouds storm-drifted, past him flies ;
While mire cast up by their hoof'd feet
Adds curious magic to deceit,
Glancing presumptuously before him,
Like yellow diamonds of Cairngorum.

How many are the subtle ways
By which sly night the eye betrays,
When in her wild fantastic mood,
By lone and wakeful traveller wo'd !
Shall I proceed ? O no ! for now
Upon the black horizon's brow
Appears a line of tawny light ;
Thy reign is ended, witching night !
And soon thy place a wizard elf,
(But only second to thyself
In glam'rie's art) will quietly take,
And spread o'er meadow, vale, and brake,
Her misty shroud of pearly white ;
A modest though deceitful wight,
Who in a softer, gentler way
Will with the wakeful fancy play,
When woody knolls, their bases losing,
Are islands on a lake reposing,
And streeted town of high pretence,
As rolls away the vapour dense
With all its wavy, curling billows,
Is but a row of pollard willows.
O no ! our traveller, still and lone,
A far, fatiguing way hath gone ;
His eyes are dim, he stoops his crest,
And folds his arms and goes to rest.

LINES FOR A FRIEND'S ALBUM.

LINES, in addition to the treasure
Of poesy, cull'd for the pleasure
Of beau, and belle, and gentle dame,
When seated round the evening flame,
What time the social hour is waning,
And tardy coachman guests detaining, —
A courteous friend hath bid me write
Upon her Album's pages white.

But age the easy grace hath lost
That would become such pages most,
While of a quondam rhymester's skill,
Scarce aught is extant but the will ;
And sober, stinted age must use
The school-girl's worn and stale excuse,
When, long her correspondent's debtor,
The apology becomes the letter.

Apologies for those who need 'em !
An Album is a thing of freedom,
Receiving all with right good will
That fortune sends from many a quill,

And then displays like scaly store
Which fisher's net brings to the shore :
The herring sheath'd in silvery green,
The whiting in its pearly sheen,
The lithe and wavy eel that glides
Athwart the mackerel's tabbled sides;
John Dory with his dolphin head,
Where amber fins like horns are spread,
And flounder, sole, and thornback, all
In turn on some observer call,
To mark each varied form and tint ;
And from this simile a hint
Of some encouragement I take,
And humbly this my offering make,
Which if received with favour, truly
Will show that I have reckon'd duly
On what might homelier things commend, —
On the good nature of a friend.

ADDRESS TO A STEAMVESSEL.

FREIGHTED with passengers of every sort,
A motley throng, thou leav'st the busy port :
Thy long and ample deck, — where scatter'd lie
Baskets and cloaks and shawls of crimson dye ;
Where dogs and children through the crowd are
straying,
And on his bench apart the fiddler playing,
While matron dames to tressel'd seats repair, —
Seems, on the glassy waves, a floating fair.

Its dark form on the sky's pale azure cast,
Towers from this clustering group thy pillar'd mast ;
The dense smoke, issuing from its narrow vent,
Is to the air in curly volumes sent,
Which coiling and uncoiling on the wind,
Trail, like a writhing serpent, far behind.
Beneath, as each merged wheel its motion plies,
On either side the white-churn'd waters rise,
And newly parted from the noisy fray,
Track with light ridgy foam thy recent way,
Then far diverged, in many a lustrous line
On the still-moving distant surface shine.

Thou holdst thy course in independent pride ;
No leave ask'st thou of either wind or tide.
To whate'er point the breeze inconstant veer,
Still doth thy careless helmsman onward steer ;
As if the stroke of some magician's wand
Had lent thee power the ocean to command.
What is this power which thus within thee lurk
And all unseen, like a mask'd giant works ?
E'en that which gentle dames at morning tea,
From silver urn ascending, daily see
With tressy wreathings borne upon the air
Like loosen'd ringlets of a lady's hair ;

Or rising from th' enamell'd cup beneath,
With the soft fragrance of an infant's breath :
That which within the peasant's humble cot
Comes from the uncover'd mouth of savoury pot,
As his kind mate prepares his noonday fare,
Which cur and cat and rosy urchins share ;
That which, all silver'd by the moon's pale beam
Precedes the mighty Geysers' up-cast stream,
What time, with bellowing din, exploded forth,
It decks the midnight of the frozen north,
While travellers from their skin-spread couches rise
To gaze upon the sight with wondering eyes.

Thou hast to those " in populous city pent "
Glimpses of wild and beauteous nature lent,
A bright remembrance ne'er to be destroy'd,
That proves to them a treasure long enjoy'd,
And for this scope to beings erst confined,
I fain would hail thee with a grateful mind.
They who had nought of verdant freshness seen,
But suburb orchards choked with coleworts green,
Now, seated at their ease, may glide along,
Loch Lomond's fair and fairy Isles among ;
Where bushy promontories fondly peep
At their own beauty in the nether deep,
O'er drooping birch and rowan red that lave
Their fragrant branches in the glassy wave :
They who on higher objects scarce have counted
Than church-spire with its gilded vane surmounted,
May view within their near, distinctive ken
The rocky summits of the lofty Ben ;
Or see his purple shoulders darkly lower
Through the dim drapery of a summer shower.
Where, spread in broad and fair expanse, the Clyde
Mingles his waters with the briny tide,
Along the lesser Cumbray's rocky shore,
With moss and crusted lichens flecker'd o'er,
He who but warfare held with thievish cat,
Or from his cupboard chased a hungry rat,
The city cobbler, — scares the wild sea-mew
In its mid-flight with loud and shrill halloo ;
Or valiantly with fearful threatening shakes
His lank and greasy head at Kittywakes.*
The eyes that have no fairer outline seen,
Than chimney'd walls with slated roofs between,
Which hard and harshly edge the smoky sky,
May Arran's softly-vision'd peaks desery,
Coping with graceful state her steepy sides
O'er which the cloud's broad shadow swiftly glides,
And interlacing slopes that gently merge
Into the pearly mist of ocean's verge.
Eyes which admired that work of sordid skill,
The storied structure of a cotton mill,
May wondering now behold the unnumber'd host
Of marshal'd pillars on fair Ireland's coast,
Phalanx on phalanx ranged with sidelong bend,
Or broken ranks that to the main descend,

* The common or vulgar name of a bird frequenting that coast.

Like Pharaoh's army on the Red Sea shore,
Which deep and deeper sank, to rise no more.

Yet ne'ertheless, whate'er we owe to thee,
Rover at will on river, lake, and sea,
As profit's bait or pleasure's lure engage,
Offspring of Watt, that philosophic sage,
Who in the heraldry of science ranks
With those to whom men owe high meed of thanks
For genius usefully employ'd, whose fame
Shall still be link'd with Davy's splendid name;
Dearer to fancy, to the eye more fair
Are the light skiffs, that to the breezy air
Unfurl their swelling sails of snowy hue
Upon the moving lap of ocean blue:
As the proud swan on summer lake displays,
With plumage brightening in the morning rays,
Her fair pavilion of erected wings,
They change, and veer, and turn like living things.

With ample store of shrouding, sails, and mast,
To brave with manly skill the winter blast
Of every clime,—in vessels rigg'd like these
Did great Columbus cross the western seas,
And to the stinted thoughts of man reveal'd
What yet the course of ages had conceal'd:
In such as these, on high adventure bent,
Round the vast world Magellan's comrades went.
To such as these are hardy seamen found
As with the ties of kindred feeling bound,
Boasting, while cans of cheering grog they sip,
The varied fortunes of "our gallant ship:"
The offspring these of bold sagacious man,
Ere yet the reign of letter'd lore began.

In very truth, compared to these, thou art
A daily labourer, a mechanic swart,
In working weeds array'd of homely gray,
Opposed to gentle nymph or lady gay,
To whose free robes the graceful right is given
To play and dally with the winds of heaven.
Beholding thee, the great of other days
And modern men with all their alter'd ways,
Across my mind with hasty transit gleam,
Like fleeting shadows of a feverish dream:
Fitful I gaze, with adverse humours teased,
Half sad, half proud, half angry, and half pleased.

SONG,

WOO'D AND MARRIED AND A',

(VERSION TAKEN FROM AN OLD SONG OF THAT NAME.)

THE bride she is winsome and bonny,
Her hair it is snooded sae sleek,
And faithfu' and kind is her Johnny,
Yet fast fa' the tears on her cheek.
New pearlins are cause of her sorrow,
New pearlins and plenishing too,

The bride that has a' to borrow,
Has e'en right mickle ado,
Woo'd and married and a'!
Woo'd and married and a'!
Is na' she very weel aff
To be woo'd and married at a'?

Her mither then hastily spak,
"The lassie is glaikit wi' pride;
In my pouch I had never a plack
On the day when I was a bride.
E'en tak' to your wheel, and be clever,
And draw out your thread in the sun;
The gear that is gifted, it never
Will last like the gear that is won.
Woo'd and married and a'!
Wi' havins and tocher sae sma'!
I think ye are very weel aff,
To be woo'd and married at a'!"

"Toot, toot!" quo' her grey-headed faither,
"She's less o' a bride than a bairn,
She's ta'en like a cout frae the heather,
Wi' sense and discretion to learn.
Half husband, I trow, and half daddy,
As humour inconstantly leans,
The chiel maun be patient and steady,
That yokes wi' a mate in her teens.
A kerchief sae douce and sae neat,
O'er her locks that the winds used to blaw!
I'm baith like to laugh and to greet,
When I think o' her married at a'!"

Then out spak' the wily bridegroom,
Weel waled were his wordies, I ween,
"I'm rich, though my coffer be toom,
Wi' the blinks o' your bonny blue een.
I'm prouder o' thee by my side,
Though thy ruffles or ribbons be few,
Than if Kate o' the Croft were my bride,
Wi' purfes and pearlins enow.
Dear and dearest of ony!
Ye're woo'd and buikit and a'!"
And do ye think scorn o' your Johnny,
And grieve to be married at a'?"

She turn'd, and she blush'd, and she smiled,
And she looket sae bashfully down;
The pride o' her heart was beguiled,
And she played wi' the sleeves o' her gown;
She twirled the tag o' her lace,
And she nipet her boddice sae blue,
Synne blinket sae sweet in his face,
And aff like a maukin she flew.
Woo'd and married and a'!
Wi' Johnny to roose her and a'!
She thinks hersel very weel aff,
To be woo'd and married at a'!

A SONG,

(WRITTEN FOR MR. STRUTHER'S COLLECTION OF SONGS.)

It was on a morn, when we were thrang,
The kirk it croon'd, the cheese was making,
And bannocks on the girdle baking,
When ane at the door chapp't loud and lang.

Yet the auld gudewife and her mays sae tight,
Of a' this bauld din took sma' notice I ween ;
For a chap at the door in braid day-light,
Is no like a chap that's heard at e'en.

But the docksy auld laird of the Warlock glen,
Wha waited without, half blate, half cheery,
And lang'd for a sight o' his winsome deary,
Raised up the latch, and cam' crouselly ben.

His coat it was new, and his o'erlay was white,
His mittens and hose were cozie and bien ;
But a wooer that comes in braid day-light,
Is no like a wooer that comes at e'en.

He greeted the carline and lasses sae braw,
And his bare lyart pow, sae smoothly he strakit,
And he looket about, like a body half glaikit,
On bonny sweet Nanny, the youngest of a'.

"Ha laird!" quo' the carline, "and look ye that
way ?
Fy, let na' sic fancies bewilder you clean :
An elderlin man, in the noon o' the day,
Should be wiser than youngsters that come at
e'en."

"Na, na," quo' the pawky auld wife, "I trow,
You'll no' fash your head wi' a youthfu' gilly,
As wild and as skeigh as a muirland filly ;
Black Madge is far better and fitter for you."

He hem'd and he haw'd, and he drew in his mouth,
And he squeezed the blue bannet his twa hands
between,
For a wooer that comes when the sun's i' the south,
Is mair landward than woovers that come at e'en.

"Black Madge is sae carefu'"—"What's that to
me ?"

"She's sober and eydent, has sense in her noddle :
She's douce and respeckit"—"I care na' a bodle :
Love winna be guided, and fancy's free."

Madge toss'd back her head wi' a saucy slight,
And Nanny, loud laughing, ran out to the
green ;
For a wooer that comes when the sun shines bright
Is no like a wooer that comes at e'en.

Then away flung the laird, and loud mutter'd he,
"A' the daughters of Eve, between Orkney and
Tweed, O !

Black or fair, young or auld, dame or damsel or
widow,
May gang in their pride to the de'il for me !"

But the auld gudewife and her mays sae tight
Cared little for a' his stour banning, I ween ;
For a wooer that comes in braid day-light,
Is no like a wooer that comes at e'en.

FY, LET US A' TO THE WEDDING.

(AN AULD SANG, NEW BUSKIT.)

Fy, let us a' to the wedding,
For they will be liting there ;
For Jock's to be married to Maggy,
The lass wi' the gowden hair.

And there will be jibing and jeering,
And glancing of bonny dark een,
Loud laughing and smooth-gabbit speering
O' questions baith pawky and keen.

And there will be Bessy the beauty,
Wha raises her cockup sae hie,
And giggles at preachings and duty,
Guid grant that she gang na' ajee !

And there will be auld Geordie Taunner,
Wha coft a young wife wi' his gowd ;
She'll flaunt wi' a silk gown upon her,
But wow ! he looks dowie and cow'd.

And brown Tibby Foulter the Heiress
Will perk at the tap o' the ha',
Encircled wi' suitors, wha's care is
To catch up her gloves when they fa',—

Repeat a' her jokes as they're cleckit,
And haver and glower in her face,
When tocherless mays are neglectit,—
A crying and scandalous case.

And Mysie, wha's clavering aunty
Wad match her wi' Laurie the Laird,
And learns the young fule to be vaunty,
But neither to spin nor to caird.

And Andrew, wha's Granny is yearning
To see him a clerical blade,
Was sent to the college for learning,
And cam' back a coof as he gaed.

And there will be auld Widow Martin,
That ca's hersel thrifty and twa !
And thraw-gabbit Madge wha for certain
Was jilted by Hab o' the Shaw.

And Elspy the sewster sae genty,
A pattern of havens and sense,
Will straik on her mittens sae dainty,
And crack wi' Mess John i' the spence.

And Angus, the seer o' ferlies,
That sits on the stane at his door,
And tells about bogles, and mair lies
Than tongue ever utter'd before.

And there will be Bauldy the boaster,
Sae ready wi' hands and wi' tongue ;
Proud Paty and silly Sam Foster,
Wha quarrel wi' auld and wi' young :

And Hugh the town-writer, I'm thinking,
That trades in his lawerly skill,
Will egg on the fighting and drinking
To bring after-grist to his mill :

And Maggy — na, na ! we'll be civil,
And let the wee bridie a-be ;
A vilipend tongue is the devil,
And ne'er was encouraged by me.

Then fy, let us a' to the wedding,
For they will be liltin' there,
Frae mony a far-distant ha'din',
The fun and the feasting to share.

For they will get sheep's head, and haggis,
And browst o' the barley-mow ;
E'en he that comes latest, and lag is,
May feast upon dainties enow :

Veal florentines in the o'en baken,
Weel plenish'd wi' raisins and fat.
Beef, mutton, and chuckies, a' taken
Het reeking frae spit and frae pat :

And glasses (I trow 'tis na' said ill),
To drink the young couple good luck,
Weel fill'd wi' a braw beechen ladle
Frae punch-bowl as big as Dumbuck.

And then will come dancing and daffing,
And reelin and crossin o' hans,
Till even auld Lucky is laughing,
As back by the aumry she stans.

Sic bobbing and flinging and whirling,
While fiddlers are making their din ;
And pipers are droning and skirling,
As loud as the roar o' the lin.

Then fy, let us a' to the wedding,
For they will be liltin' there,
For Jock's to be married to Maggy,
The lass wi' the gowden hair.

HOOLY AND FAIRLY.

(FOUNDED ON AN OLD SCOTCH SONG.)

OH, neighbours ! what had I a-do for to marry !
My wife she drinks posset and wine o' Canary,
And ca's me a niggardly, thraw-gabbit cairly,
O, gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly !
Hooly and fairly, hooly and fairly,
O, gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly !

She sups wi' her kimmers on dainties enow,
Aye bowing and smirking and wiping her mou',
While I sit aside, and am helpit but sparely,
O, gin my wife wad feast hooly and fairly !
Hooly and fairly, hooly and fairly,
O, gin my wife wad feast hooly and fairly !

To fairs and to bridals and preachings and a',
She gangs sae light headed and buskit sae braw,
In ribbons and mantuas that gar me gae barely !
O, gin my wife wad spend hooly and fairly !
Hooly and fairly, hooly and fairly,
O, gin my wife wad spend hooly and fairly !

I' the kirk sic commotion last Sabbath she made,
Wi' babs o' red roses and breast-knots o'erlaid !
The Dominie stickit the psalm very nearlly :
O, gin my wife wad dress hooly and fairly !
Hooly and fairly, hooly and fairly,
O, gin my wife wad dress hooly and fairly !

She's warring and flyin' frae morning till e'en,
And if ye gainsay her, her een glow'r sae keen,
Then tongue, nieve, and cudgel she'll lay on ye
sairly :
O, gin my wife wad strike hooly and fairly !
Hooly and fairly, hooly and fairly,
O, gin my wife wad strike hooly and fairly !

When tired wi' her cantrips, she lies in her bed,
The wark a' negleckit, the chaumer unred,
While a' our guid neighbours are stirring sae early :
O, gin my wife wad wurk timely and fairly !
Timely and fairly, timely and fairly,
O, gin my wife wad wurk timely and fairly !

A word o' guid counsel or grace she'll hear none ;
She bandies the Elders, and mocks at Mess John,
While back in his teeth his own text she flings rarely -
O, gin my wife wad speak hooly and fairly !
Hooly and fairly, hooly and fairly,
O, gin my wife wad speak hooly and fairly !

I wish I were single, I wish I were freed ;
 I wish I were doited, I wish I were dead,
 Or she in the mounds, to dement me nae mair, lay !
 What does it 'vail to cry hooly and fairly !
 Hooly and fairly, hooly and fairly,
 Wasting my breath to cry hooly and fairly !

THE LADY IN HER CAR.

(A NIGHT-SCENE BY THE SEA.)

THERE is darkness on a dangerous coast,
 Where waves on waves are wildly toss'd.
 High cliffs, and rifted rocks between ;
 The strife is terrific, and all unseen.
 Ay, loud is the roar of winds and waves,
 As strong contention wildly raves ;
 A fearful sound of a fearful commotion,—
 The many angry voices of the ocean.

Along the shore from cottage homes
 No sound of stirring inmate comes,
 Though some on restless beds there be
 Whose thoughts are with the wanderers of the sea.
 Hark ! from the mingled din an utter'd sound,
 Distinct and awful, booming through the air,
 A signal of distress ; some ship aground,
 With all her hardy crew to perish there !
 Another booming sound ! must they be lost,
 Within man's hearing, on this ruthless coast ?

No, from the lady's window lights appear ;
 There's stirring life within, and blessed help is near.
 And sooth to say, in some few minutes more
 The lady's car is at the door
 Herself into the seat is lifted,
 And to her hands the reins are shifted.

But who is she, whose deeds fulfill
 The generous impulse of her will
 So quickly ? — One, with limbs nerve-bound,
 Whose feet have never trod the ground ;
 Who loves, in tomes of Runick lore,
 To scan the curious tales of yore,
 Of gods and heroes, dimly wild ;
 And hath intently oft beguiled
 Her passing hours with mystic rhymes,
 Legends by bards rehearsed of other times :
 Learned, and loving learning well ;
 For college hall or cloister'd cell
 A student meet, yet all the while
 As meet with repartee and smile,
 'Mid easy converse, polish'd, blithe, and boon,
 To join the circles of a gay saloon :
 From childhood rear'd in wealth and ease,
 The daily care herself to please,
 For selfish nature here below
 A dangerous state, I trow.

Such is the dame who, reins in hand,
 Drives forth, and checks her courser on the strand,
 Where torches blaze, and figures rude
 Pictured on darkness, round her stood ;
 And she on th' instant in that trying hour
 Becomes to them a spirit, and a pow'r
 To rouse, and to command. —
 Those hardy seamen she had taught
 To guide the life-boat with its fraught
 Of living souls, through surf and surge,
 And brave the whirling eddy's scourge.
 But now, all daunted, in amaze
 They doggedly upon her gaze,
 And sternly murmur short reply. —
 " Will ye then all stand coldly by ;
 With faint hearts shrinking in dismay
 Let the dark deep devour its prey,
 Your friends, your brothers, gallant men,
 Who ne'er must see their homes again ?
 But no — my words her words may not express :
 Their generous import your own hearts will guess.
 And they their lady's voice obey,
 Unto the boat-house wend their way,
 Launch the light vessel from the shore
 Amid the angry surges' roar ;
 Vaulting and sinking, as they go
 The waves above, or waves below ;
 While their mix'd words of terror, or of cheer,
 Sad friends upon the shore confus'dly hear.
 It was an awful thing for them to wait
 The issue of their comrades' doubtful fate. —

Minutes like hours have slowly past,
 Each sadder, slower than the last,
 While fancied voices oft betray
 The wistful ear, and pass away.
 At length in sooth a nearing sound, though faint,
 Of oars and tongues from moderate distance sent !
 It cannot be the mocking tempest's cry,
 It comes again, must be reality :
 The boat, the boat ! its iron tackles ringing !
 And from its sides man after man is springing,
 Who strangely rock and stagger on the land,
 As though they knew not how to stand.
 It is our own : they've nobly braved,
 And brought to shore their dearly saved.
 Loud shouts of thankful joy and pride
 From the beach inland echo far and wide.

The Lady's grateful heart beats high,
 Whilst quick of thought, and quick of eye,
 She gives directions on the spot ;
 And forthwith each in kindly cot,
 With raiment, food, and bed supplied,
 Cheered with soothing words beside,
 Five hardy seamen lay them down to sleep,
 Who else had seen no more the sun's glad ray,
 Whose place of rest before the peep of day
 Had been the yawning deep :

Men, brave and useful, stark and strong,
Who each to some loved home belong,
Wherc loving mates and kinsfolk dear
Think of their absent mariner with fear.

Still on the beach some thoughtful stragglers stay
To watch the earliest streak of coming day,
As there it dimly marks the distant main :
And the lady returns to her home again,
With the sound of blessings in her ear
From young and old her heart to cheer :
Sweet thoughts within her secret soul to cherish—
The blessings of those who were ready to perish ;
And there lays her down on her peaceful pillow,
Bless'd by the Lord of the wind and the billow.

TO JAMES B. BAILLIE,

AN INFANT.

God's blessing rest upon thy harmless head,
My little James ! Well mayst thou ever speed
On life's uncertain journey, firm and straight
Thy onward steps unto the opening gate,
At which the good and just shall enter in,
And there a higher, happier life begin !
Or rough or smooth the way that must be past,
What boots it, if thou gain thy home at last ?
Yet, ne'ertheless I fain would hope that thou
Shalt with thy playmates three be happy now,
And throw a brightness round the native hearth,
To cheer their grateful hearts who gave thee birth.
Thy steps of eager speed at early day,
Thine eyes of glancing joy in buoyant play,
Thy words of sweet affection may delight
Their yearning fondness, and dear hopes excite :
Yea, Heaven perhaps thine aged Aunt may spare
Some years in these thy childhood's beams to share ;
Thy fair beginning may her ending cheer,
But aught beyond will not to her appear,
And when to man's estate thou dost attain,
No trace of her will in thy mind remain.
Ay, so it needs must be, and be it so,
Though ne'er for thee will heart more warmly glow !

Thou wearst his name, who in his stinted span
Of human life, a generous useful man,
Did well the pastor's* honour'd task perform.
The toilsome way, the winter's beating storm,
Ne'er kept him from the peasant's distant cot
Where want or suffering were the inmate's lot,
Who look'd for comfort in his friendly face,
As by the sick-bed's side he took his place.
A peace-maker in each divided home
To him all strife-perplexed folk would come.

* He was the greater part of his life a country clergyman, and afterwards Professor of Divinity at Glasgow. He died at the age of fifty-four.

In after years how earnestly he strove
In sacred lore his students to improve !
As they met round the academic chair
Each felt a zealous friend address'd him there.
He was thy grandsire's sire, who in his day,
That, many years gone by, hath pass'd away,
On human gratitude had many claims ;—
Be thou as good a man, my little James !

THE WEARY PUND O' TOW.

A YOUNG gudewife is in my house,
And thrifty means to be,
But ay she's runnin' to the town,
Some ferlie there to see.
The weary pund, the weary pund, the weary pund
o' tow,
I soothly think, ere it be spun, I'll wear a lyart pow.

And when she sets her to her wheel
To draw her threads wi' care,
In comes the chapman wi' his gear,
And she can spin nae mair.
The weary pund, &c.

And she, like ony merry may,
At fairs maun still be seen,
At kirkyard preachings near the tent,
At dances on the green.
The weary pund, &c.

Her dainty ear a fiddle charms,
A bagpipe's her delight,
But for the crooning o' her wheel
She disna care a mite.
The weary pund, &c.

You spake, my Kate, of snaw-white webs,
Made o' your linkum twine,
But, ah ! I fear our bonny burn
Will ne'er lave web o' thine.
The weary pund, &c.

Nay, smile again, my winsome mate,
Sic jeering means nae ill,
Should I gae sarkless to my grave,
I'll lo'e and bless thee still.
The weary pund, &c.

TAM O' THE LIN.

TAM o' the Lin was fu' o' pride,
And his weapon he girt to his valorous side,
A scabbard o' leather wi' deil-haet within,—
“ Attack me wha daur ! ” quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin he bought a mear,
She cost him five shilling, she was na' dear,
Her back stuck up and her sides fell in,—
"A fiery yaud," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin he courted a may,
She stared at him sourly and said him nay,
But he stroked down his jerkin and cock'd up his
chin,—
"She aims at a laird then," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin he gaed to the fair,
Yet he look'd wi' disdain on the chapman's ware,
Then chuck'd out a saxpence, the saxpence was
tin,—
"There's coin for the fiddlers," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin wad show his lare,
And he scann'd o'er the book wi' a wiselike stare,
He mutter'd confusedly but didna begin,—
"This is Dominie's business," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin had a cow wi' ae horn,
That liket to feed on his neighbour's corn,
The stanes he threw at her fell short o' her skin,—
"She's a lucky auld reiver," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin he married a wife,
And she was the torment, the plague o' his life;
She lays sae about her, and makes sic a din,—
"She frightens the bailie," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin grew dowie and douce,
And he sat on a stane at the end o' his house:
What ails thee, auld chield? he looks haggard and
thin,—
"I'm no vera cheery," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin lay down to die,
And his friends whisper'd softly and woefully,
We'll buy you some masses to scour away sin,—
"And drink at my latewake," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

NEW WORDS TO THE OLD SCOTCH AIR
OF "THE WEE PICKLE TOW."

A LIVELY young lass had a wee pickle tow,
And she thought to try the spinning o't;
She sat by the fire and her rock took a low,
And that was an ill beginning o't.
Loud and shrill was the cry that she utter'd, I
ween;
The sudden mischanter brought tears to her een;
Her face it was fair, but her temper was keen;
O dole for the ill beginning o't!

She stamp'd on the floor and her twa hands she
wruung,
Her bonnie sweet mou' she crooket O!
And fell was the outbreak o' words fra her tongue;
Like one sair demented she looket O!
"Foul fa' the inventor o' rock and o' reel!
I hope, guid forgie me, he's now wi' the deil,
He brought us mair trouble than help, wot I weel,
O dole for the ill beginning o't!"

And now when they're spinning and kemping awa',
They'll talk o' my rock, and the burning o't,
While Tibbie, and Mysie, and Maggie, and a'
Into some silly joke will be turning it;
They'll say I was doited, they'll say I was fou',
They'll say I was dowie, and Robin untrue,
They'll say in the fire some luve-pouthier I threw,
And that made the ill beginning o't!

O curst be the day and unchancy the hour,
When I sat me adown to the spinning o't!
Then some evil spirit or warlock had pow'r,
And made sic an ill beginning o't:
May Spunkie my feet to the boggie betray,
The lunzie folk steal my new kirtle away,
And Robin forsake me for douce Effie Gray,
The next time I try the spinning o't!

SONG,

CALLED "THE COUNTRY LADY'S REVEILLIE."

FROM early fire wending
The smoke is ascending,
And with the clouds blending,
Awake, awake!

FROM green covert creeping
Wild creatures are peeping,
Fy! sloth of dull sleeping
Forsake, forsake!

THE cocks are a-crowing,
The kine are a-lowing,
The milk-pail is flowing,
Awake, awake!
THE dew-drops are gleaming,
And bright eyes are beaming,
The mist of pale dreaming
Forsake, forsake!

NOW maidens are bracing,
And bodices lacing,
The slender form gracing,
Awake, awake!
ON slipper'd toe stealing,
Thy fair face revealing,
The curtain's dark sheeling
Forsake, forsake!

VOLUNTEER'S SONG,

WRITTEN IN 1803.

YE who Britain's soldiers be,—
 Freemen, children of the free,
 Who quickly come at danger's call,
 From shop and palace, cot and hall,
 And brace ye bravely up in warlike gear,
 For all that ye hold dear ;

Blest in your hands be sword and spear !
 There is no banded Briton here
 On whom some fond mate hath not smiled,
 Or hung in love some lisp'ing child,
 Or aged parent, bringing his last stay,
 With locks of honour'd gray.

Such men behold with steady pride,
 The threaten'd tempest gathering wide,
 And list with onward form inclined
 To sound of foe-men on the wind,
 And bravely act amid the battle's roar,
 In scenes untried before.

Let veterans boast, as well they may,
 Nerves steel'd in many a bloody day ;
 The generous heart, who takes his stand
 Upon his free and native land,
 Doth, with the first sound of the hostile drum,
 A fearless man become.

Then come, ye hosts, that madly pour
 From wave-toss'd floats upon our shore !
 If fell or gentle, false or true,
 Let those inquire, who wish to sue :
 Nor fiend nor hero from a foreign strand,
 Shall lord it in our land.

Come, then, ye hosts that madly pour
 From wave-toss'd floats upon our shore !
 An adverse wind or breezeless main
 Lock'd in their ports our tars detain,
 To waste their eager spirits, vainly keen,
 Else here ye had not been.

Yet ne'ertheless, in strong array,
 Prepare ye for a well-fought day.
 Let banners wave and trumpets sound,
 And closing cohorts darken round,
 And the fierce onset raise its mingled roar,
 New sound on England's shore !

Freemen, children of the free,
 Are brave alike on land or sea ;
 And every rood of British ground,
 On which a hostile spear is found,
 Proves under their firm tread and vigorous stroke,
 A deck of royal oak.

SONG,

WRITTEN FOR AN IRISH AIR.

THE morning air plays on my face,
 And through the grey mist peering
 The soften'd sun I sweetly trace,
 Wood, moor, and mountain cheering,
 Larks aloft are singing,
 Hares from covert springing,
 And o'er the fen the wild-duck brood
 Their early way are winging.

Bright every dewy hawthorn shines,
 Sweet every herb is growing,
 To him whose willing heart inclines
 The way that he is going.
 Clearly do I see now
 What will shortly be now ;
 I'm patting at her door poor Tray,
 Who fawns and welcomes me now.

How slowly moves the rising latch !
 How quick my heart is beating !
 That worldly dame is on the watch
 To frown upon our meeting.
 Fy ! why should I mind her,
 See who stands behind her,
 Whose eye upon her traveller looks
 The sweeter and the kinder.

O every bounding step I take,
 Each hour the clock is telling,
 Bears me o'er mountain, bourn, and brake,
 Still nearer to her dwelling.
 Day is shining brighter,
 Limbs are moving lighter,
 While every thought to Nora's love
 But binds my love the tighter.

SONG,

FOR AN IRISH AIR.

COME, form we round a cheerful ring,
 And broach the foaming ale,
 And let the merry maiden sing,
 The beldame tell her tale.

And let the sightless harper sit
 The blazing fagot near ;
 And let the jester vent his wit,
 The nurse her bantering cheer.

Who shakes the door with angry din,
 And would admitted be ?
 No, Gossip Winter ! snug within,
 We have no room for thee.

Go scud it o'er Killarney's lake,
And shake the willows bare,
Where water-elves their pastime take,
Thou't find thy comrades there.

Will-o'-the-wisp skips in the dell,
The owl hoots on the tree,
They hold their nightly vigil well,
And so the while will we.

Then strike we up the rousing glee,
And pass the beaker round,
Till every head, right merrily,
Is moving to the sound !

A SCOTCH SONG.

THE gowan glitters on the sward,
The lavrock's in the sky,
And collie on my plaid keeps ward,
And time is passing by.
Oh no ! sad and slow
And lengthen'd on the ground,
The shadow of our trysting bush,
It wears so slowly round !

My sheep-bell tinkles frae the west,
My lambs are bleating near,
But still the sound that I lo'e best,
Alack ! I canna' hear.
Oh no ! sad and slow,
The shadow lingers still,
And like a lanely ghaist I stand
And croon upon the hill.

I hear below the water roar,
The mill wi' clacking din,
And Lucky scolding frae her door,
To ca' the bairnies in.
Oh no ! sad and slow,
These are na' sounds for me,
The shadow of our trysting bush,
It creeps sae drearily !

I coft yestreen, frae Chapman Tam,
A snood of bonny blue,
And promised when our trysting cam',
To tie it round her brow.
Oh no ! sad and slow,
The mark it winna' pass ;
The shadow of that weary thorn,
Is tether'd on the grass.

O now I see her on the way,
She's past the witch's knowe,
She's climbing up the Brownny's brae,
My heart is in a lowe !

Oh no ! tis no' so,
'Tis glam'rie I have seen ;
The shadow of that hawthorn bush,
Will move na' mair till e'en.

My book o' grace I'll try to read,
Though conn'd wi' little skill,
When collie barks I'll raise my head,
And find her on the hill ;
Oh no ! sad and slow,
The time will ne'er be gane,
The shadow of the trysting bush,
Is fix'd like ony stane.

SONG,

POVERTY PARTS GOOD COMPANY,

(FOR AN OLD SCOTCH AIR.)

WHEN my o'erlay was white as the foam o' the lin,
And siller was chinkin my pouches within,
When my lambkins were bleatin on meadow and
brae,

As I went to my love in new cleeding sae gay,
Kind was she, and my friends were free,
But poverty parts good company.

How swift pass'd the minutes and hours of delight,
When piper play'd cheerly, and crusie burn'd
bright,

And link'd in my hand was the maiden sae dear,
As she footed the floor in her holyday gear !

Woe is me ; and can it then be,
That poverty parts sic company ?

We met at the fair, and we met at the kirk,
We met i' the sunshine, we met i' the mirk ;
And the sound o' her voice, and the blinks o' her
een,

The cheerin and life of my bosom hae been.
Leaves frae the tree, at Martinmass flee,
And poverty parts sweet company.

At bridal and infare, I braced me wi' pride,
The broose I hae won, and a kiss o' the bride ;
And loud was the laughter good fellows among,
As I utter'd my banter or chorus'd my song ;
Dowie and dree are jestin and glee,
When poverty spoils good company.

Wherever I gaed kindly lasses look'd sweet,
And mithers and aunties were unco discreet ;
While kebbuck and bicker were set on the board ;
But now they pass by me, and never a word !
Sae let it be, for the worldly and sless
Wi' poverty keep nae company.

But the hope of my love is a cure for its smart,
 And the spae-wife has tauld me to keep up my
 heart,
 For, wi' my last saxpence, her loof I hae crost,
 And the bliss that is fated can never be lost.
 Though cruelly we may ilka day see
 How poverty parts dear company.

SONG,

(FOR A SCOTCH AIR).

O SWIFTLY glides the bonny boat
 Just parted from the shore,
 And, to the fisher's chorus note,
 Soft moves the dipping oar!
 His toils are borne with lightsome cheer,
 And ever may they speed,
 Who feeble age, and helpmates dear,
 And tender bairnies feed.

CHORUS.

We cast our lines in Largo Bay,
 Our nets are floating wide,
 Our bonny boat with yielding sway
 Rocks lightly on the tide;
 And happy prove our daily lot,
 Upon the summer sea!
 And blest on land our kindly cot,
 Where all our treasures be!

The Mermaid on her rock may sing,
 The Witch may weave her charm,
 Nor Water-Sprite, nor elrich thing
 The bonny boat can harm.
 It safely bears its scaly store
 Through many a stormy gale,
 While joyful shouts rise from the shore,
 Its homeward prow to hail.

CHORUS.

We cast our lines, &c.

A SAILOR'S SONG.*

WHILE clouds on high are riding,
 The wintry moonshine hiding,
 The raging blast abiding,
 O'er mountain waves we go,
 We go, we go, we go,
 Bravely we go, we go.

With hind, the dry land reaping,—
 With townsman, shelter keeping,—
 With lord, on soft down sleeping,—

* Written at the request of Mr. Galt for his Musical Selection, called "The Banquet," performed for the benefit of the Caledonian Asylum, (the music from Macbeth).

Change we our lot? O no!
 O no! O no! O no!
 Change we our lot? O no!

On stormy main careering,
 Each sea-mate, sea-mate cheering,
 With dauntless helmsman steering,
 Our forthward course we hold,
 We hold, we hold, we hold,
 Our forthward course we hold, we hold.

Their sails with sunbeams whiten'd,
 Themselves with glory brighten'd,
 From care their bosoms lighten'd,
 Who shall return?—the bold;
 The bold, the bold, the bold;
 Only the bold! the bold!

SONG.

(A NEW VERSION OF AN OLD SCOTCH SONG).

"SAW ye Johnny comin'?" quo' she,
 "Saw ye Johnny comin'?"
 Wi' his blue bonnet on his head,
 And his doggie runnin'
 Yestreen about the gloamin' time
 I chanced to see him comin',
 Whistling merrily the tune
 That I am a' day hummin'," quo' she,
 "I am a' day hummin'."

"Fee him, faither, fee him," quo' she,
 "Fee him, faither, fee him;
 A' the wark about the house
 Gaes wi' me when I see him:
 A' the wark about the house,
 I gang sae lightly through it;
 And though ye pay some merks o' gear,
 Hoot! ye winna rue it," quo' she,
 "No; ye winna rue it."

"What wad I do wi' him, hizzy?
 What wad I do wi' him?
 He's ne'er a sark upon his back,
 And I hae nane to gie him."
 "I hae twa sarks into my kist,
 And ane o' them I'll gie him;
 And for a merk o' mair fee,
 O, dinna stand wi' him," quo' she,
 "Dinna stand wi' him."

"Weel do I lo'e him," quo' she,
 "Weel do I lo'e him,
 The brawest lads about the place
 Are a' but haverels to him.
 O fee him, faither; lang I trow

We've dull and dowie been ;
 He'll haud the plough, thrash i' the barn,
 And crack wi' me at e'en," quo' she,
 " Crack wi' me at e'en."

SIR MAURICE :

A BALLAD.

SIR MAURICE was a wealthy lord,
 He lived in the north countrie ;
 Well could he cope with foeman's sword,
 Or the glance of a lady's eye.

Now all his armed vassals wait,
 A staunch and burly band,
 Before his stately Castle's gate,
 Bound for the Holy Land.

Above the spearmen's lengthen'd file,
 Are pictured ensigns flying ;
 Stroked by their keeper's hand the while,
 Are harness'd chargers neighing.

And looks of woe, and looks of cheer,
 And looks the two between,
 On many a warlike face appear,
 Where tears have lately been.

For all they love is left behind,
 Hope beckons them before ;
 Their parting sails swell with the wind,
 Blown from their native shore.

Then through the crowded portal pass'd
 Six goodly knights and tall,
 Sir Maurice himself, who came the last,
 Was goodliest of them all.

And proudly roved his hasty eye
 O'er all the warlike train ; —
 " Save ye ! brave comrades ! — prosperously,
 Heaven send us cross the main !

" But see I right ? — an armed band
 From Moorham's lordless hall ;
 And he, who bears the high command,
 Its ancient Seneschal !

" Return, your stately keep defend ;
 Defend your lady's bower,
 Lest rude and lawless hands should rend
 That lone and lovely flower."

" God will defend our lady dear,
 And we will cross the sea,
 From slavery's chain, his lot severe,
 Our noble lord to free."

" Nay, nay ! some wandering minstrel's tongue,
 Hath framed a story vain ;
 Thy lord, his liege-men brave among,
 Near Acre's wall was slain."

" Nay, good my lord ! for had his life
 Been lost on battle-ground,
 When ceased that fell and fatal strife,
 His body had been found."

" No faith to such delusion give ;
 His mortal term is past" —
 " Not so, not so ! he is alive,
 And will be found at last !"

These latter words, right eagerly,
 From a slender stripling broke,
 Who stood the ancient warrior by,
 And trembled as he spoke.

Sir Maurice started at the sound,
 And all, from top to toe,
 The stripling scann'd, who to the ground,
 His blushing face bent low.

" Is this thy kinsman, Seneschal ?
 Thy own or thy sister's son ?
 A gentler page, in tent or hall,
 Mine eyes ne'er look'd upon.

" To thine own home return, fair youth !
 To thine own home return ;
 Give ear to likely, sober truth,
 Nor prudent counsel spurn.

" War suits thee not if boy thou art ;
 And if a sweeter name
 Befit thee, do not lightly part
 With maiden's honour'd fame."

He turn'd him from his liege-men all,
 Who round their chieftain press'd ;
 His very shadow on the wall
 His troubled mind express'd.

As sometimes slow and sometimes fast
 He paced to and fro,
 His plumed crest now upwards cast
 In air, now drooping low.

Sometimes, like one in frantic mood,
 Short words of sound he utter'd,
 And sometimes, stopping short, he stood
 As to himself he mutter'd :

" A daughter's love, a maiden's pride !
 And may they not agree ?
 Could man desire a lovelier bride,
 A truer friend than she ?

“ Down, cursed thought ! a stripling's garb,
 Betrays not wanton will ;
 Yet sharper than an arrow's barb,
 That fear might wound me still.”

He mutter'd long, then to the gate
 Return'd and look'd around,
 But the Seneschal and his stripling mate
 Were nowhere to be found.

With outward cheer and inward smart
 In warlike, fair array,
 Did Maurice with his bands depart,
 And shoreward bent his way.

Their stately ship rode near to port,
 The warriors to receive,
 And there, with blessings kind but short,
 Did friends of friends take leave.

And soon they saw the crowded strand
 Wear dimly from their view,
 And soon they saw the distant land,
 A line of hazy blue.

The white-sail'd ship with favouring breeze,
 In all her gallant pride,
 Moved like the mistress of the seas,
 That rippled far and wide.

Sometimes with steady course she went,
 O'er wave and surge careering,
 Sometimes with sidelong mast she bent,
 Her wings the sea-foam sheering.

Sometimes with poles and rigging bare
 She scudded before the blast,
 But safely by the Syrian shore
 Her anchor dropp'd at last.

What martial honours Maurice won,
 Join'd with the brave and great,
 From the fierce, faithless Saracen,
 I may not here relate.

With boldest band on bridge or moat,
 With champion on the plain,
 'T the narrow bloody breach he fought,
 Choked up with grisly slain.

Most valiant by the valiant deem'd,
 Their praise his deeds proclaim'd,
 And the eyes of his liege-men brightly beam'd,
 When they heard their leader named.

But fate will quell the hero's strength,
 And dim the loftiest brow,
 And this our noble chief at length
 Was in the dust laid low.

He lay the heaps of dead beneath,
 As sank life's flickering flame,
 And thought it was the trance of death,
 That o'er his senses came.

And when again day's blessed light
 Did on his vision fall,
 There stood by his side—a wondrous sight—
 The ancient Seneschal.

He strove, but could not utter word ;
 His misty senses fled ;
 Again he woke, and Moorham's lord
 Was bending o'er his bed.

A third time sank he as if dead,
 And then his eye-lids raising,
 He saw a chief with turban'd head,
 Intently on him gazing.

“ The Prophet's zealous servant I ;
 His battles I've fought and won :
 Christians I scorn, their creeds deny,
 But honour Mary's Son.

“ And I have wedded an English dame,
 And set her parent free ;
 And none who bear an English name,
 Shall e'er be thrall'd by me.

“ For her dear sake I can endure
 All wrong, all hatred smother ;
 Whate'er I feel, thou art secure,
 As though thou wert my brother.”

“ And thou hast wedded an English dame !”
 Sir Maurice said no more,
 For o'er his heart soft weakness came,
 He sigh'd and wept full sore.

And many a dreary day and night,
 With the Moslem Chief stay'd he,
 But ne'er could catch, to bless his sight,
 One glimpse of the fair lady.

Oft gazed he on her lattice high,
 As he paced the court below,
 And turn'd his listening ear to try,
 If word or accent low

Might haply reach him there ; and oft
 Traversed the garden green,
 And thought some footstep, small and soft,
 Might on the turf be seen.

And oft to Moorham's lord he gave
 His eager ear, who told
 How he became a wretched slave,
 Within that Syrian hold ;

What time from liege-men parted far,
Upon the battle-field,
By stern and adverse fate of war,
He was compell'd to yield :

And how his daughter did by stealth,
So boldly cross the sea,
With secret store of gather'd wealth,
To set her father free :

And how into the foeman's hands
She and her people fell ;
And how (herself in captive bands)
She sought him in his cell ;

And but a captive boy appear'd,
Till grief her sex betray'd ;
And the fierce Saracen, so fear'd,
Spoke kindly to the maid :

How for her plighted hand sued he,
And solemn promise gave,
Her noble father should be free,
With every Christian slave ;

(For many there, in bondage kept,
Felt the base rule of vice,)
How long she ponder'd, sorely wept,
Then paid the fearful price.

A tale that made his bosom thrill, —
His faded eyes to weep ;
He waking thought upon it still,
And saw it in his sleep.

But harness rings, and the trumpet's bray
Again to battle calls,
And Christian Powers in grand array,
Are near those Moslem walls.

Sir Maurice heard ; untoward fate !
Sad to be thought upon !
But the castle's lord unlock'd its gate,
And bade his guest be gone.

" Fight thou for faith by thee adored,
By thee so well maintain'd ;
But never may this trusty sword,
With blood of thine be stain'd !"

Sir Maurice took him by the hand,
" God bless thee too !" — he cried ;
Then to the nearest Christian band,
With mingled feelings hid.

The battle join'd, with dauntless pride,
'Gainst foemen, foemen stood,
And soon the fatal field was dyed
With many a brave man's blood.

At length gave way the Moslem force ;
Their valiant chief was slain ;
Maurice protected his lifeless corse,
And bore it from the plain.

There's mourning in the Moslem halls,
A dull and dismal sound ;
The lady left its 'leaguer'd walls,
And safe protection found.

When months were past, the widow'd dame
Look'd calm and cheerfully ;
Then Maurice to her presence came,
And bent him on his knee.

What words of penitence or suit
He utter'd, pass we by ;
The lady wept, awhile was mute,
Then gave this firm reply :

" That thou didst doubt my maiden pride,
(A thought that rose and vanish'd
So fleetingly) I will not chide ;
'Tis from remembrance banish'd.

" But thy fair fame, earn'd by that sword,
Still spotless shall it be :
I was the bride of a Moslem lord,
And will never be bride to thee."

So firm though gentle was her look,
Hope on the instant fled ;
A solemn, dear farewell he took,
And from her presence sped.

And she a plighted nun became,
God serving day and night ;
And he of blest Jerusalem,
A brave and zealous knight,

But that their lot was one of woe,
Wot ye, because of this
Their separate single state ? — if so,
In sooth ye judge amiss.

She tends the helpless stranger's bed,
For alms her wealth is stored ;
On her meek worth God's grace is shed,
Man's grateful blessings pour'd.

He still in warlike mail doth stalk,
In arms his prowess prove ;
And oft of siege or battle talk,
And sometimes of his love.

His noble countenance the while,
Would youthful listeners please,
When with alter'd voice, and a sweet sad smile
He utter'd such words as these :

"She was the fairest of the fair,
The gentlest of the kind;
Search ye the wide world every where,
Her like ye shall not find.

"She was the fairest, is the best,
Too good for a monarch's bride;
I would not give her, in nun's coif drest,
For all her sex beside."

TO MRS. SIDDONS.

GIFTED of heaven! who' hast, in days gone by,
Moved every heart, delighted every eye;
While age and youth, of high and low degree,
In sympathy were join'd, beholding thee,
As in the Drama's ever changing scene,
Thou heldest thy splendid state, our tragic queen!
No barriers there thy fair domains confined,
Thy sovereign sway was o'er the human mind;
And, in the triumph of that witching hour,
Thy lofty bearing well became thy power.

The impassion'd changes of thy beauteous face,
Thy stately form, and high imperial grace;
Thine arms impetuous toss'd, thy robe's wide flow,
And the dark tempest gather'd on thy brow;
What time thy flashing eye and lip of scorn
Down to the dust thy mimic foes have borne;
Remorseful musings, sunk to deep dejection,
The fix'd and yearning looks of strong affection;
The active turmoil a wrought bosom rending,
When pity, love, and honour, are contending:
They who beheld all this, right well, I ween,
A lovely, grand, and wondrous sight have seen.

Thy varied accents, rapid, fitful, slow,
Loud rage, and fear's snatch'd whisper, quick and low;

The burst of stifled love, the wail of grief,
And tones of high command, full, solemn, brief;
The change of voice, and emphasis that threw
Light on obscurity, and brought to view
Distinctions nice, when grave or comic mood*,
Or mingled humours, terse and new, elude
Common perception, as earth's smallest things
To size and form, the vesting hoar-frost brings,
That seem'd as if some secret voice, to clear
The ravell'd meaning, whisper'd in thine ear,
And thou hadst e'en with him communion kept,
Who hath so long in Stratford's chancel slept;

* Those who have been happy enough to hear Mrs. Siddons read, will readily acknowledge that the discrimination and power with which she gave effect to the comic passages of Shakspeare, were nearly as remarkable and delightful as those which she displayed in passages of a grave or tragic character. It is to be regretted that only those who have heard her read, are aware of the extent or variety of her

Whose lines, where nature's brightest traces shine,
Alone were worthy deem'd of powers like thine;
They who have heard all this, have proved full well
Of soul-exciting sound, the mightiest spell.

But though time's lengthen'd shadows o'er thee glide,
And pomp of regal state is cast aside,
Think not the glory of thy course is spent,
There's moonlight radiance to thy evening lent,
That, to the mental world can never fade,
Till all who saw thee, in the grave are laid.
Thy graceful form still moves in nightly dreams,
And what thou wast, to the lull'd sleeper seems:
While feverish fancy oft doth fondly trace
Within her curtain'd couch thy wondrous face.
Yea; and to many a wight, bereft and lone,
In musing hours, though all to thee unknown,
Soothing his earthly course of good and ill,
With all thy potent charm, thou attest still.

And now in crowded room or rich saloon,
Thy stately presence recognized, how soon
On thee the glance of many an eye is cast,
In grateful memory of pleasures past!
Pleased to behold thee, with becoming grace,
Take, as befits thee well, an honour'd place
(Where blest by many a heart, long mayst thou stand!)
Among the virtuous matrons of our land.

A SONG,

WRITTEN FOR AN IRISH MELODY.

His boat comes on the sunny tide,
And briskly moves the flashing oar,
The boatmen carol by his side,
And blithely near the welcome shore.

How softly Shannon's currents flow,
His shadow in the stream I see;
The very waters seem to know,
Dear is the freight they bear to me.

His eager bound, his hasty tread,
His well-known voice I'll shortly hear;
And oh, those arms so kindly spread!
That greeting smile! that manly tear!

In other lands, when far away,
My love and hope were never twain;
I saw him thus, both night and day,
To Shannon's banks return'd again.

genius, which has on the stage been confined almost entirely to Tragedy; partly, I believe, from a kind of bigotry on the side of the public, which inclines it to confine poet, painter, or actor, to that department of their art in which they have first been acknowledged to excel, and partly from the cast of her features, and the majesty of her figure being peculiarly suited to Tragedy.

SONG,

FOR AN IRISH MELODY.

THE harper who sat on his green mossy seat,
And harp'd to the youngsters so loud and so sweet,
The far distant hum of the children at play,
And the maiden's soft carol at close of the day,—

Ah! this was the music delighted my ear,
And to think of it now is so sad and so dear!
Ah! to listen again, by mine own cottage door,
To the sound of mine own native village once
more!

I knew every dame in her holiday airs;
I knew every maiden that danced at our fairs;
I knew every farmer to market who came,
And the dog that ran after him call'd by its name.

And whom know I now in this far distant land,
But the stiff collar'd serjeant, and red-coated band?
No kinsman to comfort his own flesh and blood;
No merry-eyed damsel to do my heart good!

To mine eye or mine ear no gay cheering e'er
comes,
But the flare of our colours, the tuck of our drums;
The fierce flashing steel of our long muster'd file,
And the sharp shrilly fifers a-playing the while.

At night, as I keep on the wearisome watch,
The sound of the west wind I greedily catch,
Then the shores of dear Ireland will rise to my
sight,
And mine own native valley, that spot of delight!

Divided so far by a wide stormy main,
Shall I ever return to our valley again?
Ah! to listen at ease by mine own cottage door,
To the sound of mine own native village once more!

SONG.

BIRD soaring high, cloud in the sky,
Where go ye? O where go ye?
Where the smoke from the gipsy's fire is veering,
And our gay little boat, o'er the blue frith steering,
Will soon bear me.

My thoughts before, on yonder shore,
Are free as wind, are free as wind,
While this body of mine on its paltry riding,
Right lazy of pace, or on smooth wave gliding,
Is far behind.

But see I not, yon distant spot?
O now I see, O now I see!
Where the mist up the distant hill is creeping,
And woods through the morning cloud are peeping,
There dwelleth she.

Doth gentle sleep her senses steep?
Or does she wake? or does she wake?
E'en now, perhaps, her dark hair raising,
At her casement she stands, o'er the waters she's
gazing,
All for my sake.

Her face is gay as the joyous day,
And O how sweet! and O how sweet!
Her voice as she utters her modest greeting,
While my heart at the sound is so quickly beating,
Whene'er we meet!

When time runs on, and weeks are gone,
Then on that shore, then on that shore,
I'll meet her with all my gaidesmen bounding,
In light-hearted glee to the minstrel's sounding,
And part no more.

SONG.

WRITTEN AT MR. THOMSON'S REQUEST, AS A KIND OF INTRO-
DUCTION TO HIS IRISH MELODIES.

SWEET power of song! that canst impart
To lowland swain or mountaineer
A gladness thrilling through the heart,
A joy so tender and so dear!

Sweet power! that on a foreign strand
Canst the rough soldier's bosom move
With feelings of his native land,
As gentle as an infant's love!

Sweet power! that makest youthful heads,
With thistle, leek, or shamrock crown'd,
Nod proudly as the carol sheds
Its spirit through the social round!

Sweet power! that cheer'st the daily toil
Of cottage maid or beldame poor,
The ploughman on the furrow'd soil,
Or herd-boy on the lonely moor:

Or he by bards the shepherd hight,
Who mourns his maiden's broken tie,
Till the sweet plaint, in woe's despite,
Hath made a bliss of agony:

Sweet power of song ! thanks flow to thee
 From every kind and gentle breast !
 Let Erin's—Cambria's minstrels be
 With Burns's tuneful spirit blest !

THE BLACK COCK,

WRITTEN FOR A WELSH AIR, CALLED "THE NOTE OF THE
 BLACK COCK."

GOOD morrow to thy sable beak,
 And glossy plumage, dark and sleek,
 Thy crimson moon and azure eye,
 Cock of the heath, so wildly shy !
 I see thee, slyly cowering, through
 That wiry web of silver dew,
 That twinkles in the morning air,
 Like casement of my lady fair.

A maid there is in yonder tower,
 Who, peeping from her early bower,
 Half shows, like thee, with simple wile,
 Her braided hair and morning smile.
 The rarest things with wayward will,
 Beneath the covert hide them still :
 The rarest things to light of day
 Look shortly forth, and shrink away.

One fleeting moment of delight,
 I sunn'd me in her cheering sight ;
 And short, I ween, the term will be,
 That I shall parley hold with thee.
 Through Snowdon's mist red beams the day ;
 The climbing herdboy chaunts his lay ;
 The gnat-flies dance their sunny ring ;
 Thou art already on the wing !

SONG,

WRITTEN FOR A WELSH AIR, CALLED "THE PURSUIT OF
 LOVE."

O, WELCOME, bat and owlet gray,
 Thus winging low your airy way !
 And welcome, moth and drowsy fly,
 That to mine ear come humming by !
 And welcome, shadows dim and deep,
 And stars that through the pale sky peep !
 O welcome all ! to me ye say,
 My woodland love is on her way.

Upon the soft wind floats her hair ;
 Her breath is in the dewy air ;
 Her steps are in the whisper'd sound
 That steals along the stilly ground.
 O dawn of day, in rosy bower,
 What art thou to this witching hour ?

O noon of day, in sunshine bright,
 What art thou to the fall of night ?

SONG,

WRITTEN FOR A WELSH AIR, CALLED "THE NEW YEAR'S
 GIFT."

ALL white hang the bushes o'er Elaw's sweet stream,
 And pale from the rock the long icicles gleam ;
 The first peep of morning just peers from the sky,
 And here at thy door, gentle Mary, am I.

With the dawn of the year, and the dawn of the
 light,
 The one who best loves thee stands first in thy sight,
 Then welcome, dear maid ! with my gift let me be—
 A ribbon, a kiss, and a blessing for thee !

Last year, of earth's treasures I gave thee my part,
 The new year before it, I gave thee my heart ;
 And now, gentle Mary, I greet thee again,
 When only this band and a blessing remain.

Though Time should run on with his sack full of
 care,
 And wrinkle thy cheek, dear, and whiten thy hair,
 Yet still on this morn shall my offering be,
 A ribbon, a kiss, and a blessing for thee.

SONG,

WRITTEN FOR A WELSH MELODY.

I'VE no sheep on the mountain, nor boat on the
 lake,
 Nor coin in my coffer to keep me awake,
 Nor corn in my garner, nor fruit on my tree,
 Yet the Maid of Llanwellyn smiles sweetly on me.

Softly tapping at eve to her window I came,
 And loud bay'd the watch-dog, loud scolded the
 dame ;
 For shame, silly Lightfoot ! what is it to thee,
 Though the Maid of Llanwellyn smiles sweetly on
 me ?

The farmer rides proudly to market or fair,
 The clerk at the alehouse still claims the great chair,
 But, of all our proud fellows, the proudest I'll be,
 While the Maid of Llanwellyn smiles sweetly on
 me.

For blythe as the urchin at holiday play,
 And meek as a matron in mantle of gray,
 And trim as a lady of gentle degree,
 Is the Maid of Llanwellyn, who smiles upon me.

SONG.

WHAT voice is this, thou evening gale !
That mingles with thy rising wail ;
And, as it passes, sadly seems
The faint return of youthful dreams ?

Though now its strain is wild and drear,
Blythe was it once as sky-lark's cheer—
Sweet as the night-bird's sweetest song,—
Dear as the lip of infant's tongue.

It was the voice, at whose sweet flow
The heart did beat, and cheek did glow,
And lip did smile, and eye did weep,
And motion'd love the measure keep.

Oft be thy sound, soft gale of even,
Thus to my wistful fancy given ;
And, as I list the swelling strain,
The dead shall seem to live again !

ON THE DEATH OF A VERY DEAR FRIEND.*

A SPIRIT bath pass'd from her breezy hill,
From the sound of her trees and her tinkling rill,
From her broomy nooks and her twisted bowers,
And the splendid show of her cherish'd flowers,
As the sun shone out on her garden gay,
And dew-drops sparkled on stem and spray ;
From the peasant's cot, where the housewife neat
Prepared for her the oft-wiped seat ;
From the farmer's hold, where the dame's glad eye
Enhanced the parlour courtesy :
From the place, above all, she loved the best,
That mansion fair, her home of rest,
Where inmates dear were ever found
And sisterly affection sweetly fenced her round.

This spirit, when clothed in mortal weeds,
Was full of Christian thoughts and deeds.
The simple sound of her well-known voice
Made lonely widow'd hearts rejoice ;
And the sickly hind look'd from his bed
As he heard her steps on his threshold tread,
And, smiling momentarily, forgot
The pine and pain of his weary lot.

Beneath his mistress, frank and kind,
Her gardener work'd with willing mind,
As though the very flowers would bloom
To please her with their rich perfume.
And when at times with spud or rake
She did his lighter toil partake,
Some neighbour's child would slyly peep
Through wicket-fence, and near her creep,

* Justina Milligan, of Cotswold House, Gloucestershire.

Encouraged by a nod or smile,
And by her side chat busily the while ;
For with such urchin folk right dearly
She loved to hold a playful parley.

Nor did such toward spots alone declare
Her pleasing fancy and her skilful care ;
The long-neglected quarry, grim and gray,
Where rubbish in uncouth confusion lay,—
Loose stones and sand with weeds and brush-wood
rotten,
And everything or worthless or forgotten,—
Seem'd to obey her will, as though by duty
Constrain'd, and soon became a place of beauty.
Its fairy floor is mossy green,
And o'er its creviced walls, I ween,
The harebell, foxglove, fern, and heather,
Mingle most lovingly together ;
While from the upper screen, as bent to see
What might be hid below, the rowan tree
And drooping birch seem to look curiously,
A friendly place where birds for shelter come,
And bees and flies and moths raise a soft summer
hum,
Justina's Quarry ! a name most dear
Will henceforth sweetly, sadly soothe the ear.

Happy, and making others so,
Her life's pure stream did gently flow.
Like a warm morning's kindly sheen,
Oft was the light of her presence seen
Reflected from the brow and eye
Of those whose hearts beat quick when she was nigh.
Her gentle voice and joyous smile
And sprightly converse could beguile
The winter's night of half its measure,
The rainy day of half its listless leisure.

The gifts of fortune were by her possess'd
As only held in trust ; she felt that best
She served her bounteous Master when she gave
What He to her had given, His poor to save
From pain or penury, and could unbend
The suffering body or the wounded mind.
How generously her hand bestow'd !
How gratefully her bosom glow'd !
The God she loved did to her heart
His own beneficence impart,
And still she thought her gifts too small
To prove her gratitude to Him who gave her ail.
To woe and suffering she clung,
And her protecting arms around the helpless flung.

But not in gentleness alone
The nature of her mind was known ;
High intellect, acute and strong,
Did to this gifted friend belong,
In time of need a present aid
To comfort, counsel, or persuade,

To hold o'er other minds a sway,
Ruling their will when seeming to obey.

And thus in health and wealth her life she pass'd,
But death his stern commission gain'd at last,
Empower'd her yet fair earthly robe to rend,
And with frail timid nature to contend.
But He, the Saviour, whom she loved through life,
Had nobly braced her for the fearful strife,
And she with mind composed and steadfast eye
Could meet the grizzly foe right valiantly.

In every interval of pain
Her buoyant spirits rose again.
At open window she would sit,
And see the swallow past her flit,
And see the blue sky pure and fair,
And white clouds floating in the air,
And feel the kindly cooling breeze
That stir'd among the waving trees ;

Or call some youngling of her race
To look upon its lovely face ;
Then on her sisters sweetly smile,
And for a time their woe beguile
With cheerful words of other years,
While they, belike, sat smiling through their tears.

But now, alas ! the ruthless foe
Must deal his final blow ;
Her brief, but honour'd course is run,
Her Christian warfare done.
'Twas then her brightening eyes she raised,
And towards heaven intently gazed,
As if some beckoning vision there,
Were hovering in the viewless air.
And then her eyelids slowly dropp'd,
Her features blanch'd, her pulses stopp'd,
And to the blessed realms of brighter day
The beautiful spirit hath pass'd away.

VERSES ON SACRED SUBJECTS.

HYMN.

MY God ! would that, from earthly trammels free,
My thoughts could win their upward way to Thee,
And there awhile in lofty regions prove
The purifying glow of holy love !

The solemn dome of night is o'er my head,
Where countless stars in grand array are spread—
Thy mighty host, that to our wond'ring eyes
One maze of glory is ; while sombre lies
Beneath its vasty span the darken'd face
Of many a land, where many a motley race,
With all their worldly care, in sleep are lapt.
O, might my soul, in adoration rapt,
Her high concentrated thoughts still raise to Thee,
With steady power ! Alas, this may not be !
My thoughts are twilight birds, in seasons rare,
That skim, and rise, and flit in nether air ;
That wheel, and turn, and cross, and soar, and swoop,
With seeming bootless speed, then feebly droop
Their weary wings, which may no more sustain
Such fight, and hie to murky haunts again.

My God, who knowst the creature thou hast
made,
Pity my weakness, nor as sin be laid
Upon my head, this feebleness of mind ;
And if sublimer thoughts I may not bind,
As the abiding treasure of my heart—
Inmates, who rarely from their cell depart ;
Vouchsafe such grace, that many a transient notion
May oft within me kindle true devotion ;

And, moving as a meteor of the night,
Be for a passing, glorious moment bright,—
A moment, uttering in words of fire,
"Thou art our Mighty Lord, our good and boun-
teous Sire !"

HYMN.

THE frith is cross'd, the previous warfare past,
Through swampy plains, dark woods and deserts
vast,
O'er heathy and flowery slopes, and valleys fair,
And gloomy mountain passes, steep and bare,—
All disembark'd the pilgrims stand
On the unknown and beauteous land,
While Hope, who needs support no more,
Hath dropp'd her anchor by the shore,
A strangely mingled band !

And lo, with many a lofty dome,
Before them stands that ample home,
Of many mansions, halls of rest,
And heavenly converse for the best,
Where charity and love abide ;
While through its precincts, fair and wide,
Research, and knowledge, and devotion,
Together wend with onward motion,—
A home to which, the entrance free,
Come from all tribes of each degree,
And from all lauds, the lord, and slave,
The firm, the timid, and the brave ;

The nursling from its mother's arms,
The maid in all her early charms,
The stately dame, the weary drudge,
The priest, the penitent, the pannel, and the judge,—
The learn'd philosopher, historian sage,
And he who could not scan a letter'd page,
Who look with wonderment, yet look with
love,

On their companions, and most sweetly prove
The new-born fellowship of blessed souls above.

Yea, there do enemies and rivals meet,
And with a strange good-will each other greet,
Like urchins who in feign'd array,
Of war, on school-tide holiday,
Have sparr'd and jostled on the green,
And for a moment angry been,

Yea, feel such presence hath within them given
A quicken'd zest even for the joys of heaven ;
For o'er them charity, like unseen air,
Diffusing balmy sweetness every where,
Shall softly brood; and minds of every hue,
From rosy paleness to empurpled blue,
Like the fair rainbow's mingled harmony,
Give soften'd splendour to the mental eye.
For wisdom, as the generous Saviour said,
When peevish censure reckless charges made—
Wisdom, unshackled, works on every side,
And is of all her children justified.

The pilgrim crowds advance. But O, that sight
Before them opening, beautiful and bright,

As lessening distance gives to view
Their Father's house, while they pursue
Their onward path, — No ! nor by word nor thought,
To man's imagination can be brought,
That awful glory : cease, vain muser ! cease !
Bless God in humble hope, and be at peace !

HYMN.

ALMIGHTY God, from whom our being came,
To whom it tends, blest be Thy holy name !
Blest when through pillar'd aisles we roam,
Or kneel beneath the lofty dome,
As full o'er-head, and all around,
Swell harmonies of long-drawn sound,
While storied windows with deep tintured beam,
On chisell'd forms and graven pavements gleam !

Blest in the low-brow'd house of prayer,
Where homely pews and rafters bayer
Encompass those, who meekly look
Upon the cherish'd, holy book !
Blest in the cot where, on the ground,
The patriarch peasant kneels with all his family
round !

But oh ! most blest where Thy adorer stands,
Within a temple not uprear'd by hands !

O'er-canopied by pure ethereal blue,
On which fair clouds, of white and silvery hue,
In wide array with slow progression range,
And varied forms assume in endless change ;
The granite peak, by storms of ages beat,
The pavement is on which he sets his feet,

And there a goodly scope surveys,
Enlighten'd by the morning rays.
Below, distinctly mark'd, are seen,
Fields, hamlets, towns, and woodlands green ;
And then beyond, but less defined,
A sweep of hills and vales combined,
Where brooding vapours scarce betray
Some river winding on its way ;
And far beyond, by distance made,
A fainter line of light and shade,
While further still, in distance lost,
Lie sea, and shore, and clifted coast, —
A vasty circle, dim and pale,
Of mortal ken the closing veil.

In this Thy Temple, fair and grand,
Doth Thine adoring creature stand,
His eyes in ecstasy of wonder raising,
His glowing, throbbing heart Thy goodness prais-
ing,

Till tears run coursing down his cheeks,
And every thrilling member speaks
The one absorbing thought his soul containeth,
Of love and awe composed, "the Lord omnipotent
reigneth."

HYMN.

WHAT thoughts come to the Christian's aid,
Upon a bed of sickness laid,
While nightly watchers silence keep,
Or close their weary eyes to sleep,
When lamp and fagots waste away,
As dimly dawns approaching day ?

"Though here this frame of dust may end,
My spirit shall to God ascend,
And, for His sake who died to save
Poor sinners from a hopeless grave,
With all its sins and faults forgiven,
A peaceful shelter find in heaven ;
A Father's house, a home of love :
Praised be His name, all praise above !
Who, even in ruin, loved us still,
And would not soul and body kill !
And blessed be His generous Son,
Who has for us such mercy won !
His gospel sheds a cheering light
Upon our darkling way, through dreary night.
A gleam falls from a sever'd cloud,
Upon the coffin, and the shroud ;
While, high in air, with buoyant swell,
Sounds like a friendly call, the passing bell."

HYMN.

My soul ! and dost thou faintly shrink,
Thus trembling on an awful brink ?
Or rough, or smooth, but one step more,
And thy long pilgrimage is o'er.
Thy pilgrim's cloak that clipp'd thee round,
Like a sear'd leaf, dropp'd on the ground,
A base and mouldering thing shall lie,
Its form and uses all gone by.
Behind thee, closing darkness all
Shall cover, like a midnight pall ;
Before thee — No ! I may not dare
To think, or fancy, what lies there. —

Doth the unbodied spirit take its flight,
Unto its destined, distant, sphere of light,
Upon the buoyant wings of morn,
All conscious of its glory borne :
Or with an instant transit, make
The awful change, and then awake,
As from a slumber, sound and deep,
Awakes an infant from its sleep,
With limbs refresh'd and vigour new
A gradual progress to pursue ;
Allied to infancy, with earthly charms,
Once fondled in an elder brother's arms,
Who said to men, by worldly passions driven,
"Lo ! such as these possess the realms of heaven."

Or shall it powerful, and at once
Start up as from a gloomy trance,
With sudden, glorious light attended,
By the blest brotherhood of saints surrounded,
Where those, who have been loved and lost, appear
With kindred looks of greeting and of cheer ?

Away, ye pictured thoughts that pass
Like figures on a magic glass,
Or fitful light with arrowy rays
That on the northern welkin plays !
A steady gleam that will not flit,
Comes from the words of Holy Writ.

"Eye hath not seen, and ear hath never heard,
Nor heart conceived the things by God prepared,
For those who love Him." — O such love impart,
Repentant, fervent, and adoring,
From every taint of sin restoring,
My Father and my God ! to this poor heart !

HYMN FOR THE SCOTCH KIRK.*

O GOD ! who madest earth, sea, air,
And living creatures, free and fair,
Thy hallow'd praise is every where,
Hallelujah !

* These three hymns were intended, agreeably to the request alluded to in the Preface, for "dismissing a congregation."

All blended in the swelling song,
Are wise and simple, weak and strong,
Sweet woman's voice and infant's tongue,
Hallelujah !

Yea, woods, and winds, and waves convey
To the rapt ear a hymn, and say
"Him who hath made us we obey,
Hallelujah !"

A SECOND HYMN FOR THE KIRK.

Be heaven's almighty King adored,
Of all good things the Giver !
Sing Hallelujah to the Lord
For ever, and for ever !

Let closed lips, moved at the word,
With glowing accents sever !
O Hallelujah to the Lord
For ever, and for ever !

Can other strains such sounds afford,
Of ecstasy ? O never !
Sing Hallelujah to the Lord,
For ever, and for ever !

A THIRD HYMN FOR THE KIRK.

Up, sluggard soul ! awake, and raise
To thy blest Lord a song of praise,
Who lifts thee from the gloomy grave,
When low on earth thou liest, —
To Him who lived and died to save,
Hosanna in the highest !

To Him, thy friend of friends, whose love
Invites thee to a home above,
When thou, the world's poor outcast slave,
In grief and anguish criest, —
To Him who lived and died to save,
Hosanna in the highest !

His love a living stream hath found
For pilgrims faint, on barren ground,
Their parch'd and languid souls to lave,
When earthly streams are dryest, —
To Him who lived and died to save,
Hosanna in the highest !

ST. MATTHEW, v. 9.

"BLESSED are the peace-makers, for they
God's children shall be called !" — so spake
The Prince of Peace, in mortal clay,
Who veil'd His glory, for our sake.

The stormy passions of the mind,
The boastful tongue and brow of pride,
Their soothing counsels, wise and kind,
Make to a gentle calm subside.

That eye upon the ground is cast,
Which glanced with restless angry glare,
That heart to hostile heart is prest,
Which thought to place a scorpion there.

Contentious tribes upon the ground
Cast bow and spear at their charm'd voice,
And, link'd in many a friendly round,
Will o'er the pledge of peace rejoice.

Then flourish fields and gardens gay,
Where leaders charged with martial train ;
And infants 'mid the herbage play,
Where lately lay the ghastly slain.

Blest are the peace-makers ! for they
To God's blest family belong ;
Honour'd in this our earthly lay,
And in a sweeter, loftier song.

ST. LUKE, XVIII. 16.

"LET little children come to me,"
Our Lord and Saviour said,
As on a humble, harmless brow
His gentle hand was laid.

The teachable and simple heart
Fears not to be beguiled ;
Who enters heaven must love and trust,
E'en as a little child.

The mightiest king, the wisest sage,
Who knows his God aright,
Himself a helpless infant feels
In the Almighty's sight.

A nursling at his lesson set,
Who hopes at last to know,
Is the most learn'd of Adam's race,
In this our home below.

An urchin with his borrow'd rod,
Who smites with guided hand,
Earth's greatest conqueror hath been
The lord of many a land.

"Let little children come to me!"
A cheering welcome given
To all with guileless, humble hearts,
Who seek the way to heaven.

ST. JOHN, XXI. 1.

TOIL-WORN upon their wavy sea,
With empty nets and wasted store,
The fishermen of Galilee
Are steering checreless to the shore.
But lo ! upon the shelving strand,
A form like one of Abraham's race,
Beckons with friendly outstretch'd hand,
Yet moves with more than mortal grace.

And words came wafted on the wind, —
"Friends, have ye meat?" they answer'd "None."
"Cast to the right and ye shall find,"
And to the right their nets were thrown :
When all the treasures of the deep
Into their meshy cells were pour'd.
Who may it may be ? within them leap
Their yearning hearts — "it is the Lord."

So he, traversing life's broad main,
Who long hath toil'd and nothing won,
Will feel how profitless and vain
A worldling's task when it is done !
His hands hang listless by his side,
With languid eye and gather'd brow,
He wanders, hope no more his guide,
For what hath she to offer now ?

But hark, a voice ! he turns his head ;
A treasure rich before him lies ;
And rays of light from heaven are shed,
To gleam the fair unfolded prize.
Who doth this better gift impart,
Than earth or ocean can afford ?
O, feel and rouse thee, grateful heart !
And gladly own it is the Lord.

ST. LUKE, VII. 12.

IN silent sorrow from the gates of Nain,
Bearing their dead, the widow's only son,
A band of friends went forth ; and with that train
E'en she, the most bereft, moved sadly on.

But when the Lord beheld the piteous sight,
He had compassion on her ; from Him broke
Soft tenderness of soul, with saving might,
And "Weep not" were the gracious words He
spoke.

In deep affliction 'tis that voice we hear,
When pitying, helpless friends keep silence
round :
Weep not ! there's saving power, there's comfort
near,
That will e'en in the darkest hour be found.

It is an hour of darkest, deepest woe,
When those we love are sever'd from our side,
Yet weep not, for we soon and surely go
Upon their steps, led by the same blest Guide.

It is a darken'd hour, when evil fame
And evil fortune mingle in our lot ;
Yet weep not ; He, who scorn, rebuke, and shame
Bore for our worthless sakes, deserts us not.

It is an hour of darkness, when the soul,
She knows not why, dreads an impending doom,
While heaven and earth seem one black, formless
scroll,
But weep not, light will yet break through the
gloom.

Poor soul ! He who beheld the widow's grief,
And touch'd the bier, and from death's bands
set free
Her only son, hath for all woes relief,
And " Weep not " are the words He speaks to thee.

JOB, XIII. 15.

O God, who by Thy boundless might,
This earth, heaven's dome and stars of light,
Hast form'd in wisdom and in love !
Let every human bosom move
With grateful thoughts, and gladly raise
In swelling notes a psalm of praise !
Let high and low, and bond and free,
Bless Thy great name, and trust in Thee !

This is our strong and steadfast stay,
When health and wealth have flown away ;
When every joy of life is past,
Our greatest comfort and our last,
When laid upon the bed of death,
These thoughts will join our latest breath.
" I will, O Lord, though crush'd and spent I be,
Yea, though Thou slay me, trust in Thee."

A generous virtue, nobly sprung,
Faith towers our inward powers among,
Like armed chief, like warrior true,
Whose courage nothing can subdue.
But bravely combats to the last,
Then says with looks high-heavenward cast,
" I will, O Lord, in this extremity,
E'en though thou slay me, trust in thee."

HYMN.

THOSE, Lord, who raise their souls to Thee,
Not always sink on bended knee.

On earth's vast space of sea and land—
Thy sky-coped temple wide and grand,
Swift passing thoughts of praise and prayer
To Thee are wafted every where,
From grateful hearts, who feel, and love
To feel, that 'tis in Thee they live and move.

In hours of triumph or of woe ;
On fortune's sunny heights, or low
In gloomy deeps of mortal doom,
The quickening thought will swiftly come,
As from veil'd heaven the lightning keen
Doth pass the sever'd clouds between,
And penetrates with equal power
The humble cottage or the lordly tower.

The marching soldier, stern and stark,—
The seaman in his wave-toss'd ark,—
The king on guarded throne sustain'd,—
The prisoner fetter'd and arraign'd,—
Will feel, like links of living fire,
Their kindred to a Heavenly Sire,
And in their bosoms' secret core,
With speechless praise, His mighty name adore.

The guileless youth, in halls of pleasure,
Whose light feet time the tuneful measure,
May, with thrill'd heart and flashing eye,
Blend holy thanks with revelry ;
The very child, at gambols seen
With play-mates on the sunny green,
Who feels it bliss to be alive*,
Will to life's Lord a transient worship give.

These nature's inward Hallelujahs are,
Warm, though with words unclothed ; here let
them wear
Thy robe of woven sounds, sweet harmony,
And wend in floating beauty to the sky !

A HYMN FOR THE KIRK.

O LORD of earth and heaven,
Whose love and power have given
The solid ground, and floating air,
And circling ocean, regions fair,
To be the home of moving life,
The busy seats of joy and strife,—
To Thee with fear and love we raise
A song of praise.

How many links there be
To bind man's heart to Thee ;
Affections of the human breast
For children, kindred, friend, and guest ;

* See Mrs. Barbauld's beautiful Hymns for Children.

Yea, those in generous minds that flow
 From virtues of a noble foe !
 All form a woven mystic cord, —
 Thy bands, O Lord ;

Thy streaming rays of love,
 That glow in heaven above,
 And draw the ransom'd soul to Thee,
 And set it from low thraldom free !
 As the snared bird, when loosen'd, flies
 On outspread pinions to the skies,
 With love that conquers fear, we raise
 Our song of praise.

A HYMN.

O LORD supreme, whose works so fair,
 Sublime and varied, every where
 The gazing eye delight !
 Thy wisdom, power, and love, the day
 Doth in its splendid course display,
 As doth the glorious night.

We look upon the ocean wide,
 Where ships upon the billows ride,
 And sea-birds wing the air,
 And feel, as o'er the blue expanse
 Soft shadows pass and sunbeams glance,
 Thy power and love are there :

And also on the checker'd land,
 Where mountain peaks, and forests grand,
 With peopled plains between,
 And rising slow from man's abode
 The grey smoke on its heavenward road,
 In fair array are seen.

Thus day and night, and land, and sea,
 Each in its turn, O Lord ! of thee
 Speaks to the mental ear :
 And still the thoughts that they impart
 Are, to the Christian Pilgrim's heart,
 Most cherish'd and most dear.

SELECT VERSES FROM THE 147TH PSALM.

PRAISE ye the Lord with cheerful voice,
 In swelling strains His praises sing,
 It makes the grateful heart rejoice,
 It is a blest and pleasant thing.

He who the broken heart doth brace,
 And bindeth up the wounded frame,
 Numbers the host through heaven's vast space,
 And gives to every star its name.

With fleecy clouds he clothes the sky,
 He stores the moisten'd earth with good,
 From him the ravens when they cry,
 And savage beasts receive their food.

He sends afar His high behests,
 Which sea and land with blessings fill ;
 Swift flies His word, no power arrests
 The course of His almighty will.

THOUGHTS TAKEN FROM THE 93RD
 PSALM.

CLOTHED in majesty sublime,
 And girt with strength th' Almighty reigns ;
 And, through the wreckful course of time,
 His hand the steadfast world sustains.

Wide doth the mighty thunder fill
 The darken'd earth with dread dismay,
 But mightier far is He whose will
 The lightning and the storm obey.

Deep, heaving under land and sea,
 The earthquake uttereth his sound,
 Awful though low ; more awful He
 Who holds its rage in prison bound.

The powerful billows, huge and grand,
 Rise swelling from the troubled main,
 More powerful is the powerful hand
 That doth their threatening rage restrain.

O Lord, adored ! from race to race,
 Men shall thy righteous laws proclaim,
 And holiness become the place
 Call'd by Thy great and glorious name.

AHALYA BAE:

A POEM.

INTRODUCTION.

THE observations I have made in my preface to the former legends, apply equally to this of Ahalya Bae. I have added no fictitious circumstances to the story or characters. I have only taken those liberties regarding supposed feeling and description, which a person detailing what he has in a general abridged way, but with no intention of altering the truth, naturally takes; in short, the difference of the story from a bare record, or from the story-teller, when the story-teller is warmed and interested by his subject. It may perhaps be thought that, in representing the daughter of Ahalya as so young at the time of her brother's death, and soothing her mother's sorrow with so many childish endearments, I have stepped beyond this rule; for we are told in another place that she was already married. But when we consider how very early betrothments take place in that country, her being still as a child with her mother is by no means inconsistent with that fact. That she should be so amiable and affectionate, and that Ahalya should be so strongly attached to her, agrees well with what is related of her melancholy end and her mother's behaviour on that dreadful occasion. In all the descriptive passages regarding her popularity, and the feelings even of the children towards her, I think myself fully entitled to go as far as I have done on Sir John Malcolm's authority, though no direct mention of children may there be found, for their light warm hearts are ever ready for grateful acclamation. It is their play and their privilege and propensity, which Providence has given them for benevolent purposes. As the history of this wise and good sovereign is given in the account of Central India, necessarily intermingled with the quarrels and expeditions, and wars of all the native princes bordering upon her dominions, it is difficult to give any distinct view of what is immediately belonging to herself; and it is only by descriptions of what must naturally be supposed or taken for granted, that an impressive idea can be given of her extraordinary merits. Had graver historians been more descriptive as to the different states and conditions of the same country under a warlike and under a peaceful sovereign, we should not so frequently hear young people complain of a peaceful reign being so dull, or, as the little boy said to his mother, "the reigns of the wicked kings are so much *prettier* than the reigns of the good kings."

That Sir John Malcolm was powerfully charmed by the character of Ahalya Bae, is very plain; but being jealous of his own partiality, and having therefore strictly examined into the truth of what is said of her, which he from his high official situation had every facility for doing, there cannot be any reasonable cause for distrust, extraordinary and perfect as her character appears.

A VOICE from Sinai's sacred summit came,
What time, enrobed and hid in smoke and flame,
Israel's assembled hosts the wonder saw
From its extended base, a sight of awe,
In stilly silence waiting to behold
What dreadful vision'd change it might unfold;
With up-cast, pallid faces, shrunk with fear,
They stood, the awful words of God to hear:
They heard and felt that Israel's God alone
Is Lord of heaven and earth, and shares His power
with none.

The terrors of that awful day, though past,
Have on the tide of time their glory cast:
As when the sun, whom cloudy state conceals,
From his pavilion's curtain'd side reveals
Some scatter'd rays, that, through the general
gloom,
Headland, or tower, or desert rocks illumine;
So did that mighty revelation throw,
O'er Prophets, Judges, Seers, a feeble glow
Of pure religious light, and Judah's king
With psalms of praise made his struck harp to
ring—
A soul-reviving light, that did impart
Devotion's warmth to many a noble heart;
Till *He* appear'd, in whom God's Spirit dwelt,
Unmeasured, and for helpless mortals felt
More than a brother's love, whose majesty,
Subdued and mild, struck not man's garish eye.
His mien, His motions, spoke of inward love—
His blessed words and acts of power above
All human excellence;—till, in the eternal name,
The Son of God, the Son of Man, the Son of David
came.

But deem not that the Parent of mankind,
Maker of all, hath to one race confined
The gifts His blessed Spirit can bestow
On all Earth's scatter'd nations here below.

His revelations to a chosen race
 With pow'r were manifested, yet we trace
 In the bewilder'd heathen's heart, who bows
 To Idols dumb, and pays devoted vows
 To Wood and Stone, a conscious inward feeling
 Of higher things o'er heart and fancy stealing ;
 Perhaps a sudden quickening thought
 Across his musings strangely brought ;
 Ay, then God's Spirit with his soul is dealing.

And have not the philosopher and sage,
 The generous and good of every age,
 In silent hours of meditation high,
 Contemplating the sun, the stars, and sky,
 The earth, the ocean, — all that bounteous store
 Of fair and good, — been strengthen'd to adore
 One Mighty Lord, and Parent of all good :
 Nature's own worship, not to be withstood
 By partial rites which heathen power imposed ?
 And have not those to other minds disclosed
 Their elevated thoughts, and held communion
 With kindred minds, — a blest, ennobling union ?

'Mid shepherd hordes, for ever changing
 Their tented-homes, o'er deserts ranging ;
 'Mid scamen on the ocean bred ;
 'Mid bandits fierce on plunder fed ;
 Wherever mental light hath shone
 In circling darkness, bright and lone,
 As beacon on a distant hill
 This message beams, though hush'd and still
 The midnight air broods on the ear, —
 " Gird on your mail, the foe is near ! " —
 It is a mission'd light from heaven,
 By the Almighty Father given,
 And hath its sacred mission well fulfill'd,
 Although its path to trace we mortals are unskill'd.

Behold that female form so meekly bending
 O'er a pale youth, who is the night-air rending
 With many a sudden shriek, and many a cry
 And lengthen'd groan of utter misery !
 It is a regent Mother, one whose fate
 By heav'n is fix'd to rule a warlike state ;
 Who, by the laws or custom of the land,
 Appointed is to hold supreme command.

* See in the first volume of Sir John Malcolm's Central India, p. 159. —

" He (the son of Ahalya Bae) had slain in a jealous fury an embroiderer, who, he believed, had formed an intimacy with a female servant of his family. The innocence of the man was established, and remorse for the crime brought on so severe a paroxysm of madness in Mallee Row, as to alarm all for his life. It is a confirmed belief with many of the natives of India, that departed spirits have, on some occasions, the power of seizing upon and destroying the living. It was rumoured that the embroiderer was a man with supernatural power ; that he warned Mallee Row not to slay him, or he would take horrible vengeance ; and the ravings of the latter were imputed to the person he had murdered, and who, according to their preposterous belief, now haunted him in the form of a Jin or Demon. Ahalya Bae, satisfied of this fact, used to sit days and nights by the

Yet one of gentle mind, who had been meet
 On Sion's hill to sit at her Redeemer's feet,
 And listen to His words with humble love,
 And see His looks benign her pious heart approve.

But she hath been in heathen darkness nursed,
 Hath been with much misguiding lore accursed,
 Which with the worship of one God supreme
 Had woven in full many an odious dream.
 Vague and perplexing seem'd her future doom :
 Her present world is dark, and darker that to come.

Close in her own his burning hands she press'd*,
 And to some pow'r unseen were words like these
 address'd. —

" Leave him, fierce Spirit of th' unhallow'd dead !
 O, let him rest awhile his wretched head !
 O, quit possession of his wasted frame !
 Nor with his lips and alter'd voice blaspheme
 To bring down blasting vengeance from the skies ;
 Upon him now enough of misery lies.
 He slew thee wrongfully, and for that deed
 Remorse has dealt to him a fearful meed.
 It was the sudden act of jealous youth : —
 He was deceived, and could not know the truth.
 But he has tried to make amends ; rich stores
 He on thy widow and thy children pours.
 An honourable tomb shall give to fame
 With graven record thy unsullied name.
 O from this wretched body, Spirit dire !
 Come forth ; what does thy fell revenge require ?
 Can all his misery, can all his pain,
 E'er make thyself a living man again ?

Thus day and night full many tears she shed,
 And watch'd, and pray'd, and struggled by his bed,
 Whene'er his fiercest, wildest fits prevail'd ;
 But neither watching, prayers, nor tears avail'd.
 At length deep silence through the palace reign'd,
 And for a solemn term its rule maintain'd.
 The dire disease its cruel task hath done ;
 The princely stripling's mortal course is run.

What lamentations, mingled, loud, and shrill,
 Did courts and halls and stately chambers fill,

bed of her afflicted son, holding communion, as she thought, with the spirit that possessed him, and who spoke to her through his organs. She shed tears in abundance, and passed whole hours in prayer. In the hope of soothing the Demon, she offered to build a temple to the deceased, and to settle an estate upon his family if he would only leave her son. But all was in vain ; a voice still seemed to answer, " He slew me innocent, and I will have his life." Such is the popular tale of the death of Mallee Row ; an event that only merits notice as connected with the history of Ahalya Bae, whom it compelled to come forward to save the ruin of the interests of the family she represented, and to exhibit, in the person of a female, that combined talent, virtue, and energy, which made her, while she lived, a blessing to the country over which she ruled, and has associated her memory with every plan of improvement and just government in the province of Malwa.

Bursting from that deep silence and repose,
We say not, but the scene of sadness close.
The corse is on its pile consumed,
The bonæ within their urn inhumed.

But the sad Mother, so bereft,
Had she no tie of comfort left?
Yes, heaven extremes of woe restrain'd;
One little daughter yet remain'd.
She to console her Mother tried,
And play'd and prattled by her side.
Her own soft cheek to hers she laid,
And simple words of kindness said
Right coaxingly, that sometimes broke
The spell of grief; a gentle stroke
Slow sliding down her mother's arm,
Repeated oft, work'd like a charm;
Then would her dark eyes glance around
To see what farther comfort might be found.
With feather'd fan she cool'd her brow,
And when the tears began to flow,
Her small hand plied its kerchief well,
And softly wiped them as they fell.
Her fingers next, belike, would try
The Rany's raven-locks in braids to tie, [flung,
That, like torn, tangled wreaths, from altars
Dishevell'd, o'er her stooping shoulders hung.
Ay, every simple, youthful, winning art [heart.
This gentle creature used to soothe the wounded
Nor was that simple ministry in vain;
Her Mother's heart was soothed, and she again
Carress'd her little Maid, as heretofore,
And dearly loved her in her bosom's core.

* See Sir J. Malcolm's Central India, p. 160.—

"The daughter of Ahalya Baeæ had been married into another family, and could therefore, according to Hindoo usage, have no claim to participate in the administration of Holkar sovereignty. Under these circumstances, Gunghadur Jeswant, the Brahmin minister of the late Mulhar Row, strongly recommended that some child (distantly related to the family) should be adopted to succeed Mallee Row; a plan which would have secured his authority as minister. This proposition was combined with the offer of a large separate provision for Ahalya Baeæ, whose abilities were admitted, but her sex objected to as a disqualification for the conducting of public affairs. Gunghadur, at the same time, proposed to give a considerable sum to Ragobah Duda, in the event of his agreeing to the arrangement and promoting its execution. This venal chief gave a ready assent to the measure; and his concurrence was considered by the minister so conclusive, that he waited on Ahalya Baeæ; completely assured that, if other motives failed, a despair of successful resistance would compel her to acquiesce; but he soon discovered his error. He was told at once, by this high-minded woman, that his plan was disgraceful to the house of Holkar, and should never have her consent." * * * "The heirs of Mulhar Row, she said, were extinct on the death of her son, and she had, as wife and mother of the two last representatives of the family, the exclusive privilege of selecting the successor; and that just claim she was resolved at all hazards to maintain. It is probable that Ahalya Baeæ had not only also consulted with her own principal adherents, but with the Mahratta military chiefs who were in Malwa when these events occurred. Her whole conduct, however, at this crisis of her fortunes and of the Holkar government, showed that her resolution had been seriously taken, and would be firmly maintained. On hearing that Ragobah was making preparations to compel her, she sent him a message not to make

But Brahma to her care consign'd
A family of far other kind,—
Of various casta a mingled brood,
Dull and untoward, fierce and rude;
And she must brace her for the task,
Nor leave of tend'rer passions ask.
Offers of large possessions to resign *
The right of sov'reignty did she decline
Indignantly, with duty still in view
To her own house and to her people true;
And gave effect to her determination
With prompt display of warlike preparation.
Each soldier of her race, with glancing eyes,
Upon her elephant's arm'd howdah spies
Quivers with arrows stored, and bows unstrung,
Just ready for the bend in order hung,
That to their warm devoted hearts declare,
She will with them their fate and dangers share.
Yet, in his place, whose hapless race is run,
She must adopt another heir and son,
That in his settled right she still may guide
The councils of the state,— may still preside,
The careful regent Mother, ovr all,
And to her aid, troops, chieftains, Brahmins call.

And hath she chosen wily
An Infant on the Nurse's knee,
Whose lengthen'd nonage may maintain
O'er subject lands her settled reign,
As prudent Ranies who pursue
One selfish end are wont to do?
O no; her noble nature spurn'd †
Such narrow thoughts; her choice she turn'd

war on a woman, from which he might incur disgrace, but could never derive honour. She added, to give effect to this remonstrance, every preparation for hostilities. The troops of Holkar evinced enthusiasm in her cause, and she made a politic display of her determination to lead them to combat in person, by directing four bows, with quivers full of arrows, to be fitted to the corners of the howdah, or seat, of her favourite elephant."

† See Sir J. Malcolm's Central India, p. 163.—

"She selected for the commander of her army, and to fulfil those duties which as a female she could not perform, Tuckajee Holkar, a chief of the same tribe, but no way related to Mulhar Row. Tuckajee was highly esteemed as a soldier by that chief, and commanded the Pagah or household troops; and, before he had reached his present power, had established a character which he maintained through life, of a plain unaffected Mahratta soldier." * * * "The divided authority established in the Holkar state from the day of Tuckajee's elevation had a character, which, judging from common rules, was not likely to admit of its subsisting a week; but it remained for above thirty years, undisturbed by jealousy or ambition. This is to be ascribed to the virtue and moderation of the parties, to their respect for each other, and to their having distinct, and, generally speaking, distant spheres of action." * * * "He was more than obedient: he was dutiful, and all his actions were directed to please and conciliate the princess, to whom he was solely indebted for his high station. He constantly called her mother; but, as she was much younger than him, this relation was not engraved upon his seal. On that he was styled, by her command, 'Tuckajee, the son of Mulhar Row Holkar.'" After various details of the regulation of their united government, Sir John proceeds thus:—"It appears from what has been related, that Ahalya Baeæ was the actual head of the government; and Tuckajee, gratified by his high

Upon a soldier tried and brave,
 Faithful of heart, and firm to save
 The country from all threaten'd wrong
 By hostile Rajahs fierce and strong ;
 Of generous nature too, who fought
 Beneath a woman's rule, nor sought
 Undue extension of his power,
 Her active champion, till her dying hour.
 He call'd her Mother, though his life had run
 More years by far than hers — a true and noble son.

Of Holkar's valiant race was he,
 Though somewhat distant in degree.
 But no suspicions e'er found way
 To her most generous mind, which lay
 In steady confidence, reposing
 On his tried worth, nor once disclosing,
 By word or look, an inward doubt
 Of his fidelity throughout
 A lengthen'd course of years, in which he served
 Nobly his noble Dame, nor from strict duty swerved.
 They were a state-constructed Son and Mother,
 A blessed twain, each worthy of the other ;
 United firmly to their native land,
 She the considerate head, and he the ready hand.

War on her distant frontiers never ending,
 Was waged by chiefs for booty still contending
 E'en more than power ; but round her seat of
 sway,
 Peaceful and bright, a charmed circle lay.
 There she the even scales of justice held,
 And all oppressive wrong and faction quell'd.
 There to her subjects, of what'er degree,
 It was, I trow, a joyous sight to see*
 Their noble Bace her seat of judgment fill,
 Dispensing justice with impartial skill.

station and her complete confidence, continued, during her life, to exercise no duties beyond those of commander-in-chief of the army and the collector of the revenues that his vicinity enabled him to realise with more convenience than any other agent of her administration. The servants of the Holkar government, who filled offices at the period, speak all the same language; and, with every disposition to praise Luckajee, strengthened by his grandson being on the throne, they never go higher in their eulogium than to say, that he fulfilled all the expectations of Ahalya Bace, and was to the last hour of his existence attentive, faithful, and obedient."

* See Sir J. Malcolm's Central India, p. 175.—
 "It is not common with the Hindus (unless in those provinces where they have learnt the degrading usage from their Mahomedan conquerors) to confine females, or to compel them to wear veils. The Mahrattas of rank (even the Brahmins) have, with few exceptions, rejected the custom, which is not prescribed by any of their religious institutions. Ahalya Bace, therefore, offended no prejudice when she took upon herself the direct management of affairs; and sat every day, for a considerable period, in open Durbar, transacting business. Her first principle of government appears to have been moderate assessment, and an almost sacred respect for the native rights of village officers and proprietors of land. She heard every complaint in person; and, although she continually referred causes to courts of equity and arbitration, and to her ministers for settlement, she was always accessible: and so strong was her sense of duty on all points connected with the distribution of justice, that she is represented as not only patient but

They gather'd round her unrestrain'd,
 Buoyant and happy if they gain'd
 Such words of her sonorous speech,
 As might their distant station reach,
 Some looks of meaning from her eye
 While perjured knaves, belike, would try
 A simple statement to perplex,
 The poor unwary hind to vex.
 And, if no better they might have,
 E'en o'er the crowd to see her wave
 Her little hand with queenly grace,
 Warm'd the good Ryot's heart and gleam'd his
 dusky face.
 The children raised a joyous cry,
 When from afar they could descry
 Her palanquin so gay and bright,
 By coolies borne—a burden light !
 And cluster'd in the narrow lane
 To see her pass with all her train ;
 And urchins dared aloud to call,
 "She is our Mother, and she loves us all."

The Pariah, or the meanest hind,
 Did to her presence access find ;
 To her might tell with much detail
 His wearisome and lengthy tale,
 Circuitous and slow, nor fear
 To tire her patient ear.
 But when she question'd him again
 To make the knotted matter plain,
 Away would awe and caution wend ;
 He felt conversing with a friend.
 And her shrewd mind, the while, quick to discern
 The human character, did useful knowledge learn.

Woe, want, and suffer'ing to assuage †,
 Would still her daily thoughts engage ;

unwearied in the investigation of the most insignificant causes, when appeals were made to her decision."

† See Sir J. Malcolm's Central India, p. 186.—
 "The correspondence of Ahalya Bace extended to the most remote parts of India. It was generally carried on through Brahmins, who were the agents of her pious munificence, which was as unexampled as it was unbounded. When the treasures of Holkar came into her possession, she is stated to have appropriated them, by the performance of a religious ceremony (common with Hindus), to the purposes of charity and good works. She built several forts; and at that of Jauns constructed a road, with great labour and cost, over the Vindhyanagar, where it is almost perpendicular. She expended considerable sums in religious edifices at Mhsir, and built many temples, Dhurmsullas (or places of rest for travellers), and wells throughout the Holkar possessions in Malwa. But her munificence was not limited to her own territories; at all the principal places of Hindu pilgrimage, including as far east and west as Juggernath in Cuttack, &c., and as far north as Redumath, among the snowy mountains of Himalaya, and south as Kumesurn, she built holy edifices, maintained establishments, and sent annual sums to be distributed in charity." * * * "In addition to this charity, she occasionally bestowed presents; and nothing added more to her fame in the southern regions of the peninsula, than the constant supply of Ganges' water which she was in the habit of sending to wash the sacred images of the different temples. Extensive and pious donations probably proceeded from a sincere belief in her religion, and a desire to

On this her mind was most intent ;
 She knew she was by Brahma sent ;
 For works of mercy, by her hand
 To be dispensed through all the land,
 He had committed to her care,
 Nor might she toil nor trouble spare.
 She thought upon the pilgrim's woes,
 Who over plain and mountain goes,
 His sinking steps, his visage gaunt,
 And eager glare of hungry want,
 His still increasing hourly pain,
 Ere he may reach his Idol's distant fane.
 She thought upon wayfaring strangers,
 Braving of wood and wild the dangers,
 Who yet by thirst subdued are found
 Stretch'd fainting on the parched ground.
 She thought of age and infancy
 Left on the river's brink to die :
 Yea, e'en on animals her thoughts would dwell,
 Who have no words their sufferings to tell.

And still to kindly thoughts succeed
 Full many a charitable deed ;
 Her agents watch'd the pilgrim's track,
 To give him what his need might lack ;
 From river's weedy margin took the child,
 And bade the aged live in accents mild.
 They caravansas would build,
 Poor strangers from the night to shield,
 And many a well and cooling tank
 Upon the traveller's route they sank.
 The thirsty oxen in the plough,
 See help at hand, and stop to bow
 Their heads unto the trough beneath,
 And drink the welcome draught with seething,
 long-drawn breath.
 Upon her heart *they* had their claim,
 Yea, Ahalya Bae e'en cared for them.

And here with humble zeal I must disclose
 A further bounty, strange, belike, to those,
 Who in a better, purer faith were born :
 Yet pause awhile, I pray, and check your scorn ;

promote her own and her country's welfare by propitiating the favour of the deities she worshipped ; but we find in many of her observances and institutions a spirit of charity which had the truest character of wisdom and benevolence. She daily fed the poor ; and on particular festivals gave entertainments to the lowest classes. During the hot months of the year, persons were stationed on the roads to supply travellers with water ; and at the commencement of the cold season she gave clothes to great numbers of her dependants and infirm people. Her feelings of general humanity were often carried to an extraordinary excess. The beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the river shared in her compassion ; portions of food were allotted to them ; and the peasant near Mysir used in hot days to see his yoke of oxen stopped during their labour to be refreshed with water, brought by the servants of Ahalya Bae ; while fields she had purchased were covered with flocks of birds that had been justly, as Ahalya Bae used to observe, driven by cultivators from destroying the grain on which the latter depended for their own sustenance."—" We may smile at such universal sym-

Ye who acknowledge freely your descent
 From those, in former days, who humbly bent
 At shrines of many a carved and gilded saint—
 Ay, saints who when their earthly race was
 run,
 Full many a black and ruthless deed had done ;
 Will ye despise the simple blinded zeal
 Which now my truthful legend must reveal ?
 Water in vessels closely pent,
 From Ganges' sacred waves she sent
 The holy idols to bedew,
 And at their shrines her vows would oft renew.
 Brahma supreme o'er all above,
 She did as humble daughter love ;
 And other gods, set by his will
 O'er Hindus' race for good or ill,
 She would invoke, at needful hours,
 Subordinate but awful powers.
 Fell powers, who ruled in nether air,
 Who bade War's weapons kill or spare ;
 Sent pestilence, all human joy
 To blast, to poison, and destroy,—
 Those still she tried her friends to make,
 For her own weal, and for her people's sake.
 With wise and learned Brahmins to converse,
 To hear them many lines of lore rehearse ;
 And from the sacred shasters to recite
 Maxims, and rules, and laws, was her delight ;
 And many a solemn, wide-sleeved sage, I ween,
 Was in her special courtly circle seen,
 Mingled with stately chiefs of high degree,
 And watchful, wary scribes, and merchants free.

But ne'er a Brahmin of them all
 Could win her for his blinded thrall,
 Could e'er her noble mind persuade
 To do what inward rectitude forbade.
 And if from district far or near,
 Some fact of ruthless rapine reach'd her ear,
 Or base oppression to the poor,
 Who must too oft such grievous wrong endure,
 How quickly did her alter'd brow*,
 Her inward indignation show !

pathy, * * * * and wasted the treasures of the state in the erection and maintenance of edifices in distant lands ; but it was well asked by an intelligent Brahmin, to whom this remark was addressed, ' Whether Ahalya Bae, by spending double the sum on an army that she did in charity and good works, could have preserved her country for above thirty years in a state of profound peace, while she rendered her subjects happy and herself adored ? No person (he added) doubts the sincerity of her piety ; but, if she had merely possessed worldly wisdom, she could have devised no means so admirably calculated to effect the object.'

* See Sir J. Malcolm's Central India, p. 192.—

" She was very cheerful, and seldom in anger ; but, when provoked by wickedness or crime, the most esteemed of her attendants trembled to approach her." Sir John adds, in a note to the above passage : " Baramut Dada, the venerable manager of Mysir, who was for many years one of her favourite servants, assured me that when really in anger, which was of rare occurrence, her countenance struck terror into the minds of the boldest."

Nor durst the boldest culprits dare
 To front her presence ; and if there
 They were at her imperious call assembled,
 The bravest chief and holiest Brahmin trembled.
 Her countenance, so mild by nature,
 Grew sternly fix'd in ev'ry feature ;
 Her dark eye flash'd like kindled leven
 Sent from a rifted cloud of heaven ;
 Her stature low and figure slight,
 Strangely dilated grew, and grand,
 Like ruling spirit of the night,
 Through misty vapour seen, by some benighted
 band.

Her voice, whose tones so kindly sweet,
 Made widows' hearts with gladness beat,
 Is now a sound of awe and fear,
 Swelling like onward thunder to the ear ;
 In sooth, a strange, unwonted sound to hear !

It was her solace and her pride
 O'er peaceful districts to preside,
 And keep around, remote or nigh,
 Her country in prosperity.
 Erewhile, her blessed reign before*,
 It was a country to deplore ;
 Where war and bloodshed, want and strife,
 Had made a hell for human life.
 Chiefs were by turns, or weak or strong,
 All interlaced in deeds of wrong ;
 Fiercely attacking town and village,
 And fenced forts for sordid pillage ;
 Treasure they did so vainly reap,
 Which all could gain, but none could keep.
 He who to-day had home and hold,
 Grain on his fields, sheep in his fold,
 To-morrow with his family fled,
 And had not where to lay his head.
 He who to-day hath kept his state
 In princely hall where menials wait,
 May soon in ruin'd haunts abide,
 Or in the perilous jungle hide,
 Where foul and fair are side by side ;
 A place of fear and admiration. There
 The brindled tiger in his reedy lair,
 Purrs gruffly, while aloft is singing
 The Lorie gay, on light spray swinging ;
 There oft the baleful snake is seen,
 Through flow'ry slopes and thickets green,
 Where roses blush and blossoms blow,
 And lilies sweet profusely grow,
 Moving his sluggish, loathly length,
 Then rearing up his stiffen'd strength,
 At moving prey to take his aim,
 And swathe and crush the vital frame.
 Horsemen and spearmen o'er the plains
 In dusky masses moved, while trains

Of heavy cannon in the rear,
 By harness'd bullocks dragg'd, appear ;
 And high, belike, above the crowd,
 Upon his elephant some chieftain proud,
 Sits stately, though less rational in nature
 Than that on which he rides,— a noble sapient
 creature.

But now, how changed ! Upon the frontiers far
 Her brave adopted son waged ceaseless war
 With every restless robber-chief, who dared
 Her rightful boundary to invade, and spared
 The centre districts. Peaceful, still, and bright,
 They gleam'd on the admiring stranger's sight,
 Like green oases of some desert land,
 Encircled round with brown and barren sand ;
 As many learned travellers endite
 Who of far distant countries love to write :
 For all, within the guarded girdle bound,
 Were peace and wealth, content and comfort
 found.

The Ryot plough'd his native soil,—
 His Father's fields, a pleasing toil ;
 Who, as he guides his sturdy steers,
 With kindly voice their labour cheers ;
 For well he knows the produce will
 In season due his garner fill,—
 Will, on his quiet, daily board
 Food for his mate and little ones afford.
 Beside her door the Matron stands
 And deftly draws, with busy hands,
 The snowy yarn from distaff tall,
 For turban fine, or gorgeous shawl.
 The weaver plies his useful trade,
 In humid cell beneath the shade,
 Through the strain'd warp his shuttle throws,
 And as his web more lengthy grows,
 Thinks of the golden price that will be paid
 When in the throng'd bazaars its beauty is
 display'd.

In flow'ry nooks the children play,
 Or through the shady copses stray
 In quest of fruit ; while from the bough
 Offended monkeys grin and mow.
 The gentle lady, all bedight,
 In gilded palanquin so bright,
 Goes forth secure, on visit kind
 Or ceremonious, to some distant friend ;
 Nor fears that on her lengthen'd way
 She may become some lurking bandit's prey.
 But wherefore needless words increase ?
 With wise and equal rule the land was bless'd — and
 peace.

But who through life's uncertain day hath run
 With still, o'er head, a clear unclouded sun ;

* See the account given by Sir John Malcolm of the many feuds and petty wars of rapine and pillage, so unceasingly

carried on with one another, previous to his details regarding the house of Holkar and Ahalya Bae.

When noon is past he hears the tempest roar,
 And on his shoulders pelting torrents pour.
 The weary pilgrim rests him void of fear,
 Unwitting of the lurking tiger near.
 The loaded raft floats smoothly on the tide,
 Though fatal rocks beneath the waters hide ;
 And when the steersman thinks he nears the shore
 A stroke is felt,—they sink, and rise no more.

Our Rany, as this legend soothly said *
 Had, for her solace sweet, a little Maid.
 Her after-lot was bright ; one happy scene
 Of married love her easy life had been.
 But now, alas ! her happiness is flown ;
 Death has o'er all his sable mantle thrown.
 Who now are seen within that spacious room,
 Where rests an ominous and dismal gloom ?
 She, seated by yon deck'd and rose-strew'd bier,
 Who neither heaves a sigh nor sheds a tear ;
 She stooping over her and gently speaking,
 To stem her wayward sorrow vainly seeking !
 The one is Ahalya's widow'd child ;
 The other is herself, composed and mild,
 Trying the fatal purpose to avert—
 Composed, indeed, but with a bleeding heart.
 Ay, all in vain her gentle words ; for hear
 What words of woe the tardy answers bear
 " O Mother, do not grieve me so,
 My lot is cast and I must go.
 Shall Jeswunt Row, my noble mate,
 On pyre be laid in lonely state,
 While I, who was the only flower
 He watch'd and cherish'd in his bower,
 A craven wife shall from the brink
 Of love's last trial meanly shrink ?
 Forbid it, Brahma, Lord above !
 Forbid it, faithfulness and love !"—
 " And dost thou think that Brahma's will
 I did not righteously fulfil,
 When I, bereft and sad, did strive
 Thy noble father to survive ?
 And was not his high blessing pour'd
 On one so sever'd from her lord ?

And characters, distinct and fair,
 Did his approval well declare,
 When flourishing beneath my sway
 My people and my kingdom lay.
 Yes ; though a widow so bereft,
 My heart had other blessings left.
 But still, as cell'd within my breast,
 Thou wast my dearest and my best ;
 Thou wast as my own youngling still,
 Who didst my first affections fill.
 And wilt thou leave me sad and lone ?
 How shall I live when thou art gone ?
 Whom shall I fondly love and trust ?
 O, do not bow me to the dust !"—
 " O no ! committed to thy care,
 Thou hast thy children every where,
 Their daily benefits will be
 The comfort Brahma sends to thee.
 And, dearest mother ! thou art old—
 Thy grains of life will soon be told ;
 And what to me will then remain ?
 My Last will ne'er return again !
 I through these lonely rooms shall roam
 A living thing, whose heart hath with the dead its
 home.
 Then, best and dearest, to my passion bend,
 And let my sorrows have an honour'd end !"—
 " An honour'd end will close her life,
 Who was a good and faithful wife ;
 Die when she will, the funeral flame
 Gives but a fruitless fleeting fame."—
 " I seek not fame, O say not so !
 O, add not agony to woe !
 Life would be death to me, and worse :
 The inward working of remorse
 Would make my day as darkness seem,
 My haunted night a fearful dream.
 For then he would be ever near,
 And his upbraiding eyes appear
 To glare upon a wife, whose love
 Could not one moment rise above
 Base fears, but from her last sad duty started
 And left his lonely bier unhonour'd and deserted."

* See Sir J. Malcolm's Central India, p. 190.—

"An event occurred in the latter years of Ahalya Bae of too interesting and afflicting a nature to be passed over in silence. The melancholy death of her only son, Malee Row, has been noticed. She had besides one daughter, Muchta Bae, who was married, and had one son, who, after reaching manhood, died at Mhysir. Twelve months afterwards his father died, and Muchta Bae declared, immediately, her intention to burn with the corpse of her husband. No efforts (short of coercion) that a mother and a sovereign could use were untried by the virtuous Ahalya Bae to dissuade her daughter from the fatal resolution. She humbled herself to the dust before her, and entreated her, as she revered her God, not to leave her desolate and alone upon the earth. Muchta Bae, although affectionate, was calm and resolved. 'You are old, mother,' (she said) 'and a few years will end your pious life. My only child and husband are gone, and when you follow, life, I feel, will be insupportable, but the opportunity of terminating it with honour will then have

passed.' Ahalya Bae, when she found all dissuasion un-availing, determined to witness the last dreadful scene. She walked in the procession, and stood near the pile, where she was supported by two Brahmins, who held her arms. Although obviously suffering great agony of mind, she remained tolerably firm till the first blaze of the flame made her lose all self-command ; and while her shrieks increased the noise made by the exulting shouts of the immense multitude that stood around, she was seen to gnaw in anguish those hands she could not liberate from the persons by whom she was held. After some convulsive efforts, she so far recovered as to join in the ceremony of bathing in the Nerbudda, when the bodies were consumed. She then retired to her palace, where, for three days, having taken hardly any sustenance, she remained so absorbed in grief that she never uttered a word. When recovered from this state, she seemed to find consolation in building a beautiful monument to the memory of those she lamented."

All interchange of words were vain—
 The Rany answer'd not again ;
 But long fix'd looks of anguish fell
 Upon her daughter's face, and well
 Spoke that which language could not tell ;
 While actions too did piteously entreat,
 The mother kneeling at her daughter's feet :—
 But all in vain ; nought may arrest
 The purpose of her wounded breast.

The parent bent her to the cruel blow,
 And left the dismal chamber, sad and slow ;
 And, closely shut within her secret bower,
 With humble penitence and prayer
 Did her afflicted soul prepare
 For the approaching, dreadful hour :
 Her prayers were heard, and mercy gave
 A stinted strength the dreadful hour to brave.

That hour is come ; and from the palace gate
 There issues forth in melancholy state,
 A gorgeous pageant.—Standards borne on high,
 Moved by the fanning air, arrest the eye,
 On which devices, traced in colours gay,
 Emblems of ranks and races make display.
 First portly Brahmins, sombre and profound,
 Walk, loosely robed, with eyes cast on the ground.
 Next turban'd chiefs, with fierce and warlike mien,
 Cinctured with shawls and flashing arms, are seen ;
 Then high authorities, the letter'd scribe,
 And mission'd men from many a different tribe,
 Move slowly on, all ranged in sad array,
 Proceeding on their mournful, destined way,

With heavy steps, that from the ground
 Send up a muffled, sullen sound.
 Then doth from portal-arch appear,
 Circled by friends, the stately bier,
 On which the princely corse is laid,
 In rich and splendid robes array'd,
 Whose features, like to chisel'd stone,
 Do still an awful beauty own.
 The crowd on him intently gaze
 And deeply murmur words of praise.
 Anon they drop their eyes to find
 The youthful widow, close behind.
 She moved, with brow and step sedate,
 As one who of her lifeless mate
 Alone had conscious thoughts, and she
 Worthy appear'd his mate to be.
 But when by priestly Brahmins, stern and strong,
 They saw their own loved Rany led along,
 On her at once all eager eyes were turn'd,
 And grateful sympathy within each bosom burn'd :
 Their inward sorrow broke through all restraint,
 And all around a loud and mingled wailing sent.

Now onward as the long procession goes,
 A different mournful harmony arose
 From many instruments, whose mingled sound

Is floating on the air, and rising from the ground.
 But when it reach'd the fatal spot,
 All soft excitement was forgot ;
 A deep and solemn pause ensued,
 Silence with strange mysterious awe embued.

Alas ! what measured words can tell
 The anguish of their last farewell,
 When that young widow with that Mother parted ?
 From the intense embrace the younger started,
 As if afraid. Her failing steps sustain'd
 The bier of death she has already gain'd,
 Hath on her lap with gentle kindness placed
 The lifeless head, and its cold form embraced.
 To the heap'd pile the torch hath been applied,
 And from between the fagots are descried
 Pale curving streams of smoke, that wind and
 sweep,
 Coil and uncoil, like serpents waked from sleep,
 Then broadening and ascending hang on high,
 A dusky, fearful canopy ;
 While pointed tongues of flame below
 Burst forth : and soon one general glow
 Involves, in fierce consuming fire,
 Roaring and red, the funeral pyre.
 Then drum and trumpet, cymbal, gong,
 And stringed viols, harsh and strong,
 Discordant minstrelsy, begin
 To raise a loud and deaf'ning din ;
 While faintly come to fancy's ear
 Shrieks from the burning bier.
 Ay, there are dismal shrieks I wot,
 But from the flames proceeding not.
 'Tis Ahalya in despair,
 Who, though by friendly force restrain'd
 Convulsively hath freedom gain'd,
 And beats her breast and tears her hair.
 Her gnashing teeth and bleeding hand
 Too plainly show that self-command
 Is from her princely spirit taken,
 Of all its wonted power forsaken.
 And pause we here ! That noble mind
 To dull unconsciousness was for awhile consign'd.

But heaven's all merciful and potent Lord
 To health of mind the Rany soon restored.
 He raised again her drooping head ;
 From him received, as from the dead,
 The people saw their noble Dame,
 And bade her hail with loud and long acclaim.

Still wasteful war, though raging round,
 Within her precincts was not found,
 The husbandman scarce turn'd his ear
 Some far-off tale of love to hear,
 How bandits, on the distant border,
 With bandits strove in wild disorder ;
 Where sordid chiefs to robbers turn'd,
 Made might their right, and justice spurn'd :

What cares he for their ceaseless coil ?
She lives and reigns who will protect his toil.

In sooth, o'er all the watch she kept *,
And waked, and thought, when others slept.
When early dawn appear'd, she rose,
Nor longer would indulge repose,
But to herself (for she could read)
Grave books perused. Then would succeed
Hours of reflection and of pray'r,
That cleared her mind and soothed her care ;
And oft her day, so well begun,
An easy, prosp'rous course would run.
Herself sagacious, firm, and just,
She put in others gen'rous trust ;
And when their merit well was proved,
Her ministers she ne'er removed.

With all the Rajah pow'rs of ev'ry nation,
From time to time, she held communication :
Could points of policy with art contest,
But ever loved the simple method best.
And in good sooth, to reason cool,
The simplest was the wisest rule.
For who would venture to gainsay
Or doubt the faith of Ahalya Baeæ ?

To death at last the mission'd power was given
To call her hence ; her earthly ties were riven,
Through all the land a woeful wailing went,
From cot to cot, from town to village sent ;

* See Sir J. Malcolm's Central India, p. 192. —

" Ahalya Baeæ died at the age of sixty, worn out with care and fatigue; and, according to some, she hastened her death by a too strict observance of the numerous fasts prescribed by her religion. She was of a middle stature, and very thin. Though at no period of her life handsome, her complexion, which was dark olive, was clear; and her countenance is described as having been, to the last hour of her existence, agreeable, and expressive of that goodness which marked every action of her life." * * * * "The mind of this extraordinary woman had been more cultivated than is usual with the Hindus; she could read and understand the Puranas, or sacred books, which were her favourite study. She is represented as having been singularly quick and clear in the transaction of public business. Her husband was killed before she was twenty years of age, and to that misfortune were added the vice and insanity of her son. These afflictions made a strong impression on her mind. After her husband's death, she never wore coloured clothes nor any jewels except a small necklace; and, indeed, remained amid every temptation unchanged in her habits and character. Flattery even appears to have been lost on Ahalya Baeæ. A Brahmin wrote a book in her praise, which she heard read with patience;

A tender woe, like which there is no other, —
Bereaved children weeping for a mother.
Her life and reign were closed in glory,
And thus concludes my Legend's faithful story.

For thirty years—her reign of peace—
The land in blessings did increase ;
And she was bless'd by every tongue,
By stern and gentle, old and young.
And where her works of love remain,
On mountain pass, on hill or plain,
There stops the traveller awhile,
And eyes it with a mournful smile,
With muttering lips, that seem to say,
" This was the work of Ahalya Baeæ."

The learned Sage, who loves to muse,
And many a linked thought pursues,
Says to himself, and heaves a sigh
For things to come and things gone by,
" O that our restless chiefs, by misery school'd,
Would run the states as that brave woman
ruled !"
Yea, even children at their mothers' feet,
Are taught such homely rhyming to repeat :—
" In better days, from Brahma came,
To rule our land, a noble Dame ;
Kind was her heart, and bright her fame,
And Ahalya was her honour'd name !"

but, after observing ' she was a weak sinful woman, and not deserving such fine encomiums, ' she directed it to be thrown into the Nerbudda, and took no further notice of the author. The facts that have been stated of Ahalya Baeæ rest on grounds that admit of no scepticism. It is, however, an extraordinary picture:—a female without vanity; a bigot without intolerance; a mind, imbued with the deepest superstition, yet receiving no impressions except what promoted the happiness of those under its influence; a being exercising, in the most active and able manner, despotic power, not merely with sincere humility, but under the severest moral restraint that a strict conscience could impose on human action. And all this, combined with the greatest indulgence for the weakness and faults of others. Such, at least, is the account which the natives of Mulwa give of Ahalya Baeæ: with them her name is sainted, and she is styled an Avatar, or incarnation of the Divinity. In the most sober view that can be taken of her character, she certainly appears, within her limited sphere, to have been one of the purest and most exemplary rulers that ever existed; and she affords a striking example of the practical benefit a mind may receive from performing worldly duties under a deep sense of responsibility to its Creator."

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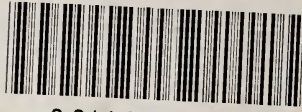
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